The Progressive Era
1870 - 1920
Terms and People

• **civil service** – system that includes most government jobs, except elected positions, the judiciary, and the military

• **primary** – election in which voters, rather than party leaders, choose their party’s candidate

• **recall** – process by which people may vote to remove an elected official from office

• **initiative** – process that allows voters to put a bill before a state legislature

• **referendum** – way for people to vote directly on a proposed new law

• **graduated income tax** – method of taxation that taxes people at different rates depending on income
For the rich, the late 1800s was a time of fabulous wealth. Mark Twain wrote *The Gilded Age*, a novel that poked fun at greed and political corruption. The era became known as the Gilded Age. To gild is to coat an object with gold leaf. Just as the gold leaf can disguise an object of lesser value, **the wealth of a few people masked society’s problems**, including corrupt politics and widespread poverty.
Some of the business leaders who built giant corporations abused their power.

Politicians accepted bribes and did not appoint the most capable people to positions.

Americans were outraged and demanded changes to limit the power of monopolies and corruption in the government.
Problems in Turn-of-the-Century America

**Political:**
Patronage; limited suffrage and democracy, corruption

**Social:**
Poverty; alcohol abuse

**Economic:**
Power of big corporations; unemployment

**Environmental:**
Impure food and water; diminishing natural resources
Muckrakers were a group of writers who exposed corruption in American society around 1900.

Ida Tarbell – accused Standard Oil of unfair tactics to force small companies out of business.

Upton Sinclair – wrote *The Jungle* which exposed unsanitary practices in the meat industry.

Lewis W. Hine – exposed child labor abuses by publishing a series of photos.

Jacob Riis – illustrated the horrors of tenement life in his book *How The Other Half Lives*.

Lincoln Steffens – wrote *The Shame of the Cities* which focused on government corruption.
Ida Tarbell targeted the unfair practices of big business, focusing on the oil industry and John D. Rockefeller.
In 1887, a law was aimed at **ending the unfair practices of the railroads.**

- Prohibited practices such as rebates
- Set up the **Interstate Commerce Commission** to oversee railroads
In 1890, Congress passed a law to **regulate the ruthless business tactics of the trusts.**

**Sherman Antitrust Act**

- Prohibited businesses from trying to limit or destroy competition

While the act was meant to limit the power of big businesses, at first it was actually used against labor unions.

**Say No To Trusts!**
The Jungle, by Upton Sinclair, described, in grisly detail, the workings of the meatpacking industry.

Public outcry over the book led to passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906.
Lewis W. Hine photograph showing child factory workers.

The Muckrakers
The Muckrakers
The Muckrakers

THE SHAME OF THE CITIES
LINCOLN STEFFENS
Government corruption was especially hard to control in the nation’s cities. Powerful city bosses like New York’s William Tweed grew rich accepting bribes and other payoffs.
Despite bosses’ corruption, they were loved by the poor.

| Bosses would hand out jobs, turkeys for Thanksgiving, and coal during the winter. |
| In exchange, the poor would vote for the boss or the boss’s candidate. |
Corruption was also a problem at the national level.

Much of the government corruption of the time stemmed from the **spoils system**.

- Presidents gave jobs to people as a reward for political support.
- Some were qualified; many were not.
The spoils system was out of control. Vice President Chester A. Arthur benefitted from the spoils system. But when he became president, he worked to reform the system.
In 1883, President Arthur signed a law requiring that government jobs be filled on the basis of merit.

- Created the Civil Service Commission
- Jobs would go to those scoring the highest on civil service exams
Widespread corruption led to a surge in support for the Progressive movement.

Governor Robert La Follette introduced a series of Progressive reforms known as the Wisconsin Idea.

- Commissioned experts to solve problems
- Supported primary elections of candidates

Many other states followed Wisconsin’s lead, passing new laws to protect the public interest.
Progressive reforms also resulted in two new amendments to the Constitution, both ratified in 1913.

**Sixteenth Amendment**
- Gave Congress the power to pass an income tax
- Resulted in the *graduated income tax*

**Seventeenth Amendment**
- Required that senators be elected directly by the people, rather than by state legislatures
Many Progressive reforms put more power in the hands of voters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party leaders pick candidates for state and local offices</td>
<td>Voters select their party candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only members of state legislature can introduce bills</td>
<td>Voters can propose bills to the legislature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only legislators pass laws</td>
<td>Voters can vote on bills directly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only courts or legislature can remove corrupt officials</td>
<td>Voters can remove elected officials from office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Terms and People

- **Theodore Roosevelt** – first Progressive President; formed the Progressive Party
- **trustbuster** – person who works to destroy monopolies and trusts
- **conservation** – the protection of natural resources
- **national park** – natural area protected and managed by the federal government
- **William Howard Taft** – President who supported many reforms but lost Progressive support
- **Woodrow Wilson** – Progressive President who promoted the New Freedom program
While attending the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, N.Y., President McKinley was shot by an anarchist. The assassin, Leon Czolgosz, was protected by police from a mob that wanted to lynch him. President McKinley died eight days later on 9/14/1901.
Theodore Roosevelt was the nation’s first Progressive President.

- State legislator
- Police chief
- Assistant secretary of the navy
- Governor of New York
- Vice President
- Became President when McKinley was assassinated
Though he was not against all big businesses, Roosevelt was against what he called the "bad trusts."

- **"Good Trusts"**
  - Efficient
  - Fair
  - Should be left alone

- **"Bad Trusts"**
  - Took advantage of workers
  - Cheated the public
  - Must be controlled or broken up
Roosevelt soon earned a reputation as a **trustbuster**, winning court rulings that eventually broke up the bad trusts.

- The courts broke up Northern Securities because it had **violated the Sherman Antitrust Act**.
- Because of Roosevelt, Standard Oil and the American Tobacco Company were also broken up.
- Finally, the Antitrust Act was used to limit trusts, instead of unions.
Roosevelt also supported Progressive goals in other areas.

- When miners went on strike to demand higher pay and shorter hours, he supported them.
- He encouraged Congress to require stricter inspections in meat-packing houses.
- He supported the Pure Food and Drug Act to protect consumers from false drug claims and harmful additives.
Americans in 1901 hoped that Theodore Roosevelt’s “Square Deal” would help end child labor, poverty, business abuses, and political corruption.
President Roosevelt believed that industries needed to be regulated for the public interest and launched an effort to break up corporate trusts. After reading *The Jungle*, Roosevelt acted to regulate the meat-packing industry. He was also a strong crusader for the environment and led efforts for conservation.
Teddy the Muckraker

A NAUSEATING JOB, BUT IT MUST BE DONE
(President Roosevelt takes hold of the investigating muck-rake himself in the packing-house scandal.)
President Roosevelt doubled the number of national parks in the U.S. When Congress refused to create anymore parks, Roosevelt used the Antiquities Act to turn the areas into National Monuments. He used this method to protect the Grand Canyon.
## Major Reforms of the Roosevelt Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REFORM</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meat Inspection Act</strong></td>
<td>Created a government meat inspection program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pure Food and Drug Act</strong></td>
<td>Banned the sale of impure foods and medicines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Parks</strong></td>
<td>Doubled the number of national parks in the US. Preserved more than 200 million acres of public lands.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Roosevelt decided not to run for re-election in 1908.

Many Progressives, including Roosevelt, supported William Howard Taft, who won easily.

- Trustbuster
- Favored graduated income tax
- Supported workplace safety rules
- Supported eight-hour workday
- Controlled child labor
William Howard Taft continued Roosevelt’s attack on trusts. He pursued almost twice as many antitrust suits in four years as Roosevelt had in nearly eight years. The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Amendments were passed during Taft’s presidency. Taft is also the only man in American history to serve as President and then as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.
The heaviest president, at 355 pounds, the 6’2” Taft struggled all his adult life with a weight problem. He got stuck in the White House bathtub and had to have an oversized version brought in for his use. The new bathtub could hold 4 average-sized men.

Taft liked milk so much that he brought his own cow to the White House. The cows name was Mooly Wolly. When Mooly died, she was replaced by another cow called Pauline.

William Howard Taft was the first president to own a car at the White House. He had the White House stables converted into a 4-car garage.
In 1912, Roosevelt was unhappy with Taft's time in office and put his name forward to become the Republican Party's nominee again. The Party chose to stick with Taft. This angered Roosevelt who walked out of the convention and then formed his own party, the Progressive Party, in protest. Nicknamed the Bull Moose Party from a quote by Theodore Roosevelt. When asked whether he was fit to be president, he responded that he was as fit as a "bull moose."
In October of 1912, during a campaign stop in Milwaukee, Teddy Roosevelt was shot at close range by a bartender named John Flammang Schrank. Schrank claimed he was instructed by the ghost of William McKinley to prevent a third term for TR. Roosevelt was extremely lucky. He had a 50-page speech, folded in two, and a steel spectacle case in his pocket. The bullet was slowed as it passed through them before entering Roosevelt's chest. The bullet was never removed, and caused no difficulty after the wound healed.

T.R. gave his speech anyway – “Friends, I shall ask you to be as quiet as possible. I don't know whether you fully understand that I have just been shot; but it takes more than that to kill a Bull Moose. Fortunately I had my manuscript, so you see I was going to make a long speech, and there is where the bullet went through - and it probably saved me from it going into my heart. The bullet is in me now, so that I cannot make a very long speech, but I will try my best.”

T.R. eventually received more votes than Taft, though the Republican Party split brought about the election of Woodrow Wilson.
Taft made the poorest showing of any president seeking reelection. Wilson won with only about 42 percent of the popular vote.

**Region** In comparison, how did Wilson fare in the electoral vote?

See **Skills Handbook**, p. H21
Wilson created a plan to restore free and fair competition among businesses. **His New Freedom put further limits on big business.**

- **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)**
  - Stops businesses from using unfair practices to eliminate competition

- **Clayton Antitrust Act**
  - Banned business practices that limit competition
  - Stopped antitrust laws from being used against unions
Woodrow Wilson was elected President in 1912 and reelected in 1916. President Wilson thought that government should use its powers to break up monopolies and to help workers in their struggles against business owners.

Wilson also reformed the nation’s financial system. In 1913, the Federal Reserve Act was passed. This improved the nation’s monetary system by creating a modern banking system. It also created a more flexible currency system by allowing banks to control the money supply.

“Bigness is dangerous”
## Major Reforms of the Taft and Wilson Administrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAW</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sixteenth Amendment</td>
<td>1909 - Gave Congress the power to create income taxes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clayton Antitrust Act</td>
<td>Forbade any business practice that &quot;substantially&quot; lessened competition; legalized certain labor tactics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Reserve Act</td>
<td>Created the Federal Reserve system, consisting of 12 Federal Reserve Banks, supervised by the Federal Reserve Board.</td>
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</table>
TYPES OF TAXES

INCOME TAXES
1. Individual: You pay a percentage of what you earn at work or from investments.
2. Corporate: Corporations pay a percentage of their profits in income tax.

PROPERTY TAXES
People pay taxes on property they own, such as land or a house. Property taxes are often used to support public services such as schools.

SALES TAXES
Sales tax is imposed on the retail price of merchandise. For example when you buy a pair of jeans, you pay sales tax.

ESTATE TAXES
This tax is charged against the value of property of a person who has died. It is commonly called the “death tax”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMENDMENT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seventeenth Amendment</td>
<td>1913 - Provided for the direct election of US Senators by voters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighteenth Amendment</td>
<td>1919 - The Prohibition Amendment, it banned the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nineteenth Amendment</td>
<td>1920 - Gave women full voting rights.</td>
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</table>
Is Teddy Roosevelt as deserving as Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln to have his image immortalized on Mount Rushmore? If you agree, explain why. If you disagree, discuss who you think is more deserving.
### Terms and People

- **Carrie Chapman Catt** – leader of the women’s movement who devised a strategy to win suffrage
- **suffragist** – people who worked for women’s right to vote
- **Alice Paul** – suffragist who worked for a constitutional amendment guaranteeing women the right to vote
- **Frances Willard** – president of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union
- **prohibition** – a ban on the sale and consumption of alcohol
As a result of social reform movements of the Progressive Era and the growth of industry, many women began working outside their homes.

Women began to work in factories, offices, and stores. They took jobs as telephone operators, store clerks, and typists. Women also took classes and those with a college education could even pursue a profession such as teaching or nursing. Most were expected to quit their jobs when they married.

Women in various occupations (ca. 1915), Wladyslaw Theodor Benda
Political Cartoon

In 1912 cartoonist Laura E. Foster addressed an issue faced by even more women today: the tough choices relating to careers and home life.

The woman climbing the stairs represents women seeking career success.

The prize of Fame at the top of the stairs represents the goal that some people believed suffragists sought.

The words at the bottom imply the traditional women’s values—home, children, marriage—the woman is leaving behind. The children represent those left behind by the woman’s search for personal success.

1. Interpreting Political Cartoons How do the words change as the stairs lead up to the top?

2. Identifying Points of View What point is the cartoonist trying to make with this cartoon?

Many women took a leading role in the temperance movement, favoring prohibition.

Frances Willard, the president of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, called for states to ban the sale of alcohol.

Carrie Nation took more violent actions, storming into saloons and smashing liquor bottles.
The Temperance Movement

Carrie Nation and Temperance groups worked for a ban on the sale and distribution of alcohol.
In 1917, Congress passed the Eighteenth Amendment, enforcing prohibition.

The amendment was ratified by the states in 1919.
## Achievements of Women Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRESSIVE ACHIEVEMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lillian Wald</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jane Addams</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Florence Kelley</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
By far, however, the most important goal of women reformers was women’s suffrage.

The **Seneca Falls Convention** of 1848 marked the start of an organized women’s movement, which continued after the Civil War.

- Founded by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in 1869
- Pushed for a constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote
Susan B. Anthony was born February 15, 1820 in Adams Massachusetts. She was brought up in a Quaker family with long activist traditions.

After teaching for fifteen years, she became active in the temperance movement. Because she was a woman, she was not allowed to speak at temperance rallies. This experience, and her acquaintance with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, led her to join the women's rights movement in 1852. Soon after she dedicated her life to woman suffrage.

Anthony, who never married, remained active until her death on March 13, 1906.
Between 1900 and 1920, the woman suffrage movement modernized, adopting the new tactics of lobbying, advertising, and grass-roots organizing. **Carrie Chapman Catt** led the National American Woman Suffrage Association (**NAWSA**).

Growing opposition to suffrage fostered a sense of impatience among some women. In 1916, **Alice Paul** and **Lucy Burns** organized the National Woman’s Party (**NWP**), adopted the radical tactics of the British suffragettes, and campaigned for the first Equal Rights Amendment.
Although both Carrie Chapman Catt, NAWSA president, and Alice Paul shared the goal of universal suffrage, their political strategies could not have been more different.

NAWSA concentrated a majority of its efforts on state campaigns. Paul wanted to focus on a national amendment. While NAWSA endorsed President Wilson and looked to members of the Democratic Party as allies, Alice Paul and the NWP wanted to hold Wilson and his party responsible for women's continued disenfranchisement.

The NWP organized "Silent Sentinels" to stand outside the White House holding banners inscribed with incendiary phrases directed toward President Wilson.
The government’s initial tolerance of the “Silent Sentinels” gave way after the United States entered World War I. Beginning in June 1917, suffrage protestors were arrested, imprisoned, and often force-fed when they went on hunger strikes to protest being denied political prisoner status.

The Stomach Tube - "The sensation is most painful," reported a victim. "The drums of the ears seem to be bursting and there is a horrible pain in the throat and breast. The tube is pushed down twenty inches; [it] must go below the breastbone." The prisoners were generally fed a solution of milk and eggs.
Woman Suffrage Before the Nineteenth Amendment

Western states led the battle for women’s right to vote, but key victories in New York (1917) and Michigan (1918), and a carefully organized campaign in all parts of the country, finally led to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. It was a triumph of progressive reform.
By 1914, eleven Western states allowed full voting rights for women. Because of a determined campaign by NAWSA and the NWP, in 1918 President Wilson urged Congress to pass the Nineteenth Amendment. In 1920, the women’s suffrage movement that started with the Seneca Falls convention was finally successful.
The Nineteenth Amendment doubled the number of eligible voters.

Some people saw women’s suffrage as the final victory, while others saw it as one step on the road to full equality.
Terms and People

• **Booker T. Washington** – educator and prominent African American leader

• **W.E.B. Du Bois** – African American leader who urged blacks to fight discrimination

• **lynching** – murder by a mob

• **parochial school** – school sponsored by a church

• **anti-Semitism** – prejudice against Jews
African Americans faced discrimination in both the North and the South.

- Jim Crow laws enforced segregation.
- Landlords refused to offer equal housing.
- African Americans were restricted to the poorest jobs.
- Lynchings increased after the depression of 1893.
Lynching of African Americans, 1886–1915

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number of persons lynched</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1886–1890</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891–1895</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896–1900</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901–1905</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906–1910</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911–1915</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970
Ida B. Wells refused to leave a segregated railroad car. She initially won a lawsuit, but it was overturned by the Tennessee Supreme Court.

- Born into slavery
- Was shocked by the lynching of three close friends
- Began an editorial campaign and speaking tour against lynching
Booker T. Washington was one of the most prominent African American leaders of the time.

- Born into slavery
- Helped found the Tuskegee Institute
- Advised African Americans to learn trades and move up gradually in society
A History class at the Tuskegee Institute in 1902.
W.E.B. Du Bois had a different view of how African Americans should respond to discrimination.

- First African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard
- Agreed with Washington on the need for education
- Urged blacks to **fight discrimination now**
Marcus Garvey was arrested for corruption and mismanagement.

• An immigrant from Jamaica
• Created the **Universal Negro Improvement Association** which encouraged blacks to invest in Negro owned businesses
• Urged blacks to **return to Africa** & create a self-governing nation there
In 1909, **W.E.B. Du Bois** joined Jane Addams and other reformers to create an organization to work for equal rights for African Americans.

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**

African Americans saw some successes during the Progressive Era:

- Sarah Walker became the **first female African American millionaire**.
- Scientist **George Washington Carver** discovered new uses for Southern crops.
Mexican Americans were also targets of discrimination.

• They were denied skilled jobs and often worked as manual laborers.

• They were paid less than Anglo workers.

• Their children were forced to go to separate schools.
Prejudice against Asians had already stopped Chinese from immigrating to the U.S.

Employers on the West Coast began to hire Asian immigrants from other countries, such as Japan.

More than 100,000 Japanese entered the United States in the early 1900s.
Members of religious minorities also suffered discrimination.

Nativist groups worked to restrict Catholics and Jews from immigrating.

Catholics and Jews who were not immigrants faced discrimination in jobs and housing.