Review and Preview

The Industrial Revolution led to great changes in American life. Students will now read about the growing demand for government control of corruption and ruthless business practices.

Section Focus Question

How did reformers try to end government corruption and limit the influence of big business?

Prepare to Read

Build Background Knowledge

In this section, students will read about efforts to reform government and big business. Remind students that they learned in Chapters 17 and 18 about changes caused by industrialization. Write the term gilded on the board and explain that it means “coated with a thin layer of gold paint.” Ask students to suggest problems in government, industry, and society that might be exposed if the “thin layer” were removed.

Set a Purpose

- Read each statement in the Reading Readiness Guide aloud. Ask students to mark the statements True or False.

- Have students discuss the statements in pairs or groups of four, then mark their worksheets again. Use the Numbered Heads participation strategy (TE, p. T24) to call on students to share their group’s perspectives. The students will return to these worksheets later.

Objectives

- Identify the problems in American politics during the Gilded Age.
- Describe the political reforms the Progressives supported.
- Explain how journalists contributed to reform efforts.

Reading Skill

Place Events in a Matrix of Time and Place As you read this textbook, notice that chapters often cover overlapping time periods. History is complex and involves many continuing issues. To gain a better understanding of a period, place events from one chapter in the context of other events from the same time period. Think back to other chapters and to your own knowledge for these connections.

Key Terms

civil service  referendum
primary  graduated income
recall  tax
initiative  muckraker

Why It Matters

In the late 1800s, giant corporations gained control of much of American business. Some business leaders abused their power and were aided by corrupt government officials. Americans began to protest against the corruption. They urged government to limit the power of the huge trusts and monopolies.

Section Focus Question: How did reformers try to end government corruption and limit the influence of big business?

Reform in the Gilded Age

The period after the Civil War came to be known as the Gilded Age. Gilded means “coated with a thin layer of gold paint.” It suggests falseness beneath surface glitter. Some Americans worried that the glitter of American society was hiding serious problems. The Gilded Age lasted from the 1870s through the 1890s.

Two concerns shaped politics during the Gilded Age. Many Americans feared that industrialists and other wealthy men were enriching themselves at the expense of the public. The other worry was corruption, or dishonesty in government. Bribery and voter fraud appeared to be widespread.

Taming the Spoils System

Critics said a key source of corruption was the spoils system, the practice of rewarding political supporters with government jobs. The spoils system had grown since the Age of Jackson. Whenever a new President took office, job seekers swarmed to Washington, demanding rewards for their political support.

Expensive, Inefficient, and Corrupt

“With very few exceptions, the city governments of the United States are . . . the most expensive, the most inefficient, and the most corrupt. . . . Such cities, like the decaying spots on ripe fruit, tend to corrupt the whole body politic.”

—Andrew D. White, educator and diplomat, describing government corruption, 1890
In 1881, James Garfield became President. He was soon swamped with people seeking jobs. Four months later, Garfield was shot by a disappointed office seeker. He died two months later. The assassination sparked new efforts to end the spoils system.

Vice President Chester A. Arthur succeeded Garfield. Arthur, a New York politician, owed his own rise to the spoils system. Yet, he worked with Congress to reform how people got government jobs.

In 1883, Arthur signed the Pendleton Act. It created the Civil Service Commission. The civil service is a system that includes most government jobs, except elected positions, the judiciary, and the military. The aim of the Civil Service Commission was to fill jobs on the basis of merit. Jobs went to those with the highest scores on civil service examinations. At first, the Commission controlled only a few jobs. Over time, however, the civil service grew to include more jobs.

**Controlling Big Business** In the late 1800s, big business exerted a strong influence over politics. Railroad owners and industrialists bribed members of Congress in order to secure their votes. Outraged by such actions, many Americans demanded that something be done to limit the power of railroads and monopolies. Under the Constitution, the federal government has the power to regulate interstate commerce, or trade that crosses state lines. In 1887, President Grover Cleveland signed the Interstate Commerce Act. It forbade practices such as rebates. It also set up the Interstate Commerce Commission to oversee railroads.

**The Problem of Corruption**

In many cities, illegal businesses often paid “protection” to police in order to avoid arrest. This 1894 cartoon compares this practice to corruption in the federal government.

**Reading Political Cartoons**

(a) **Interpret Cartoons** Who is the man on the right? What is he getting from the man in the window?

(b) **Draw Inferences** What do you think the giver expects in return?

**Vocabulary Builder**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High-Use Word</th>
<th>Definition and Sample Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>exert, p. 645</td>
<td>V. to use; to put into action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diverse, p. 646</td>
<td>Adj. different or varied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teach**

**Reform in the Gilded Age**

p. 644

**Instruction**

- **Vocabulary Builder** Before teaching this section, preteach the High-Use Words exert and diverse, using the strategy on TE p. T21.
- **Key Terms** Following the instructions on p. 7, have students create a See It–Remember It chart for the key terms in this chapter.
- **Have students read** Reform in the Gilded Age using the Structured Silent Reading strategy (TE, p. T22).
- **Ask:** What big concerns did Americans have about government and politics during the Gilded Age? (They feared that industrialists were getting rich at the expense of the public and that there was corruption in government.) How did reformers try to control big business? (Interstate Commerce Act, Sherman Anti-trust Act)
- **Ask:** Why do you think many poor city-dwellers supported corrupt politicians? (Possible answer: They needed the things politicians gave them in exchange for their votes.)
- **To help students better understand the concept of reform, which is important to the understanding of this chapter, use the Concept Lesson Reform. Distribute copies of the Concept Organizer.**

**Independent Practice**

Have students begin filling in the study guide for this section.

**Interactive Reading and Notetaking Study Guide** (Adapted Version also available.)

**Monitor Progress**

As students fill in the Notetaking Study Guide, circulate to make sure individuals understand the problems that arose during the Gilded Age.

**Answers**

**Reading Political Cartoons** (a) a U.S. senator; stocks (b) preferential treatment in terms of legislation

Chapter 19 645
Progressives and Political Reform

**Instruction**

- Have students read Progressives and Political Reform. Remind students to look for causes and effects.
- Ask: **Who was Robert La Follette?** *(He was a Wisconsin governor who introduced numerous early Progressive reforms called the Wisconsin Idea.)*
- Discuss the reforms instituted in voting. *(primaries, recalls, initiatives, referendums, direct election of senators)* Ask: **Why were these reforms important to voters?** *(Possible answer: They gave voters more power through a direct voice in government.)* Ask: **How did the Seventeenth Amendment reduce election abuses?** *(It let people vote for senators directly and so put an end to bribing state lawmakers to vote for certain candidates.)*

**Independent Practice**

Have students continue filling in the study guide for this section.

**Monitor Progress**

As students fill in the Notetaking Study Guide, circulate to make sure individuals understand the reason for the Progressive political reforms. Provide assistance as needed.

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**Progressives and Political Reform**

President Benjamin Harrison signed the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890. It prohibited businesses from trying to limit or destroy competition. The law sounded tough but proved difficult to enforce. Judges sympathetic to business ruled in favor of trusts. Instead of regulating trusts, the Sherman Act was used to limit the power of labor unions. The courts said strikes blocked free trade and thus threatened competition.

**Corruption in the Cities**

Corruption was a particularly serious problem in city governments. As cities grew, they needed to expand services such as sewers, garbage collection, and roads. Often, politicians accepted money to award these jobs to friends. As a result, corruption became a way of life.

In many cities, powerful politicians called bosses controlled work done locally and demanded payoffs from businesses. City bosses were popular with the poor, especially immigrants. The bosses handed out turkeys at Thanksgiving and extra coal in winter. Often, they provided jobs. In return, the poor voted for the boss or his chosen candidate.

William Tweed, commonly known as Boss Tweed, carried corruption to new extremes. During the 1860s and 1870s, he cheated New York City out of more than $100 million. Journalists exposed Tweed’s crimes. Cartoonist Thomas Nast pictured Tweed as a greedy giant and as a vulture feeding on the city. Faced with prison, Tweed fled to Spain. There, local police arrested him when they recognized him from Nast’s cartoons. Still, when Tweed died in jail in 1878, thousands of poor New Yorkers mourned for him.

**How did the civil service system limit corruption?**

**Progressives and Political Reform**

Opposition to corruption led to the rise of the Progressive movement. The Progressives were a diverse group of reformers united by a belief in the public interest, or the good of all the people. The public interest, they said, must not be sacrificed to the greed of a few huge trusts and city bosses.

**The Wisconsin Idea**

Wisconsin was one of the first states to adopt Progressive reforms. Wisconsin governor Robert La Follette, known as Battling Bob, introduced various Progressive reforms that became known as the Wisconsin Idea.

La Follette opposed political bosses. He appointed commissions of experts to solve problems. For example, his railroad commission recommended lowering railroad rates. As rates decreased, rail traffic increased, which helped both railroad owners and customers.

Since the Age of Jackson, party leaders had picked candidates for local and state offices. In 1903, Wisconsin was the first state to adopt a primary run by state government officials. A primary is an election in which voters, rather than party leaders, choose their party’s candidate. By 1917, all but four states had followed Wisconsin’s lead.

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**Differentiated Instruction**

**Advanced Readers**

**The Right Decisions**

Robert La Follette and other Progressives believed that people would make the right decisions if given the chance. Their fight for reforms that gave more power to voters was a result of this belief. Have students meet in groups of four to discuss this idea. Then ask students to defend or disagree with La Follette’s position in a letter to the editor. Tell students to include examples to support their position.

**Gifted and Talented**

**L3 Advanced Readers**

**Gifted and Talented**

**L3 Gifted and Talented**

**L3 Gifted and Talented**
**Two Constitutional Amendments**

Many Progressive reformers backed a **graduated income tax**, a method of taxation that taxes people at different rates depending on income. The wealthy pay taxes at a higher rate than the poor or the middle class. When the Supreme Court ruled that a federal income tax was unconstitutional, Progressives called for a constitutional amendment. The Sixteenth Amendment, which gave Congress the power to pass an income tax, was ratified in 1913.

Since 1789, United States senators had been elected by state legislatures. Powerful interest groups often bribed lawmakers to vote for certain candidates. Progressives wanted to end this abuse by having people vote for senators directly. The Seventeenth Amendment, ratified in 1913, required the direct election of senators.

**The Recall**

A process by which people may vote to remove an elected official from office. The recall made it easier to get rid of corrupt officials.

**Other reforms** gave voters a direct say in the lawmaking process. The initiative is a process that allows voters to put a bill before a state legislature. In order to propose an initiative, voters must collect a certain number of signatures on a petition. The **referendum** is a way for people to vote directly on a newly proposed law.

**Identify Benefits**

Identify the benefits of the recall? Which reform would be important? Why?

**Multiple Choice**

1. The Seventeenth Amendment, which required the direct election of senators, was ratified in 1913. True or false?
2. The initiative is a process that allows voters to pass laws. True or false?
3. The referendum is a way for people to vote directly on a newly proposed law. True or false?
4. The primary system allows voters to select candidates for state and local offices. True or false?

**Checkpoint**

What reforms put more power in the hands of voters?
The Muckrakers

The press played an important role in exposing corruption and other problems. President Theodore Roosevelt compared reporters who uncovered problems to men who raked up dirt, or muck, in stables. Muckraker became a term for a crusading journalist.

Some muckrakers targeted big business. Ida Tarbell’s work led to demands for more controls on trusts. She accused oil baron John D. Rockefeller of unfair business methods. Tarbell wrote:

“Every great campaign against rival interests which the Standard Oil Company has carried on has been inaugurated ... to build up and sustain a monopoly in the oil industry.”

—Ida M. Tarbell, History of the Standard Oil Company

Others described how corruption in city government led to inadequate fire, police, and sanitation services. Jacob Riis (REES), a photographer and writer, provided shocking images of slum life.

In 1906, Upton Sinclair’s novel The Jungle told grisly details about the meatpacking industry. Sinclair described how packers used meat from sick animals and how rats often got ground up in the meat.

Looking Back and Ahead  The Progressive movement began at local and state levels. In the next section, you will see how three Presidents brought Progressive ideas into the White House.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) Recall How was the spoils system reformed during the Gilded Age?
(b) Analyze Cause and Effect What abuses do you think were occurring under the spoils system that made reform necessary?

2. (a) Identify Who were some of the principal muckrakers during the Progressive Era, and what did each try to do?
(b) Link Past and Present What impact do you think their efforts had on life in the United States today?

3. Place Events in a Matrix of Time and Place Ida Tarbell wrote muckraking articles about the Standard Oil Company. Why did she think this was necessary? How had Standard Oil’s business practices changed American industry? Think back to the previous chapter to answer these questions.

Key Terms
Answer the following questions in complete sentences that show your understanding of the key terms.

4. Which jobs are civil service positions?

5. What happens in a primary election?
6. What did muckrakers try to do?
7. What happens in a successful referendum?
8. How are tax rates structured under the graduated income tax?

Writing
9. Write a statement supporting the work of the muckrakers. Then, write a statement opposing their work. For each statement, write one question to ask the muckrakers about their methods and their goals.

wrote The Jungle about the meatpacking industry.
(b) Possible answer: The legislation and reforms that resulted from their efforts helped prevent those conditions today.
3. Possible answer: Standard Oil used its control over large areas of business to unfairly drive out competition. It formed a trust that gave control to a central board. As a result, many other businesses formed trusts and gained monopolies.

4. Most federal government jobs are part of the civil service system.
5. Voters choose their party’s candidate for an election.
6. Muckrakers tried to expose corruption and other problems.
7. People vote directly to pass a new law.
8. The wealthy pay taxes at a higher rate than people with a lower income.
9. Questions should relate to position stated.