Two Paths to Reform

Compare evidence, emotion, and historical context.

ELA.11.R.3.3 "Compare and contrast how contemporaneous authors address related topics, comparing the authors' use of reasoning and analyzing the texts within the context of the time period."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail showing Tarbell's reasoning and one detail showing Sinclair's reasoning. Circle one phrase that connects both works to their reform-era context.

Writing Against Corporate Power

1 In the early twentieth-century Progressive Era, many Americans questioned the power of giant corporations. Investigative magazines and reform-minded novels reached readers who worried that competition, public health, and workers were being harmed. Ida Tarbell's 1902 to 1904 magazine history of Standard Oil and Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel The Jungle emerged in this climate. Both challenged business practices, but each chose a different kind of evidence and a different route to persuade readers.

2 Tarbell builds her case through a documented history. She traces Standard Oil's growth, explains secret railroad rebates, and follows legal and business decisions over time. Her orderly sequence asks readers to judge whether the company gained power through fair competition. Writing for McClure's magazine, she uses records, public testimony, and specific transactions to make corporate conduct seem open to investigation. Her reasoning is analytical, inviting readers to weigh patterns rather than simply react to one victim's suffering.

3 Sinclair persuades through fiction, following Lithuanian immigrant Jurgis Rudkus in Chicago's meatpacking district. Graphic scenes of injury, spoiled food, and family hardship make industrial abuses immediate and personal. Instead of assembling a documentary record, he uses a character's losses to suggest that the economic system traps workers. Published amid calls for reform, The Jungle stirred public alarm about food conditions and labor exploitation. Its emotional reasoning presses readers to demand change now, not only to examine a corporation's history.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What related problem do Tarbell and Sinclair address, and why was it timely?

2. How does Tarbell build her argument about Standard Oil?

3. How does Sinclair's reasoning differ from Tarbell's?

4. How does each author guide readers toward a response?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly three sentences comparing Tarbell's and Sinclair's methods. Include one detail about each author's reasoning and explain how the Progressive Era makes both approaches meaningful.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 11 · ELA.11.R.3.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail showing Tarbell's reasoning and one detail showing Sinclair's reasoning. Circle one phrase that connects both works to their reform-era context. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What related problem do Tarbell and Sinclair address, and why was it timely?	**Both challenge harmful corporate and industrial practices during the Progressive Era, when many Americans were calling for reform.**
2	How does Tarbell build her argument about Standard Oil?	**She uses a documented sequence of records, testimony, transactions, and business decisions.**
3	How does Sinclair's reasoning differ from Tarbell's?	**Sinclair uses fictional, emotional scenes from Jurgis's life instead of a documentary history.**
4	How does each author guide readers toward a response?	**Tarbell asks readers to judge patterns and fairness, while Sinclair presses readers to demand change.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Tarbell and Sinclair both expose harms connected to industrial power, but Tarbell builds a case from records while Sinclair uses Jurgis's experiences. Tarbell's sequence of rebates and decisions invites a measured judgment, whereas Sinclair's scenes of injury create urgency. During the Progressive Era, readers were already debating reform, so both approaches could strengthen demands for oversight.

Accept comparisons that accurately distinguish Tarbell's documented, analytical reasoning from Sinclair's fictional, emotional reasoning. For the open response, require a relevant historical-context connection and accurate passage evidence.