Ink Into Action

Assess how Progressive Era media inspired reform.

SS24.US1.18b "Assess the effectiveness of muckrakers' use of literature, newspapers, photography, and other media to inspire change during the Progressive Era."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline one detail in each paragraph showing how a medium reached or persuaded people. Circle actions taken by lawmakers or courts, and number details that show why media alone may not have caused lasting change.

When Muckrakers Reached the Public

1. In 1906, readers of Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle* entered a fictional Chicago meatpacking plant. Sinclair described filthy conditions and workers facing serious danger. His story reached people who might never read a government report. Public outrage over food safety grew, and federal investigations also revealed problems in meatpacking. Congress passed the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act that year. The novel helped build pressure for change, but the investigations and earlier reform efforts mattered too. A powerful story can move readers, yet its effect is best judged alongside what officials actually do.

2. Lewis Hine, a photographer for the National Child Labor Committee, traveled to workplaces where children labored. His photographs often had captions recording a child's age, job, and hours. Faces and small figures beside large machines gave distant viewers a reason to care, while captions supplied details they could repeat to lawmakers. Newspapers and reform reports circulated images and written accounts, extending the campaign beyond the workplaces. Congress passed the Keating-Owen Child Labor Act in 1916, but the Supreme Court struck it down in 1918. The photographs helped build support, yet that federal law did not last.

3. Magazine reporting offered another path. Beginning in 1902, Ida Tarbell published a series in *McClure's* that investigated Standard Oil's business practices. Instead of relying on a single shocking scene, she assembled records and accounts of how the company gained power. Her articles helped readers question whether one corporation had too much control. The federal government sued Standard Oil in 1906, and the Supreme Court ordered its breakup in 1911. Tarbell's reporting contributed to the climate for antitrust action, but courts and officials, not a magazine, made that decision. When assessing muckrakers, consider both a medium's reach and the limits of its influence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How effective was Sinclair's novel at prompting change? Give one outcome and one reason not to credit the novel alone.

2. How did Hine's photographs and captions work together to make the child labor campaign more persuasive?

3. Why does the fate of the 1916 child labor law limit a claim that Hine's photographs achieved lasting reform?

4. How does Tarbell's reporting show both the power and the limits of magazine writing as a tool for reform?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are a Progressive Era reformer who finds blocked exits in a factory. In five or six sentences, propose how you would use two media from the passage to press for a specific change, then use an example from the passage to explain why public attention might not guarantee lasting reform.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 10 · SS24.US1.18b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline one detail in each paragraph showing how a medium reached or persuaded people. Circle actions taken by lawmakers or courts, and number details that show why media alone may not have caused lasting change. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How effective was Sinclair's novel at prompting change? Give one outcome and one reason not to credit the novel alone.	**It helped build pressure before Congress passed two food safety laws in 1906. Federal investigations and earlier reform efforts also mattered.**
2	How did Hine's photographs and captions work together to make the child labor campaign more persuasive?	**The images made children's working conditions visible to distant viewers. Captions provided details, such as ages and hours, that viewers could share with lawmakers.**
3	Why does the fate of the 1916 child labor law limit a claim that Hine's photographs achieved lasting reform?	**Although the photographs helped build support and Congress passed the law, the Supreme Court struck it down in 1918.**
4	How does Tarbell's reporting show both the power and the limits of magazine writing as a tool for reform?	**Her articles helped readers question Standard Oil's power and contributed to support for antitrust action. Federal officials brought the case, and the Supreme Court ordered the breakup.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would photograph the blocked exits and publish the pictures in newspapers. The photographs could make the danger visible to readers who never enter the factory. A newspaper report could explain the risk and ask city officials to require clear exits. Together, the images and report might push readers to demand inspections. But public pressure would not guarantee a lasting rule. As the passage shows, the Supreme Court struck down the 1916 child labor law, so a reform can be reversed even after a campaign gains support.

Accept well-supported judgments that distinguish media's influence from lawmakers' or courts' actions. For the open task, accept any two media named in the passage if the response explains their persuasive value, proposes a specific change, and uses a passage-based limit.