



# LifeSmarts

Learn it. Live it.

## Key Points

### REFORMS CHANGED DAILY LIFE IN AMERICA

From safer workplaces to cleaner food and expanded voting rights, Progressive Era reforms reshaped how people lived and worked. These changes laid the foundation for many protections we rely on today.

### MUCKRAKERS PUSHED FOR CHANGE

Journalists and activists exposed unsafe factories, child labor, corruption, and poor living conditions, sparking public demand for reform. Their work brought hidden problems into the spotlight.

### GOVT. AND CITIZENS WORKED TOGETHER

New laws, watchdog agencies, and grassroots movements aimed to make businesses more accountable and give people a stronger voice in society.

## Core Concepts

### GOALS OF THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

Reformers focused on improving working conditions, cleaning up cities, expanding democracy, and regulating businesses to protect ordinary people.

### LABOR AND CHILD WORKERS

Children often worked long hours in dangerous jobs for little pay. Progressive reforms pushed for child labor laws, shorter workdays, and workplace safety standards.

### CONSUMER PROTECTIONS BEGIN

Books like *The Jungle* and tragic events like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire led to new food safety rules, factory inspections, and worker protections.

### THE RISE OF REFORM JOURNALISM

Investigative reporters, known as muckrakers, used newspapers and books to reveal corruption, poor living conditions, and unfair practices, leading to public outrage and change.

### POLITICAL REFORMS AND EXPANDED RIGHTS

Progressives fought for women's suffrage, fairer elections, and anti-corruption measures that gave citizens more control over government decisions.

### LASTING IMPACT ON AMERICAN SOCIETY

Many reforms from this era, such as the Pure Food and Drug Act and early labor protections, set the stage for modern consumer and worker rights.

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# The Progressive Era

## 1900 - 1917

## Additional Resources

### Crash Course - The Progressive Era

Improving food safety, reducing child labor, and unions during the Progressive Era.

<https://bit.ly/4mFiJyw>

### YouTube - Muckrakers... or Investigative Journalists?

When the first investigative reporters started working in the United States, not everyone saw them as a good thing

<https://bit.ly/3JwJmHB>

### YouTube - These Photos Ended Child Labor in the U.S.

Child labor was widely practiced until a photographer showed the public what it looked like.

<https://bit.ly/45OII0M>

### YouTube - "The Jungle" & The Pure Food and Drug Act

Birth of the Pure Food and Drug Act

<https://bit.ly/3JdwxIB>

## Listen to the Podcast



## Explore and Explain

1. What problems in society and industry motivated reformers during the Progressive Era?
2. How did muckraking journalists influence public opinion and push for change?
3. What laws or policies from this era improved safety, fairness, or democracy for everyday Americans?
4. How did Progressive Era reforms affect workers, consumers, and women's rights?

*Studying the Progressive Era shows how activism, journalism, and policy changes worked together to address social and economic problems.*

## The Progressive Era

## Acronyms

### **AFL**

American Federation of Labor

### **ICC**

Interstate Commerce Commission

### **NAWSA**

National American Woman Suffrage Association

### **NCL**

National Consumers League



**LifeSmarts**

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## Vocabulary

### **CHILD LABOR REFORMS**

A major effort in the early 1900s to stop the widespread use of children in dangerous, low-wage factory jobs

### **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)**

Began inspecting meat in 1906 after public outrage over unsanitary practices revealed in *The Jungle*

### **FLORENCE KELLEY**

Progressive reformer who fought against child labor and unfair working conditions; co-founded the National Consumers League in 1899

### **FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (FDA)**

Created in 1906 through the Pure Food and Drug Act to oversee food and medicine safety

### **MUCKRAKERS**

Journalists in the Progressive Era who exposed unsafe, dishonest, or abusive practices

### **PURE FOOD AND DRUG ACT (1906)**

The first major law to protect consumers from unsafe or mislabeled food and medicine

### **TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST FACTORY FIRE (1911)**

A deadly NYC garment factory fire that killed 146 workers and led to major workplace safety reforms

### **UPTON SINCLAIR**

Author of *The Jungle* (1906), whose exposé on the meatpacking industry led to food safety law