

**The Progressive Era**

**Lesson 1** The Movement Begins, *Continued*

**Taking on Corruption**

There were problems in American society in the late 1800s. Many Americans called for reform. Reformers are people who want to change society to make it better. Reformers during this time were called progressives. Progressives focused on problems affecting cities, government, and business.

"Political machines" were powerful groups linked to political parties. These powerful groups controlled local government in many cities. Cities were divided into political districts. A member of the political machine controlled jobs in each district. This person was called a political boss.

Many political bosses did things to make money that were not honest. Bosses took "kickbacks," or illegal payments. For example, some builders wanted to do business with the city. They would give campaign money to bosses to get work. Builders might add extra fees to their bill for city work. They used that money to give kickbacks to bosses.

One dishonest city boss was William M. Tweed. He was known as "Boss Tweed." Tweed and his group controlled most of New York City. They controlled the police department, courts, and some newspapers. Tweed's group collected millions of dollars in illegal payments. A lot of these payments came from companies that did business with the city. Thomas Nast was a political cartoonist. His political cartoons were printed in *Harper's Weekly*. The cartoons showed how Tweed's group did illegal things. Tweed later went to prison.

//////////,Glue Foldable here//////////

Reformers wanted to stop the power of political bosses. They worked to make city governments more honest and efficient.

Reformers wanted to end something called the spoils system. In the spoils system, elected officials rewarded their friends. They gave jobs to people who supported them. They did favors for them, too. Many people were not qualified to do the jobs given to them.

President Hayes and President Garfield both tried to change the spoils system. Neither of them succeeded. Congress passed the **Pendleton Act** in 1883. This act created the Civil Service Commission, which gave tests for people wanting federal jobs. If they passed the test, it would prove they had the skills to do the job. By 1900, the commission was in charge of hiring many federal workers.



**Mark the Text**

- Underline the definition of *kickbacks*.



**Identifying**

- Who was Thomas Nast and why was he important?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Defining**

- Glue a one-tab Foldable over "Reformers wanted to stop the power of political bosses." Label the anchor tab *Common Practice*. Write *Spoils System* in the middle of the Foldable tab. Create a memory map by drawing arrows around the title and writing six words or phrases about the spoils system.

## The Progressive Era

### Lesson 1 The Movement Begins, *Continued*

 **Reading Check**

4. How did the Pendleton Act help to end the spoils system?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

 **Explaining**

5. What are tariffs? Why did American business owners like them?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

 **Reading Check**

6. What was one major difference between socialists and progressives?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Many Americans believed that trusts had too much control over the economy and the government. A trust is a powerful group of companies. Congress passed the **Sherman Antitrust Act**. The act was passed in 1890. It was the first federal law to control trusts.

Railroads were important to people and businesses. Large railroad companies wanted to make more money. The companies agreed to not compete against each other. Together, they set higher prices.

The railroads formed an **oligopoly**. An oligopoly is a group of large companies that set prices for a type of product or service. Reformers wanted to limit the rates that railroads charged. Congress passed the **Interstate Commerce Act** in 1887. It made railroads charge fair rates.

Tariffs are taxes charged on imported goods. Imported goods are made in other countries. Tariffs would make imported goods cost more. Congress passed a tariff bill in 1890. It increased tariffs on many imported goods. Many American business owners liked high tariffs. They thought it would make Americans buy more of their products.

### The New Reformers

In the early 1900s, reformers wanted to make society better. Reformers believed that people were not treated fairly. They came up with new ideas to solve problems in society. These ideas included socialism and progressivism.

Socialists felt that it was unfair that a few people had most of the wealth and power in America. They believed more people should have wealth and power. Socialists wanted the government to own and operate businesses. Eugene V. Debs helped create the American Socialist Party in 1898. Debs ran for president five times. He never received more than 6 percent of the popular vote.

Progressives also believed that it was unfair for a few people to own most of the wealth and power. Progressives disagreed with socialists on how to solve this problem. They did not think the government should own businesses. Progressives wanted the government to regulate businesses. This meant that the government would make rules that businesses would have to follow.

Newspaper reporters helped the reformers. They investigated problems and wrote newspaper and magazine stories about them. These reporters were called

**The Progressive Era**

**Lesson 1** The Movement Begins, *Continued*

**muckrakers.** Their stories told the people about the “muck,” or dirt, in business.

One muckraker was Ida Tarbell. She wrote articles about the oil trust’s unfair practices. People became upset after reading her articles. They asked the government to take charge of big business.

Another muckraker was Upton Sinclair. He wrote a book called *The Jungle* (1906). It described the dirty and unsafe conditions of the Chicago meatpacking industry. Americans were shocked. Congress passed the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906. It made businesses put labels on food and medicine. The labels told people what the businesses had put into food and medicine. Food that might cause harm could not be sold.

Oregon made important reforms. The **initiative** allowed citizens to put an issue up for voting. The **referendum** allowed people to vote for or against a law. The **recall** allowed voters to remove elected officials from office. These reforms were called the Oregon System. Many states began using these reforms.

The Constitution allowed state legislatures to choose senators. People felt there were problems doing it this way. Party bosses often controlled the process. Businesses also were too involved in the process. Progressives wanted people to be able to vote for their senators directly.

Congress passed the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1912. It allowed people to vote for their senators in elections.

//////////Glue Foldable here//////////

**Check for Understanding**

List two forms of media that helped Progressive reformers.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did the Progressive reforms of this time make life better for Americans today?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Identifying**

7. What is a *muckraker*?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



8. Cut a two-tab Foldable in half to make four tabs. Place it along the dotted line to cover Check for Understanding. Write *Progressives & Reforms* on the anchor tab. Label the tabs *Pendleton Act*, *Sherman Antitrust Act*, *Interstate Commerce Act*, and *17th Amendment*. On the front and back of the tabs, write words or phrases that outline what you remember about each Progressive reform.

**The Progressive Era**

**Lesson 3** Presidents of the Progressive Era, *Continued*

**Theodore Roosevelt**

Theodore Roosevelt was vice president in 1900. He became president after President McKinley was killed in 1901. Only 42 years old, Roosevelt was the youngest president in the country’s history. He agreed with progressive ideas.

President Roosevelt wanted to regulate trusts. Trusts were groups of businesses that set their own rules about prices and who could sell that product or service. Some trusts were not following the Sherman Antitrust Act. Roosevelt brought legal charges against many trusts. Roosevelt was called a **trustbuster**. He wanted to break up the trusts he thought were harmful.

More than 100,000 coal miners went on strike in 1902. They were members of the United Mine Workers union. The miners wanted more pay. They wanted to work only eight hours a day. The mine owners refused to give the workers what they asked for. The strike lasted for months. Winter was coming. People needed coal to heat their homes.

Roosevelt asked the union and the owners to accept **arbitration** (ahr•buh•TRAY•shun). This meant that a neutral party would make a decision to solve the dispute. Mine workers won some of what they wanted.

Roosevelt handled this problem differently than past presidents. Earlier presidents used soldiers against strikers. Roosevelt had company owners make an agreement with strikers.

//////////,Glue Foldable here //////////

Roosevelt ran for president in 1904. He promised the people a **Square Deal**. This meant fair and equal treatment for all. He easily won the election.

Roosevelt’s Square Deal called for government regulation of business. This approach differed from that of some earlier presidents. They felt the government should leave businesses alone.

Roosevelt supported the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act. The acts gave the government power to visit businesses and **inspect**, or carefully examine, products.

Roosevelt has been called the first environmental president. He believed in the need for **conservation**. This meant that natural resources would be protected and saved. In 1905, Roosevelt suggested making the U.S. Forest Service. He asked Congress to set aside millions of acres of national forests. He also formed the National



**Explaining**

1. Tell how Roosevelt wanted to handle trusts.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Mark the Text**

2. Underline the definition of *arbitration*.



**Reading Check**

3. What was Roosevelt’s approach to labor relations?

\_\_\_\_\_



**Explaining**

4. Glue a one-tab Foldable over “Roosevelt ran for president ...”. Label the anchor tab *Roosevelt: 1904*. Write *Square Deal* in the middle of the tab. Make a memory map by drawing arrows around the title and listing five or more words or phrases about Roosevelt’s Square Deal promise.

## Progressive Era

### Lesson 3 Presidents of the Progressive Era, *Continued*



#### Identifying

5. What did the Sixteenth Amendment allow?

---



---



#### Analyzing

6. Why was the tax on individual incomes passed by Congress considered fairer than other kinds of taxes?

---



---

Conservation Commission. The commission took the first survey of the country's natural resources.

### William Howard Taft

No U.S. president had ever served more than two terms. Roosevelt decided not to run again in 1908. He chose his friend and fellow Republican William Howard Taft to run for president. Roosevelt thought that Taft would carry on the progressive Republican ideas. Taft easily defeated the Democrat's candidate, William Jennings Bryan.

Taft did carry out many of Roosevelt's policies. The Taft administration won more antitrust cases than Roosevelt had won. Taft also favored safety standards for both mines and railroads.

Taft supported the Sixteenth Amendment. It allowed Congress to tax people's income. Progressives believed income taxes were fairer than other taxes. They hoped a new tax would allow the government to lower tariffs. This would lead to lower prices. This would help poor people. The Sixteenth Amendment was added to the Constitution in 1913. Congress also passed laws so that people who made more money had to pay more tax.

Roosevelt and other progressives were disappointed with Taft. They were unhappy that Taft did not fight for a lower tariff. Taft also changed some conservation policies.

By 1912, Roosevelt was unhappy with Taft. Roosevelt decided to run against him for the Republican presidential nomination. Roosevelt won every **primary**. Primaries are elections that help political parties choose candidates. Taft had the backing of party leaders. Taft also had the support of powerful businesses. Taft won the nomination.

Roosevelt and his supporters formed a new political party called the Progressive Party. The Progressives nominated Roosevelt for president. Roosevelt felt ready to fight, so he said, "I feel as fit as a bull moose!" People then called the party the Bull Moose Party. This split in the Republican Party lost votes for both Taft and Roosevelt. It allowed Democrat Woodrow Wilson to win the election.

President Wilson did not like big government or big business. His program was called the "New Freedom." He asked Congress to pass a lower tariff. This would help foreign companies compete with American companies. President Wilson believed this would force American companies to make better products and to lower prices.



# The Progressive Era

## Lesson 3 Presidents of the Progressive Era, *Continued*

Congress also passed the **Federal Reserve Act** to regulate banking. The act created 12 regional banks. It was supervised by a central board. Many banks had to join the Federal Reserve System and follow its rules.

Wilson wanted the government to have more control over business. In 1914, Congress set up the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The FTC’s job was to see that corporations traded fairly. Wilson also supported the **Clayton Antitrust Act** of 1914. The government could use this act to fight against trusts.

The government also tried to regulate child labor. Congress passed the Keating-Owen Act of 1916. Goods made by children in one state could not be sold in other states. This law was struck down two years later.

The public began to lose interest in progressive ideas. Americans were more concerned with world affairs. By 1914, war was beginning in Europe.

//////Glue Foldable here//////

### Check for Understanding

What part did the Progressive Party play in the presidential election of 1912?

---

---

Why do you think there was a shift in interest from progressive reform to world affairs at the end of Wilson’s first term?

---

---

### ✓ Reading Check

7. How did Roosevelt’s run for the presidency affect the election of 1912?

---

### ✍ Explaining

8. Why did Wilson support lower tariffs?

---

### FOLDABLES®

9. Place a three-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover Check for Understanding. Write the title *Progressive Presidents* on the anchor tab. Label the tabs *Roosevelt*, *Taft*, and *Wilson*. On both sides of the tabs, list what you remember about the successes of each. Use your Foldable to help answer Check for Understanding.