Inside The Jungle

Trace how context and viewpoint shape a reform novel.

10.T.C.2 "Authors & Speakers: Evaluate how authors' and/or speakers' perspectives influence texts and how circumstances shape their creation."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that reveal Sinclair's perspective or purpose, and circle details about the circumstances in which he wrote. In the margin, number one way a circumstance shaped the novel.

A Novel With an Argument

1. In 1904, writer Upton Sinclair spent seven weeks investigating Chicago's meatpacking district and gathering details for a novel. Sinclair was a socialist who believed that powerful business owners profited while workers carried the risk. Those beliefs shaped what he noticed and emphasized. In The Jungle, published in 1906, he follows Jurgis Rudkus, a Lithuanian immigrant trying to support his family. By centering an immigrant laborer rather than a company owner, Sinclair directs readers to experience industrial growth from the worker's vulnerable position.

2. Sinclair's circumstances also affected the novel's tone. Chicago's stockyards were an enormous center of production, yet many employees faced low wages, dangerous machinery, and unstable jobs. Sinclair wrote during the Progressive Era, when journalists and reformers investigated problems created by rapid industrialization. He uses grim sensory details, including spoiled meat and exhausted bodies, to make readers feel disgust and alarm. This choice supports his argument that the economic system harms people. A writer hired by a packing company might have stressed efficiency, affordable food, or jobs instead, producing a sharply different account.

3. The book influenced a national debate, but not entirely in the way Sinclair hoped. Many readers reacted most strongly to its descriptions of contaminated food. In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt supported federal action after reading the novel and receiving an investigative report about packing plants. Congress passed the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act that year. Sinclair later wrote, "I aimed at the public's heart, and by accident I hit it in the stomach." His comment shows that his worker-centered purpose differed from many readers' concerns.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What perspective does Sinclair bring to The Jungle? Use two details from the passage to support your answer.

2. How did Sinclair's investigation and the Progressive Era shape the content and tone of his novel?

3. How does Sinclair's use of spoiled meat and exhausted bodies support his purpose?

4. Explain why Sinclair said he hit the public "in the stomach" instead of the heart. What does this reveal about the difference between his purpose and many readers' concerns?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a current school or community issue. Write one paragraph of 80 to 100 words that names two possible writers or speakers, explains a circumstance shaping each viewpoint, and describes one detail or tone choice each person might use.

ANSWER KEY

Inside The Jungle

GRADE 10 · 10.T.C.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details that reveal Sinclair's perspective or purpose, and circle details about the circumstances in which he wrote. In the margin, number one way a circumstance shaped the novel. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What perspective does Sinclair bring to The Jungle? Use two details from the passage to support your answer.	**Sinclair writes from a worker-centered socialist perspective. He believed business owners profited while workers carried risks, and he centers Jurgis, an immigrant laborer, rather than a company owner.**
2	How did Sinclair's investigation and the Progressive Era shape the content and tone of his novel?	**His investigation supplied details about stockyard conditions, while the reform-minded Progressive Era encouraged attention to industrial problems. These circumstances helped produce a grim, alarming account of dangerous work and spoiled meat.**
3	How does Sinclair's use of spoiled meat and exhausted bodies support his purpose?	**The grim sensory details make readers feel disgust and alarm, supporting his argument that the economic system harms people.**
4	Explain why Sinclair said he hit the public "in the stomach" instead of the heart. What does this reveal about the difference between his purpose and many readers' concerns?	**Sinclair hoped readers would care about exploited workers, but many focused more on contaminated food. His worker-centered purpose differed from the public's concern about food safety.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A parent who works an early shift might write that cutting a bus route threatens students' attendance because the parent has no car and cannot drive them. Their work schedule would make them emphasize missed class time and unsafe walking conditions. A transportation director might explain that fewer riders and rising fuel costs require combining routes. Because the director must balance a district budget, that speaker might use numbers about costs and seat capacity instead of describing families' daily routines.

Accept responses that connect a writer's or speaker's position, experience, role, or historical setting to specific choices in a text. For Part 3, accept any plausible issue and viewpoints if the response explains how circumstances influence the details or tone used.