

“Muckrakers to Progressives” A Congressional Testimony Role Play



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“A Dirty, Poverty-Stricken Home”
[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?pp/nclc:@field\(SUBJ+@od1\(Starvation+\)\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?pp/nclc:@field(SUBJ+@od1(Starvation+)))

Students use images and primary sources from the Library of Congress website to expose social problems from 1895-1930, and propose historical Progressive legislation in testimony before Congress.

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| Overview | | Back to Navigation Bar |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Objectives | Students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become familiar with the societal problems of 1895-1930 related to urbanization and industrialization • Learn about the proposed Progressive solutions to these problems • Design and carry out simulated congressional testimony exposing these problems and proposing historical solutions | |
| Recommended time frame | 2-3 class periods of 55 minutes | |
| Grade level | High School | |
| Curriculum fit | U.S. History | |
| Materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Power Point Presentation or other presentation software • Costumes and props. | |



Michigan High School Content Expectations

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| | <p>U.S. History and Geography:</p> <p>6.3.1 Social Issues—Describe at least three significant problems or issues created by America’s industrial and urban transformation between 1895 and 1930 (e.g. urban and rural poverty and blight, child labor, immigration, political corruption, public health, poor working conditions, and monopolies).</p> <p>P1.4 Communicate clearly and coherently in writing, Speaking, and visually expressing ideas pertaining to social science topics acknowledging audience and purpose.</p> <p>P2.3 Know how to find and organize information from a variety of sources; analyze, interpret, support interpretations with evidence, critically evaluate, and present the information orally and in writing; report investigation results effectively.</p> <p>P3.1 Clearly state an issue as a question of public policy, trace the origins of an issue, analyze various perspectives, and generate and evaluate possible alternative resolutions.</p> <p>P4.3 Plan and conduct activities intended to advance views on matters of public policy, report the results, and evaluate effectiveness.</p> |
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Procedures

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review primary and secondary sources using J’aime Holderbaum’s PPT presentation.• Divide your class into heterogeneous groups of four (4).• For each group, assign or have the students choose a role:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Presentation organizer○ Presenter○ Witness (2) |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand out to the groups the Student Handout that explains each step. • Working together, the group would review the images and primary sources at the Primary Resource Table. • The group selects the images they will present at their congressional hearing. They will also decide which people from the images that the witnesses will portray. • The group selects the actual historical laws or bills they will propose that the committee will pass. • The organizer will create a Power Point presentation that will form the backbone of the congressional testimony. This should be mostly images. The presenter should <u>not</u> simply read what is on the Power Point, but rather give the testimony with the images and witnesses supplementing the presentation. • The witnesses will portray various historical people from the images. In an act of historical fiction, they will bring these people to life and use their testimony to convince Congress to pass Progressive legislation. Witnesses might use costumes or props to help make their testimony effective and realistic. • The presenter will give the congressional testimony, supplemented by the images on the Power Point presentation and by the witnesses' accounts. The presentation should include a description of the problems, the proposed laws to fix the problems, and how these laws would solve the problems. The total time for the congressional testimony, including witnesses, should be 8-10 minutes. |
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| | Have students research and report on the present-day status of these problems. |



Primary Resources from the Library of Congress

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Primary Resource Table

| | |
|--|---|
| Assembly line workers | Garbage in the streets |
| Auto assembly line | Kids sleeping on street |
| Mrs. Potter Palmer's mansion | Orange blossom cure for female diseases |
| Breaker boys in coal mines | Illustrations from "How the Other Half Lives" |
| Immigrants at Ellis Island movie | Tenement floor plan |
| Barroom scene | Sewing and starving |
| Chicago Meatpacking plant movie | Crowded Housing |
| Law establishing Yellowstone | Suffrage pickets |
| Mirror Lake, Yosemite | Anti-suffrage association |
| Yosemite Falls | A dirty poverty-stricken home |
| Girls sewing in a sweatshop | Barrels of alcohol |
| girls in a sweatshop | Governor signing prohibition law |
| Suffrage parade in Chicago | Immigrants on ship |
| Hell's Kitchen boys | Striking for an eight hour day |
| Tenement House | Steel mill |
| Worst slum | Battle at the tavern |



Rubric

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Congressional Testimony Rubric Social Problems, 1895-1930

Name _____ Role _____

| 1. Quality of Testimony | Points Possible | Student Evaluation | Teacher Evaluation |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Testimony highlighted several social problems• Presentation used problems to propose new laws• Images and primary sources were used effectively• Witnesses brought the images to life and effectively made the case for new laws | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Effectiveness of Group Interaction | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group members worked consistently & purposefully• Group used cooperative skills to stage the testimony | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Individual Contribution | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shared equally in the planning, research, and performance• Effectively completed the responsibilities of your role | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Total Points | | | |

Student Comments:

Teacher Comments:



Handouts

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Social Problems

Poverty

Blight

Child Labor

Immigration

Political Corruption

Public Health

Poor Working Conditions

Monopolies

Progressive Legislation

Antitrust laws

Child Labor laws

Maximum hour laws

Minimum wage

Worker's compensation

Pure Food and Drug Act

Progressive income tax

Prohibition

Mann Act

Settlement houses

National Parks

City planning

“City Beautiful” movement

Women's suffrage

Meat Inspection Act



“Muckrakers to Progressives”
Congressional Testimony Role Play
Student Handout

Step 1—In your group, decide which group members will fill the following roles:

- Organizer/Technology coordinator (creates the visual presentation)
- Presenter (makes the case before the Congressional committee, using the visual presentation and introducing the witnesses)
- Witnesses (2) (impersonates a person from one of the images, and tells the story of this person to illustrate social problems)

Step 2—Working together, the group will accomplish the following tasks:

- Review the images and primary sources at the [Primary Resource Table](#)
- Decide on two (2) social issues on from the following list:
 - Poverty
 - Blight
 - Child Labor
 - Immigration
 - Political corruption
 - Public Health
 - Poor Working Conditions
 - Monopolies
- Pick a number of images or primary sources from the [Primary Resource Table](#) to use in your testimony.
- Pick one or two laws that you will urge Congress to pass to solve the social problems you chose.
- Create a plan with your group for an 8-10 minute presentation that will be your testimony before Congress. Your testimony should include testimony by the presenter (using the presentation created by the Organizer), and first-person testimony by the witnesses.

Step 3—Work individually to create your testimony

- Organizer—create the presentation using Power Point or some other software. You want high quality images, as large as possible. Use text, but keep it minimal. 24 point font is a minimum size.
- Presenter—prepare your oral presentation, in consultation with the organizer and the witnesses. You may use notes, but you may not read your testimony. (That’s really boring!) It’s also never a good idea to simply read what’s written on a Power Point presentation. You will want to have an attention-grabbing opening, highlight your social problems, and make the case for passing your legislation.
- Witnesses—compose your testimony, posing as one of the people in the images you have chosen. You are composing a piece of historical fiction, with emphasis on historical, making sure your testimony reflects the facts of real history. Your testimony will be especially effective if you are dramatic, using emotion, props, and/or costumes. You want to bring the person in the picture to life! Your main goal is to highlight the social problems you have chosen and the need for laws to fix these problems. You may use notes, but you may not read your testimony (That’s really boring!)

Step 4—Present the testimony. The rest of the class will be the congressional committee. Your presentation should be 8-10 minutes in length.

