



GUIDED READING *The Origins of Progressivism*

Section 1

A. As you read about the era of reform, take notes about the goals, reformers, and successes of the reform movements.

Social Reforms	People and Groups Involved	Successes (laws, legal decisions, etc.)
1. Social welfare reform movement		
2. Moral reform movement		
3. Economic reform movement		
4. Movement for industrial efficiency		
5. Movement to protect workers		

Political Reforms	People and Groups Involved	Successes (laws, legal decisions, etc.)
6. Movement to reform local government		
7. State reform of big business		
8. Movement for election reform		

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B. On the back of this paper, explain the importance of the following:

progressive movement

prohibition

scientific management

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SKILLBUILDER PRACTICE *Forming Historical Questions*

In the years following the turn of the century, many women and children could find no other means of survival than to work long hours in unsafe conditions. Progressive reformers sought to end unfair treatment by employers. Read the passage below by a progressive reformer about child labor in Pennsylvania's anthracite coal-mining region. Think of questions that would lead you to find out more about the situation. Fill in the chart with a question for each category. (See Skillbuilder Handbook, p. R12.)

The slate is sharp so that the slate pickers often cut or bruise their hands; the coal is carried down the chute in water and this means sore and swollen hands for the pickers. The first few weeks after a boy begins work, his fingers bleed almost continuously and are called red tops by the other boys. Slate picking is not itself dangerous; the slate picker is, however, sometimes set at cleaning-up jobs, which require him to clean out shakers, the chute, or other machinery. . . .

Accidents that had occurred to boys in the breakers as well as underground were recounted to the Children's Bureau agents. One boy told of a friend who had dropped a new cap in the rollers and how, in trying to pull it out, his arm was caught, crushed, and twisted. The older brother of another boy, a jig runner, slipped while at work and his arm was caught in the jig [a sorting machine] and mashed. One boy told of the death of another while watching the dam beneath the breaker. He and some of the other breaker boys had helped to extricate the mutilated body from the wheels in which their companion was caught; he himself had held the bag into which the recovered parts of the dead body were put.

As reported by the boys, 42 percent of these accidents kept them from work less than two weeks. . . . According to the reports made to the Children's Bureau, no compensation was paid forty-four boys who were incapacitated for a period of two weeks or more as the result of injuries received while they were employed in the mines, although the Pennsylvania Compensation Law entitled them to receive it.

It would be superfluous to point out that in view of the hazards of mining, young boys should not be employed in the mines or around the breakers. Public opinion had already prohibited underground work in Pennsylvania and in most other states, and the federal government had imposed a penalty in the form of a tax if children under sixteen were employed in or about a mine. The real problem here, as in many other parts of the country, was how to secure the enforcement of the child labor laws that had been enacted.

from U. S. Department of Labor, Child Labor and the Welfare of Children in an Anthracite Coal-Mining District (Washington, D. C.: Children's Bureau Publication No. 106, 1922).

Your Questions
Who?
What?
When?
Where?
Why?
How?

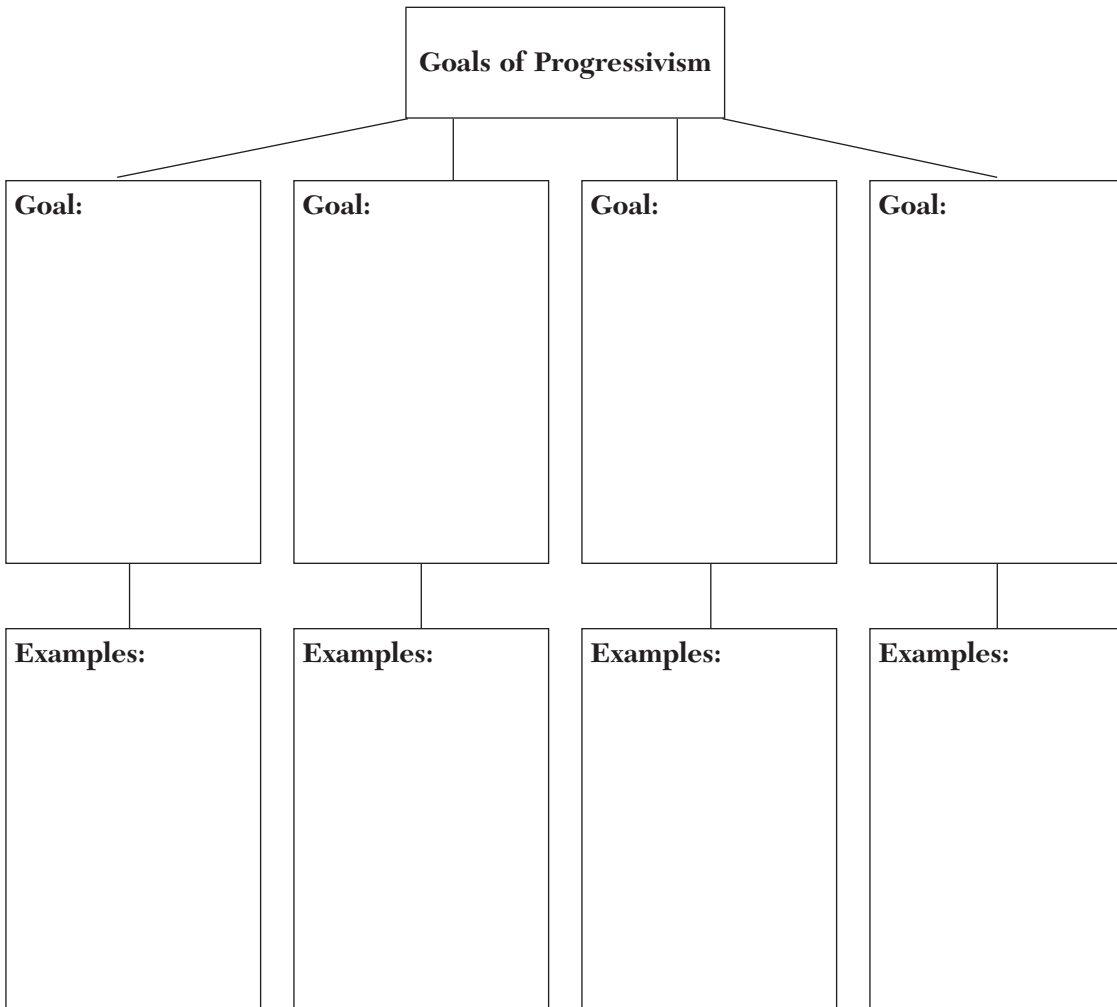


Section 1

RETEACHING ACTIVITY *The Origins of Progressivism*

Analyzing

Complete the chart below by identifying the four goals of progressivism and providing examples of how reformers tried to meet each goal.



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PRIMARY SOURCE **Declaration of the WCTU**

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was founded in 1873 to promote the goal of prohibition. In 1902 the WCTU drew up the following declaration. What principles did members of the WCTU support?

We believe in the coming of His kingdom whose service is perfect freedom, because His laws, written in our members as well as in nature and in grace, are perfect, converting the soul.

We believe in the gospel of the Golden Rule, and that each man's habits of life should be an example safe and beneficent for every other man to follow.

We believe that God created both man and woman in His own image, and, therefore, we believe in one standard of purity for both men and women, and in the equal right of all to hold opinions and to express the same with equal freedom.

We believe in a living wage; in an eight-hour day; in courts of conciliation and arbitration; in justice as opposed to greed of gain; in "peace on earth and goodwill to men."

We therefore formulate and, for ourselves, adopt the following pledge, asking our sisters and brothers of a common danger and a common hope to make common cause with us in working its reasonable and helpful precepts into the practice of everyday life:

I hereby solemnly promise, *God helping me*, to abstain from all distilled, fermented, and malt liquors, including wine, beer, and cider, and to employ all proper means to discourage the use of and traffic in the same.

To conform and enforce the rationale of this pledge, we declare our purpose to educate the young; to form a better public sentiment; to reform so far as possible, by religious, ethical, and scientific means, the drinking classes; to seek the transforming power of Divine Grace for ourselves and all for whom we work, that they and we may willfully transcend no law of pure and wholesome living; and finally we pledge ourselves to labor and to pray that all of these principles, founded upon the Gospel of Christ, may be worked out into the customs of society and the laws of the land.

from National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Annual Leaflet, 1902. Reprinted in Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1895–1904: Populism, Imperialism, and Reform, vol.12 in The Annals of America (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1968), 503.

Discussion Questions

1. What were the WCTU's beliefs and principles?
2. What pledge did members of the WCTU take?
3. Progressive movements in the early 1900s had at least one of these goals: protecting social welfare, promoting moral improvement, creating economic reform, and fostering efficiency. According to their declaration, which goal or goals did members of the WCTU have?

CHAPTER
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In 1919 the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor studied child labor in Pennsylvania's anthracite coal-mining region. As you read this excerpt from the study, think about why progressive reformers sought to end child labor.

These breakers which tower above the town of Shenandoah to the east and the south and the west are great barnlike structures filled with chutes, sliding belts, and great crushing and sorting machines. Around these machines a scaffolding was built on which the workers stand or sit. The coal is raised from the mine to the top of the breaker and dumped down the chute into a crushing machine, which breaks it into somewhat smaller lumps. These are carried along a moving belt or gravity incline on each side of which men and boys stand or sit picking out pieces of slate and any coal which has slate mixed with it. The latter is carried into another crusher, where it is broken again and then carried down chutes to be sorted further by slate pickers or by sorting machines. After the coal has been broken and cleaned of slate or other alien materials, it is sorted by being shaken through a series of screens.

The work in the breakers might be described as disagreeable but much less hazardous than underground mining. As it is not heavy and does not require skill, young boys or the older men are employed. "If you don't die, you wind up in the breakers," one man said. Another remarked, "You begin at the breaker and you end at the breaker, broken yourself." These older men and boys worked in the constant roar which the coal makes as it rushes down the chute, is broken in the crushing machines, or sorted in the shakers. Black coal dust is everywhere, covering the windows and filling the air and the lungs of the workers.

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Activity Options

1. Imagine you are a boy who works in the anthracite coal mines. Write a diary entry in which you describe your work life and then share it with classmates.
2. As a progressive reformer in the 1900s, write a letter to a newspaper editor. State your opinion on child labor in the coal mines based on your reading of this excerpt. Then read your letter to classmates.

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AMERICAN LIVES **Robert M. La Follette**
Rebellious Reformer

"[Some people urge] 'standing back of the President,' without inquiring whether the President is right or wrong. For myself, I have never subscribed to that doctrine and never shall."—Robert M. La Follette, Senate speech against a declaration of war (1917)

They called him “Fighting Bob.” From his first election to the end of his life, Robert M. La Follette (1855–1925) was a rebel who tried to reform government and end its control by business interests and party bosses.

La Follette, born on a Wisconsin farm, studied at the state university in Madison while working to help support his family. He developed a skill at public speaking and after college joined the Wisconsin bar.

In 1880, he ran for county district attorney against the wishes of the local Republican leader. Visiting every voter he could, he carried the election and won re-election two years later. He then served three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. The 1890 election was a disaster for Republicans, though, and La Follette lost his seat. Back in Wisconsin, he broke with Philetus Sawyer, the power behind the state Republican party. He charged that Sawyer tried to bribe him to influence a judge in a case that Sawyer was arguing on behalf of a railroad. The exposure of corruption and the break with party leadership launched La Follette’s career as a reformer.

He tried several times to win the party’s nomination for governor of Wisconsin. Finally, in 1900, La Follette was nominated—and elected. In office he pushed his reform goals: ending party boss control by relying on direct primaries to nominate candidates, making state taxes more fair and equitable by closing business loopholes, and regulating railroad rates. He took his reform plans to the U.S. Senate in 1906.

In the Senate, La Follette again ran afoul of party leaders. He backed the progressive bills that Theodore Roosevelt introduced, but he did not believe the president to be a committed reformer. La Follette hoped to succeed Roosevelt in 1908 as the Republican nominee for president, but the nod, and subsequent election, went to William Howard Taft. As Taft’s term proceeded, La Follette grew increasingly critical. In 1911 he sought support for

a presidential run. Once in 1912, tired from overexertion, he delivered a rambling speech that was seen as sign of a nervous breakdown. La Follette’s supporters deserted him for Roosevelt and the latter’s Bull Moose Party. In the end, Democrat Woodrow Wilson won the election.

La Follette voted for Wilson’s progressive measures but resisted U.S. involvement in World War I. He voted against the declaration of war in 1917. He voted against bills creating a military draft and authorizing the use of borrowed money to meet war costs. Senators attacked him for disloyalty, and he was in danger of receiving censure. But the war ended, and Republicans needed his vote to control the Senate. As a result, the censure move died. After the war he opposed the Treaty of Versailles and League of Nations. He felt the treaty would lead only to “an unjust peace which could only lead to future wars.”

Conservatives took control of the Republican party in the 1920s, but the independent-minded La Follette continued to rebel. Appalled by corruption in the Harding administration, he led Senate investigations of the Teapot Dome scandal. Uniting the progressives from both parties, he ran for president on a third-party ticket in 1924. Though he spent just a fraction of the money spent by Republicans, he pulled in 5 million votes, one-sixth of the total. He won in Wisconsin and finished second in 11 other states. The next year, Republican Party regulars struck back. They stripped La Follette of his Senate committee assignments, ending his authority. La Follette died soon afterward at age 70.

Questions

1. Cite evidence you find in this biography that supports La Follette’s nickname “Fighting Bob.”
2. Which of La Follette’s reforms do you think had the most lasting impact on American government?
3. How was La Follette punished for rebelling against party leadership?