



BHH Curriculum Units

Fourth Grade

Progressive Era

During the 2nd and 3rd grades, students studied 19th century U.S. immigration and industrialization. In this unit, students study how citizens and government of the early 20th century sought solutions to problems that accompanied immigration and industrialization. By focusing on child labor, factory working conditions and tenement housing issues and reforms, the unit encourages empathy both with those who suffered during this period of immense economic and population expansion, and with those who sought to end suffering. Lessons also provide an introduction to capitalism and various economic principles of trade.

The unit begins with a review of industrialization and immigration, and moves on to capitalism, factory working conditions, child labor, and tenement housing conditions. Concluding with a service project, the unit brings the progressive theme of citizen action for social reform into the present. The service-learning project may be introduced earlier in the unit than indicated below, and integrated as an ongoing activity.

Activity I: Overview of Industrial Society – Review of immigration, industrialization and corporations

Content Goals:

- Review previous knowledge on immigration and industrialization from 2nd and 3rd grades

Process Goals:

- Brainstorming to recall prior knowledge

➤ Content: *97 Orchard Street, New York : Stories of Immigrant Life*

➤ Process:

✧ Class brainstorms:

- What is immigration? (2nd grade BHH unit.)
- What were some of the countries immigrants left to move to the U.S.?
- What were some of the reasons people immigrated into the U.S.?
- What is industrialization? (Shift from skilled craftsman production to assembly line mass production, mechanization of production processes.) (3rd grade BHH unit.)
- What is a corporation? (3rd grade BHH unit.)

✧ Teacher reads selections from *97 Orchard Street, New York : Stories of Immigrant Life*.

➤ Assessment: Class brainstorm results.

Activity 2: What is Capitalism?

Content Goals:

- Students understand capitalism is a system that allows private ownership of businesses, rather than state ownership of businesses.
 - Students learn profit and competition are central to capitalist systems.
 - Students learn the concept of a business monopoly.
- Centerpiece: BHH Teacher-authored story: [The Lemonade Stand](#)
 - Content: Defining capitalism, profit, competition, monopoly.
 - Process
- ✧ Read *The Lemonade Stand*. Students may first read silently or read aloud together. Follow the story with a discussion of terms as described below.
 - ✧ Discussion – Teachers, the concepts you introduce in this discussion may best be illustrated by examples from your local community and/or items from your students' everyday lives.
 - **Brainstorm with Students: What do private individuals or companies own?** Businesses that sell things. (McDonald's, grocery stores, movie theaters, clothing stores, drugstores, gas stations, furniture stores, sporting good stores.)
 - **Brainstorm with Students: What does the government own?** Offices that provide a service paid for by everyone together through taxes. (Police stations, fire stations, wildlife management offices, parks, schools, etc.)
 - **In capitalism, how do business owners make money?** (They make a profit, that is, they sell products for more money than they pay to produce or make them.)
 - **What is Profit?** Price – Cost = Profit. (Example: A candy bar costs 60 cents. If it costs 40 cents to make it, the candy bar company owner makes 20 cents on every bar sold.)
 - **What is Cost?**
 - ❓ What does it cost to make a product?
- Materials + Labor = Cost. (Example of candy bar *materials*: ingredients to make chocolate and other goodies; paper and foil to wrap the candy bar. Gas to fuel the truck that hauls the candy to store, etc. *Labor*: The candy bar factory owner must pay the people who work in the candy bar factory.)

? Next ask the students if they can think of any other candy bar costs, either material or labor (store to sell in, cashier to sell candy in the stores, trucks to haul candy from factory to store, etc.) You might choose some other product examples and ask students to imagine the materials and labor involved in producing that product.

- **What is competition?** Businesses compete with other businesses that sell similar products. Customers may choose to buy *Brand-X* because it is higher quality and has unique features, or they might choose *Brand-Y* because it is less expensive.

- ◇ Why is competition good for everyday people buying things? (Makes products cheaper. Can make the quality better.)

- **What is a Monopoly?**

- A business with no competition.

- Is this bad for everyday people making and buying the thing that is monopolized? How is this bad? (Prices high, quality low, workers paid low wages. There is no monetary incentive/reward for a monopoly owner to make good products, keep his prices low or pay his workers well.)

- How do historians know some business owners were forming monopolies long, long ago? They read documents from the time. We can be history detectives or historians, too. (Distribute unfair business practice documents. Read aloud and discuss as a class.)

Resources:

- ◇ [The Lemonade Stand](#)

Activity 3: Child Labor

Content Goals:

- Students learn child labor was commonly used in factories at the turn of the century.

Process Goals:

- Primary source analysis – Studying photographs and documents for meaning
 - Reading secondary sources for historical knowledge
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- Centerpiece: Books – *Kids at Work*, *Growing up in Coal Country* and *Kids on Strike*, [photographs of child labor](#)
 - Content:
 - Child labor at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries.
 - Citizen activism.
 - Process:
 - Parts of *Kids at Work* and *Kids on Strike* may be read aloud by the teacher, or by students individually or in groups. Follow-up with a teacher-led discussion. Possible questions:
 - What was life like for children who worked in factories?
 - How many hours a day did they work?
 - What were some of the jobs children did?
 - Why did children work?
 - How do you think the working children felt?
 - What did the children do to help themselves?
 - Photo and document analysis as the source of history books
 - How did the people that wrote these books, *Kids at Work* and *Kids on Strike*, put their stories together? What sources did they use to be successful history detectives? (Photos and documents from the time/era they investigated, and secondary sources or books other people have written about the era. Examine the sources cited section of the books for this information.)
 - Optional activity -- Together as a class, students examine child labor photos and documents and use the [SOCC guides](#) to direct their inquiry. Photos may be displayed on an overhead transparency, or copies of photos may be distributed to the students.



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- Each student should have their own copy of the SOCC guide on which to write.
- Optional activity: Mock preparation for demonstration
 - Groups design and make posters they would carry in a protest march against child labor in the early 20th century.
- Assessments:
 - Posters
 - [SOCC guides](#)

Resources:

- ✧ *Kids at Work, Growing up in Coal Country* and *Kids on Strike*.
- [photographs of child labor](#)
- ✧ Poster board.
- [SOCC guides](#)

Activity 4: Tenement Housing

Content Goals:

- Students learn about tenement housing at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries.

Process Goals:

- Photo analysis
 - Centerpiece: [Photos of tenement dwellings](#), Book -- *Tenement: Immigrant Life on the lower East Side*.
 - Content:
 - ✧ Urban poverty and overcrowding resulted in terrible conditions for turn of the 19th/20th century tenement dwellers.
 - Process:
 - ✧ Class reads parts of *Tenement*, together or individually.
 - ✧ Class examines photos and/or accounts of tenement life using the NARA worksheet as a guide -- this may be done together as a class. Teachers -- introduce the NARA questions one at a time. You may wish to allow students time to answer a question on paper and then share their answers with the class before moving on to the next question.
 - Assessment: NARA analysis sheets.

Resources:

- ✧ NARA analysis sheets.
- ✧ [Tenement photos](#)
- ✧ Book -- *Tenement: Immigrant Life on the Lower East Side*.

Activity 5: Making Progressive Laws

Content Goals:

- Children learn about the muckrakers, journalists that exposed societal problems in the late 19th/early 20th centuries.
- Students learn citizen action lead to various laws regulating business and social abuses in the early 20th century.

Process Goals:

- Document analysis
 - Using an internet site to research a historic figure.
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- Centerpiece: Muckraker accounts, anti-child-labor, tenement regulatory and anti-trust laws.
 - Content: Passing laws to regulate child labor, tenement conditions and monopolies.
 - Process:
 - ◇ What is a muckraker?
 - Teacher asks children how we get information about the world, how we get the news. (From newspapers, TV, the internet, the radio.)
 - Teacher asks if the students think child labor and tenement housing conditions should have been in the news 100 years ago, if people should have known about these issues. (The muckrakers were journalists, newspaper and book writers, who brought problems to the public's attention.)
 - Q: What do you think may have happened as a result of the muckrakers' articles? What can happen in the United States when citizens learn about a problem and decide to take action? (Because the U.S. is a democracy, citizens can ask the government to make changes, to pass laws in an effort to solve problems.)
 - ◇ Who were the muckrakers? Students work in groups to explore some of the muckrakers on the internet site:
<http://www.westirondequoit.org/ihs/library/prog2.htm#MUCKRAKERS>

Groups are each assigned a muckraker and seek answers to these questions:

- Who is your muckraker?
- What problem(s) did they expose and write about?
- Did they publish a book? If so, what was the title?
- What is one of your favorite sentences your muckraker wrote? Copy it onto your paper.

- What effect did your muckraker's writing have? Do you know if the problem s/he publicized was eventually addressed or solved?
 - Students print pictures from their web pages and save for timeline activity.
- ❖ As a class, students examine tenement housing, anti-trust and child labor laws.
- ❖ Timeline -- Muckrakers and Progressive Laws
- Teacher provides a butcher paper timeline. On the timeline, students list important dates from their muckraker profiles, and illustrate the dates by pasting up their group's web pictures.
 - The timeline is completed by adding onto it the dates when the progressive laws listed above were enacted.
- Assessments:
- Group profiles of muckrakers
 - Class timeline

Resources:

- Muckraker profiles on internet site:
<http://www.westirondequoit.org/ihs/library/prog2.htm#MUCKRAKERS>
- [Progressive laws.](#)



Activity 6: Progressive Era Mind Maps

Content Goals:

- Review of the unit's Progressive era issues, with focus on corporations, child labor, tenement housing.
- Review of citizen and government action to solve these problems.

Process Goals:

- Mind Map conception and design
- Reviewing and synthesizing new knowledge
 - Centerpiece: All materials from the unit.
 - Content: All material from the unit.
 - Process:
 - ✧ Teacher leads a brainstorm to identify as many words or phrases that describe elements of capitalism as students can come up with. (For example: profit, competition, labor, monopoly, cost, etc.) Teacher writes these on a large butcher paper sheet or on an overhead projector – anywhere the list can be preserved for a few days.
 - ✧ Each student is given a large piece of paper. Students will draw pictures to illustrate two or more concepts from the brainstorm list. Then they will work alone, in pairs or in groups to brainstorm concepts from the other unit topics: child labor, tenement housing, citizen action and progressive laws. Their choices should reflect the full range of topics covered in the unit. Teacher may wish to categorize the list with the students either before or after the brainstorm, i.e. divide into child labor, tenements, corporations, citizen action, etc. The students then could individually choose one or more items from each category to represent on their maps.
 - Assessment: Mind maps.

Resources: The unit's books and documents.



Activity 7: Service Learning Project – Modern Day Progressives

Content Goals:

- Students learn progressivism still exists today.

Process Goals:

- Students design and execute a civic action project.
 - Centerpiece: A community service project.
 - Content:
 - Identifying community problems
 - Publicizing the problem
 - Connecting with others concerned about the same problem
 - Determining action to help solve the problem
 - Taking action
 - Determining effects of action
 - Publicizing action and effects.
 - Process:
 - ✧ Compare the main observations with life today.
 - ✧ Do we still have progressive programs today? What are some of these? (This question encompasses an enormous range of possible responses – from the Humane Society to the YMCA to this history grant...)
 - ✧ Class discusses various community issues – these may include animal overpopulation and homelessness, human homelessness and hunger, local pollution, environmental problems, blood bank shortages...???)
 - ✧ Class chooses one issue to work on.
 - ✧ Class researches the issue and writes up a one-page muckraker article to distribute to the school. The article should include the writers' determination to take action on this problem.
 - ✧ If possible, class meets with a local leader on the issue and discusses how they might take action.
 - ✧ Class chooses a course of action and executes.
 - ✧ Class takes inventory of their activity – their project outcomes.
 - ✧ Class writes-up their experience and distributes to the school.

Resources:

Local civic action groups



Final Discussion

A final discussion on progressivism may center on our responsibilities as U.S. citizens. Teacher may wish to talk with children about how the Constitution allows citizens to try to better society.

- We may use free speech, as did the muckrakers, to teach and inform others about problems we discover. (First Amendment)
- We may march/demonstrate, peacefully carrying signs to tell other citizens and our political lawmakers about problems. (First Amendment)
- We may vote for lawmakers that agree with our opinions about how to make our world a better place. These lawmakers then may work to bring about the changes that we hope to see. (The right for all citizens over 18 years old to vote was universally guaranteed in the 1960's.)