

# Progressivism: Where Will You Put Your Million Dollars?



**Overview:** The year is 1900. Two years ago America won a “splendid little war” with Spain and is feeling quite good about itself. However, successes outside the country leave nagging problems within. What, for example, should be done about dirty meat packing plants, or young children working in the mines? A reform movement called Progressivism is taking shape to work on these and other problems. You want Progressivism to succeed and have some money to help the cause. This Mini-Q asks you to think about where you will put your money.

## The Documents:

- Document A: Deforestation: John Muir (with map)
- Document B: Child Labor: Lewis Hine (with photo)
- Document C: Women’s Suffrage: Jane Addams (with photo)
- Document D: Food Safety: Upton Sinclair (with photo)

A Mini Document Based Question (Mini-Q)

## Hook Exercise: Progressivism

**Directions:** The United States is a good country. It has had a democratic government longer than any other country on earth. It is filled with many caring people. It is also true that the United States isn't perfect. Below are ten problems that continue to nag America. With a partner do these two tasks. Be prepared to share your thinking with the full class.

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**Task One:** Identify one problem that would make it easiest to solve the other nine problems.

The most basic underlying problem is \_\_\_\_\_

**Task Two:** Explain how solving your number one problem would make it easier to solve *five* of the other problems on the list below.

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### Problems

Factory jobs going to other countries

Costly health care

Weak schools

Drugs

Gang violence

Too much dependence on fossil fuels like coal and oil

Homelessness

Income gap between rich and poor

Overpopulation

High taxes

## Progressivism: Where Will You Put Your Million Dollars?

On January 1, 1900, the United States had reason for optimism. Cities were bustling. Industry was booming. One factory owner, Andrew Carnegie, was about to sell his steel company and become the richest man in the world. Not bad for a weaver's son from Scotland. And if Carnegie could make it, why not anyone! With victory in the Spanish-American War just behind, and a fresh new century lying before, it was a good time to be an American.

However, if you peeled back the excitement and looked carefully, there was an **underside**. Not everyone in America was making it. In fact, in the absence of clear rules, not everyone in America had a chance of making it. Consider this:

1. Average earnings for American workers were less than \$500 a year. In the South, the average for unskilled workers was closer to \$300. And this was at a time when the poverty line for a family of six was \$600.
2. Hours were long. In 1900, the average work week was 60 hours. In the garment industry of New York City it was 70 hours.
3. Child labor was widespread. In 1900, 26% of boys between ten and fifteen years old were in the work force. For young girls the figure was 10%.

Added to this, more than half of adult Americans were denied the right to vote. Women had never had the right, and most black men had lost the vote in the years after Reconstruction. Clearly, America had some work to do.

Fortunately, some people spoke out. A group of writers known as **muckrakers** looked into the problems and voiced their concerns. Ministers, professors, social workers, and many elected officials listened and joined in. A movement developed that was called **Progressivism**.

The reform effort included both major political parties. It lasted about twenty years and influenced the thinking of three presidents – Teddy Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson.

To be sure, Progressivism had its limits. For example, almost nothing was done to rid the nation of racial segregation, and labor unions were given little encouragement. However, there were other areas where important reforms were made.

Here is your task. It is a cold February day in 1913. Your great Aunt Bessie, whom you love greatly, calls you to her side. Aunt Bessie is old and not long for this world. She tells you she is giving you \$1,000,000, her entire life savings. Her wish is that you give the money to three Progressive reforms. You are to

pick the causes. For reasons known only to Aunt Bessie, she wants the money distributed in a specific way: \$600,000 to the most needy cause, \$300,000 to the next most needy cause, and \$100,000 to the third most needy cause. Choose your three causes from the documents that follow. Then write a letter to Aunt Bessie explaining your reasons for how you will give her money away. In other words, *where will you put your million dollars?*



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## Background Essay Questions

1. When was the Progressive Period?
2. What was the poverty level in dollars for a family of six in 1900?
3. What was the average earnings of an American worker in 1900?
4. What three Presidents served during the Progressive Period?
5. What were two areas where Progressivism made little or no change?
6. Define each of the following:

underside

muckraker

Progressivism

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### Timeline

- 1890** – Sequoia National Park is created in California.
- 1893** – Colorado grants women the right to vote.
- 1905** – First World Series
- 1906** – Pure Food and Drug Act passed.
- 1912** – Titanic sinks. 1,501 people die.
- 1913** – First peacetime income tax
- 1920** – Women's Suffrage Amendment is ratified by states.

## Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing

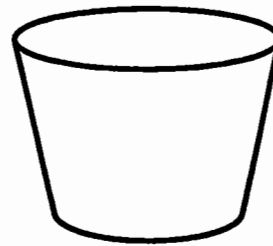
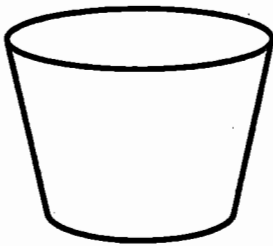
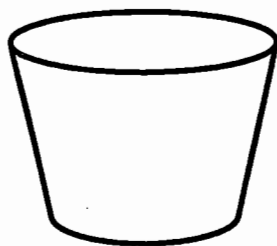
### Understanding the Question

1. What is the analytical question asked by this Mini-Q?
2. What terms in the question need to be defined?
3. Rewrite the task in your own words. The task is described in the last paragraph of the Background Essay.

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### Pre-Bucketing

**Directions:** Using any clues from the Mini-Q question, the Background Essay and the document titles on the cover page, create possible bucket labels.



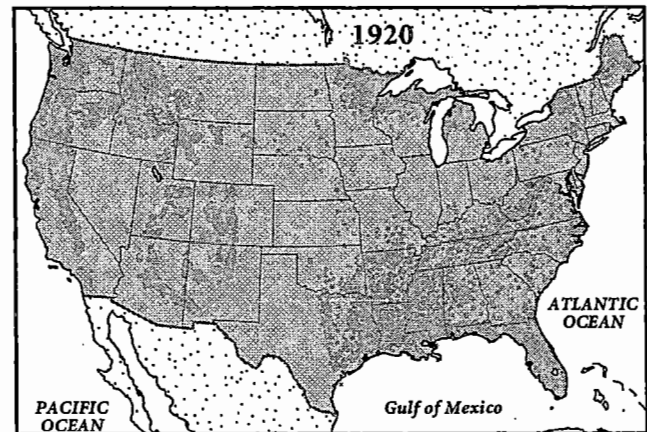
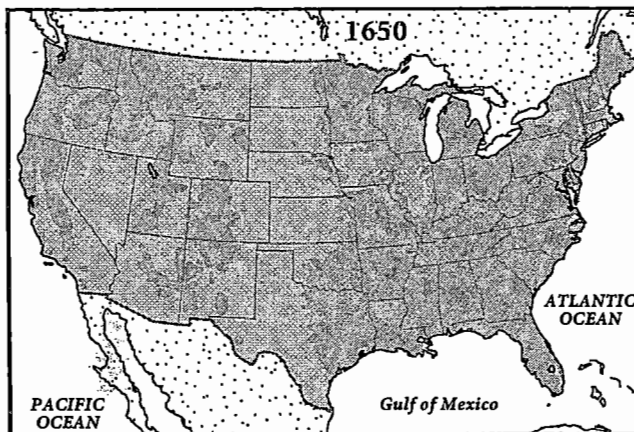
## Document A

Source: John Muir, "The American Forests," *Atlantic Monthly*, August 1897.

Any fool can destroy trees. They cannot run away; and if they could, they would still be destroyed – chased and hunted down as long as fun or a dollar could be got out of their barks and hides.... It took more than three thousand years to make some of the trees in these western woods – trees that are still standing in perfect strength and beauty, waving and singing in the mighty forests of the Sierras. Through all the wonderful, eventful centuries since Christ's time – and long before that – God has cared for these trees, saved them from drought, disease, avalanches, and a thousand straining, leveling tempests and floods; but He cannot save them from fools – only Uncle Sam can do that.

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 Area of Primary (Never Been Logged) Forests in the United States



## Document Analysis

1. How old were the trees that John Muir was describing?
2. According to Muir, why do people cut down trees?
3. What argument does Muir give for protecting the redwoods?
4. According to Muir, what is the only thing that can save the trees?
5. How do the maps help strengthen John Muir's main arguments?

## Document B

Source: Lewis Hine, National Child Labor Committee Report, 1911.

The boys working in the breaker are bent double, with little chance to relax; the air at times is dense with coal-dust, which penetrates so far into the passages of the lungs that for long periods after the boy leaves the breaker, he continues to cough up the black coal dust. Fingers are calloused and cut by the coal and slate, the noise and monotony are deadening.... While I was in the region, two breaker boys of 15 years ... fell or were carried by the coal down into the car below. One was badly burned and the other smothered to death. This was the Lee Breaker at Chauncy, Pennsylvania, January 6th, 1911. The boy who was killed was Dennis McKee.

**Note:** Breaker boys were often located just outside the mine next to a machine (called a breaker) where they sorted and separated the coal from slate rock.

Boys working in the Pennsylvania Coal Company's Ewen Breaker.



Source: Photo by Lewis Hine, 1911; Library of Congress, Prints and Photo Division.

## Document Analysis

1. What was a breaker boy?
2. How old were the two boys who were injured and killed at the Lee Breaker?
3. What is the main idea of the Lewis Hine report?
4. How does the photograph help support the report's descriptions?

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## Document C

**Source:** Jane Addams, "Why Women Should Vote," *Ladies Home Journal*, January 1910.

**Note:** Jane Addams was the co-founder in 1889 of Hull House, a famous settlement house in Chicago.

A woman's simplest duty ... is to keep her house clean and wholesome and to feed her children properly. Yet if she lives in a tenement house, as so many of my neighbors do, she cannot fulfill these simple obligations by her own efforts because she is utterly dependent upon the city administration for the conditions which [make] decent living possible. Her basement will not be dry, her stairways will not be fireproof.... She cannot even secure untainted meat for her household ... unless the meat has been inspected by city officials....

... [If] woman would fulfill her traditional responsibility to her own children ... then she must bring herself to use the ballot.... American women need this ... to preserve the home.



**Source:** Library of Congress, Prints and Photo Division

### Document Analysis

1. When did Jane Addams write her article for *Ladies Home Journal*?
2. What is "the ballot"?
3. Why does Jane Addams say that it is necessary for women to get the ballot?
4. In the photo the sign being displayed reads, "Mr. President, How Long Must Women Wait For Liberty?" The protesters were standing in front of the White House. Do you think this was a good way for women to fight for the vote? Why or why not?
5. Should women's suffrage be a higher or lower priority than forest preservation? than child labor? Explain.



## Document D

Source: Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 1905.

Note: *The Jungle* was a novel that described the conditions in the Chicago meat-packing industry.

There was never the least attention paid to what was cut up for sausage.... There would be meat that had tumbled out on the floor, in the dirt and sawdust, where the workers had tramped and spit.... There would be meat stored in great piles in rooms; and the water from leaky roofs would drip over it, and thousands of rats would race about on it. It was too dark in these storage places to see well, but a man could run his hand over these piles of meat and sweep off handfuls of the dried dung of rats. These rats were nuisances, and the packers would put poisoned bread out for them; they would die, and then rats, bread and meat would go into the hoppers together. This was no fairy story and no joke; the meat would be shoveled into carts, and the man who did the shoveling would not trouble to lift out a rat even if he saw one....

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Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photo Division

### Document Analysis

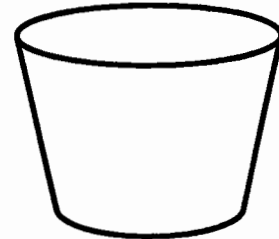
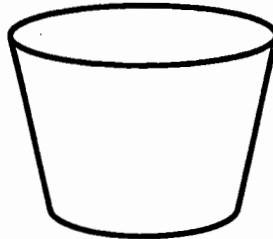
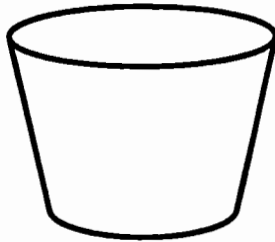
1. What detail from Upton Sinclair's book is the most disgusting to you?
2. If you were alive in 1906, and had just read this book, what might you decide to do to change the situation?
3. Does the photo support Sinclair's claims about the meat-packing industry? Explain.
4. What argument could be made that meat inspection should receive \$600,000 of Aunt Bessie's money?

## Bucketing – Getting Ready to Write

### Bucketing

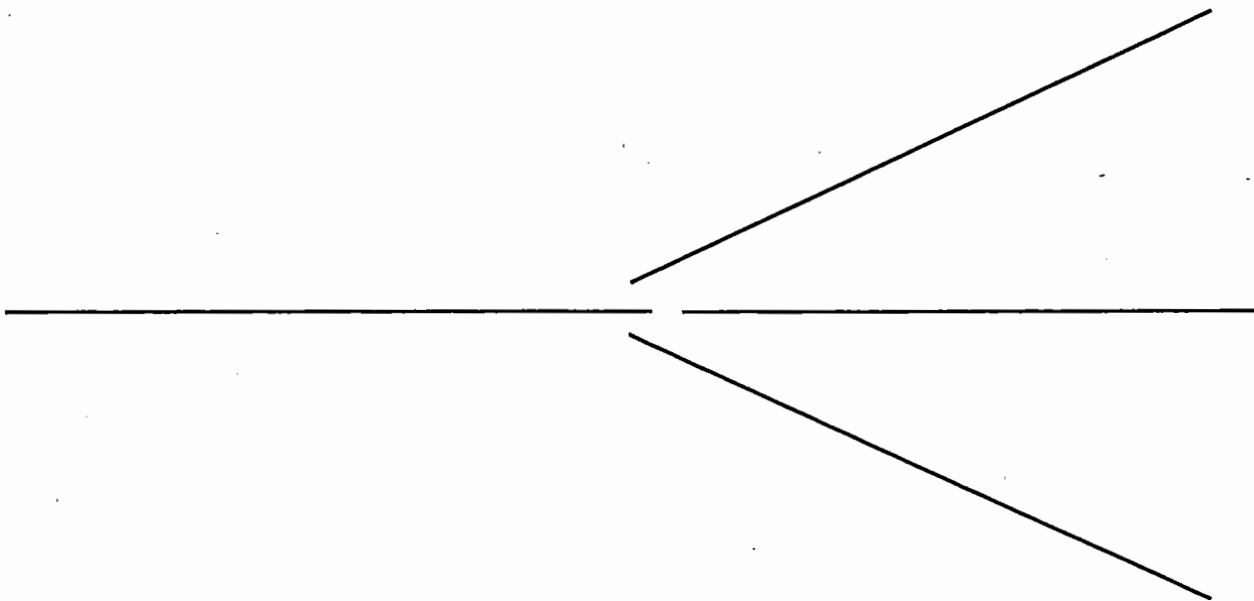
Look over all the documents and organize them into your final buckets. Write final bucket labels under each bucket and place the letters of the documents in the buckets where they belong. It is okay to put a document in more than one bucket. Remember, your buckets are going to become your body paragraphs.

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### Thesis Development and Road Map

On the chickenfoot below, write your thesis and your road map. Your thesis is always an opinion and answers the Mini-Q question. The road map is created from your bucket labels and lists the topic areas you will examine in order to prove your thesis.



# From Thesis to Essay Writing

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## Mini-Q Letter Outline Guide

**Greeting:** Dear Aunt Bessie,

### Paragraph #1

Grabber

Background

Stating the task with key terms defined

Thesis and roadmap

### Paragraph #2

Baby Thesis for bucket one

Evidence: supporting detail from documents with document citation

Argument: connecting evidence to the thesis

### Paragraph #3

Baby Thesis for bucket two

Evidence

Argument

### Paragraph #4

Baby Thesis for bucket three

Evidence

Argument

### Paragraph #5

Letter closing

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Student Mini-Q Lined Paper

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Lined paper for student writing, consisting of 25 horizontal lines.

