

**Laura George**  
**Lesson overview**

Subject:

American History

Grade:

11<sup>th</sup>

Topic:

Progressive Era - Muckraking

Concepts:

Students will learn about muckraking and how it led to change.

Essential questions:

- How did the society created by the industrial revolution (“Gilded Age”) lead to the reforms of the Progressive Era?
- What effect did muckraking journalism have on society?

**Objectives**

✓ Students will know:

The causes of Muckraking.

Terms associated with Muckraking.

✓ Students will understand:

Muckraking journalism causes change by making people aware of problems in society and by enraging them to act.

The press (both historical and modern) is an instrument of change.

✓ Students will be able to do:

Analyze the problems set forth in muckraking literature and photographs.

Create solutions to these problems that they feel would work.

*\*Checking points.*

- Do the “Know” objectives cover the essential information to be learned?
- Are the “Understand” objectives big and transferable ideas of the discipline?
- Are the “Do” objectives are observable and measurable? Do they encompass essential skills?
- Do the KUDs “fit together”-in other words, will they come together coherently?

After having a basic discussion that both reviews past lessons (what was society like?) and introduces the concept of muckraking, students will be asked to complete one of three tasks. They may do this alone or with a partner.

### Creative Task

Examine Jacob Riis' photographs and read the excerpts from *The Jungle*. Think: what were the problems these journalists found in society? How did they present these problems to their readers and viewers?

Pretend you are living in this society and respond to what you have seen and read. Write a letter to the editor, prepare a speech to be given at a town meeting, or create a flyer to help raise awareness. Include at least two societal problems that need to be solved, a solution for each, and an explanation as to why your solution will work. If you are doing the flyer and are unable to present the solutions without messing up the design, write the solutions and explanations on the back.

### Analytical Task

Examine Jacob Riis' photographs and read the excerpts from *The Jungle*. Think: what were the problems these journalists found in society? How did they present these problems to their readers and viewers?

List these problems and organize them into logical categories. For at least two categories, create a law that would result in a solution. Write these up! Include the problem, your solution, and why you think it will work. You may either write these down and turn them in, or write notes and present them to the class.

### Practical

Examine Jacob Riis' photographs and read the excerpts from *The Jungle*. Think: what were the problems these journalists found in society? How did they present these problems to their readers and viewers?

Pretend you are a member of Congress in the early 1900s that has seen muckraking literature and photographs. Create two bills to present to Congress that you feel would solve some of the problems in your society (you are not being asked to fix everything – pick one or two problems to work with). You may either write the bills and turn them in or write notes and present them to the class. In each bill, make sure to include (1) the problem you are trying to solve, (2) your solution, and (3) why you feel it would work.

Once the groups have finished, the class will rejoin and discuss possible solutions, outlining the potential positive and negative effects of the most common ones. Then, the class will vote on the most plausible solutions and create a master plan. This will be reexamined after the lesson on progressive reforms.

I decided to just do a reflection in paragraph form as opposed to using the chart. Seeing as how this is a class on differentiation instruction and how I can better organize my thoughts in a paragraph form, I decided this wouldn't be a problem.

The intent of this lesson is to provide a transition from the industrial revolution to the progressive era. The students will learn about muckraking literature and photographs by examining them and then use this as a springboard to create their own reforms. The intent is to get the students thinking about reforms, which will provide good background when they learn about what was actually done to change society.

The lesson would start by having a brief discussion about muckraking – just to make sure everyone has a good background. Then, the students would work on one of three tasks; picking the one that best suits their learning profile. Creative students would either write an editorial, write/perform a speech, or make a flyer. Analytical students would organize problems and create reforms for them. Practical students would create a bill to solve problems. Each task results in the same information being learned – identifying problems in society found in muckraking journalism, thinking up possible solutions, and then defending these solutions. This would solidify the idea that muckraking literature led to change. The idea of the press as an agent of change would be developed over the entire year and would be examined in each major unit. Once everyone had finished their work, the class would reconvene and discuss the reforms everyone thought of. A list would be compiled and brought out again after the unit on the Progressive Era, allowing students to examine the strengths and weaknesses their laws and of the ones that were actually created.