

There's More Online!

- ✓ **BIOGRAPHY** George Plunkitt
- ✓ **BIOGRAPHY** Jacob Riis
- ✓ **BIOGRAPHY** William Tweed
- ✓ **CHART/GRAPH** Rising Urban Populations
- ✓ **IMAGE** Jacob Riis Photographs
- ✓ **VIDEO** Urbanization
- ✓ **INTERACTIVE SELF-CHECK QUIZ**



LESSON 2

Urbanization

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS • Why do people migrate? • How is urban life different from rural life?

Reading HELPDESK



Academic Vocabulary

- incentive • trigger

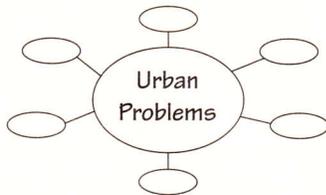
Content Vocabulary

- skyscraper
- tenement
- political machine
- party boss
- graft

TAKING NOTES:

Key Ideas and Details

Organizing As you read, use the following graphic organizer to identify the problems the nation's cities faced.



IT MATTERS BECAUSE

Native-born Americans and immigrants were drawn to cities by the jobs available in America's growing industries. The new, modern cities developed skyscrapers, public transportation systems, and neighborhoods divided by social class. In many cities, political machines controlled city government.

Americans Migrate to the Cities

GUIDING QUESTION How do you think life in big cities was different from life on farms and in small towns?

After the Civil War, the urban population of the United States exploded. New York City, which had more than 800,000 inhabitants in 1860, grew to almost 3.5 million by 1900. During the same period, Chicago swelled from some 109,000 residents to more than 1.6 million. The United States had only 131 cities with populations of 2,500 or more residents in 1840; by 1900, there were more than 1,700 such urban areas.

Most newly arrived immigrants as well as rural Americans, moved to U.S. cities during this time. Cities offered more and better-paying jobs, electricity, modern plumbing, and entertainment.

As city populations grew, the rising value of land provided an **incentive** to try new strategies of urban development. Some businessmen built upward rather than outward. Tall, steel frame buildings called **skyscrapers** began to appear. Other businessmen, such as industrialist Hamilton Disston, transformed and reshaped the landscape. Disston drained parts of the Florida Everglades to create more land to build and grow upon. Disston purchased about 4 million acres of land in the state and set off a land boom in Florida that resulted in the formation of many cities such as Kissimmee and Gulfport and encouraged rapid urbanization around St. Petersburg.

To move people around cities quickly, various kinds of mass transit developed. At first, almost all cities relied on the horsecar, a railroad car pulled by horses. In 1890 horsecars moved about 70 percent of urban traffic in the United States. More than 20 cities,

beginning with San Francisco in 1873, installed cable cars, which were pulled along tracks by underground cables. Then, in 1887, engineer Frank J. Sprague developed the electric trolley car. The country's first electric trolley line opened the following year in Richmond, Virginia.

In the largest cities, congestion became a severe problem. Chicago responded by building an elevated railroad, while Boston, followed by New York, built the first subway systems.

✓ READING PROGRESS CHECK

Summarizing What attracted people to cities in the 1800s?

Separation by Class

GUIDING QUESTION How did the living conditions of the urban working class differ from those of other social classes?

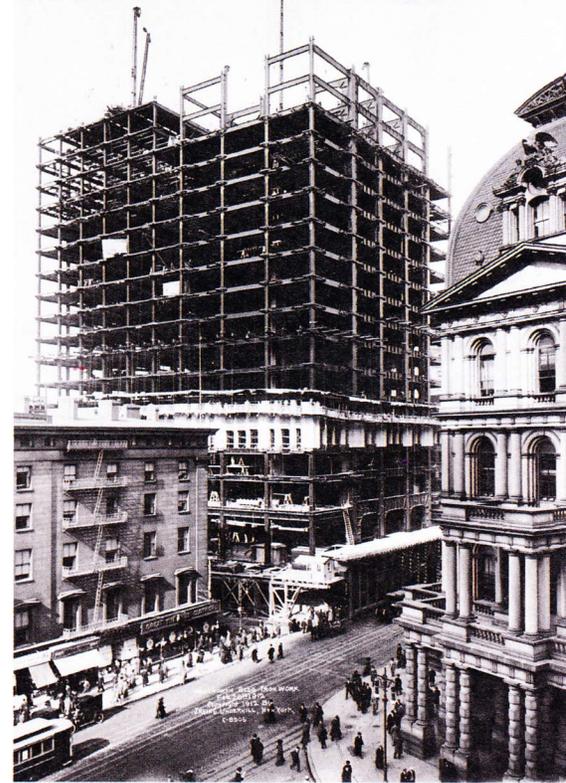
In the growing cities, the upper, middle, and working classes lived in separate and distinct parts of town. The boundaries between neighborhoods can still be seen in many American cities today.

During the last half of the 1800s, the wealthiest families established fashionable districts in the heart of a city. As their homes grew larger, wealthy women increasingly relied on more servants, such as cooks, maids, butlers, nannies, and chauffeurs, and spent a great deal of money on social activities. In an age in which many New Yorkers lived on \$500 a year, socialite Cornelia Sherman Martin spent \$360,000 on a dance.

American industrialization expanded the middle class, which included doctors, lawyers, engineers, managers, social workers, architects, and teachers. Many middle-class people moved away from the central city to escape the crime and pollution and to be able to afford larger homes. Some used new commuter rail lines to move to “streetcar suburbs.”

In the late 1800s, wealthier families had at least one live-in servant. This gave the woman of the house more time to pursue activities outside the home, including “women’s clubs.” At first these clubs focused on social and educational activities, but over time “club women” became active in charitable and reform activities. In Chicago, for example, the Women’s Club helped establish juvenile courts and exposed the terrible conditions at the Cook County Insane Asylum.

Few families in the urban working class could hope to own a home. Most spent their lives in crowded **tenements**, or multifamily apartment buildings. The first tenement in the United States was built in 1839. In New York City, three out of four residents squeezed into dark and crowded tenements. To supplement the average industrial worker’s annual income



Before the mid-1800s, few buildings exceeded four or five stories. To make wooden and stone buildings taller required thick lower walls. This changed when steel companies began mass-producing cheap steel girders and steel cable.

► CRITICAL THINKING

Predicting Consequences What long-term effects do you think new building technologies had on cities?

incentive something that motivates a person into action

skyscraper a very tall building

tenement multifamily apartments, usually dark, crowded, and barely meeting minimum living standards

In the late 1800s, large numbers of people from farms and small towns, as well as immigrants, settled in cities.

► CRITICAL THINKING

Identifying Central Ideas Why were so many people drawn to cities during this era?





Most working-class families lived in apartments, often only a single room in size. They had no servants, and typically husbands and wives both had to work.

► CRITICAL THINKING

Drawing Conclusions How effective was urban society at meeting the needs of the working class?

of \$445, many families rented precious space to a boarder. Zalmen Yoffeh, a Jewish immigrant journalist, lived in a New York tenement as a child. He recalled his family's everyday struggle:

PRIMARY SOURCE

“With . . . one dollar a day [our mother] fed and clothed an ever-growing family. She took in boarders. Sometimes this helped; at other times it added to the burden of living. Boarders were often out of work and penniless; how could one turn a hungry man out? She made all our clothes. She walked blocks to reach a place where meat was a penny cheaper, where bread was a half cent less. She collected boxes and old wood to burn in the stove.”

—from “The Passing of the East Side,” *Menorah Journal*, 1929

Within the working class, some people were better off than others. For example, white native-born men earned higher wages than African American men, immigrants, and women. One economist estimated that 64 percent of working-class families began to rely on more than one wage earner. In some cases, the whole family worked, including the children. The dangerous working conditions faced by child workers, and the fact that they were not in school, alarmed many reformers.

A growing number of women took jobs outside the home. White native-born women were better educated than other women. Thus, many found jobs as teachers, clerks, or secretaries. Many women, however, were domestic servants, with immigrant women filling these jobs in the North and African American women doing such work in the South. Domestic servants endured long hours, low wages, and social isolation.

✓ READING PROGRESS CHECK

Explaining What was working life like for working-class families?

Urban Problems

GUIDING QUESTION *What types of problems developed due to the rapid growth of urban areas?*

City living posed the risks of crime, violence, fire, disease, and pollution. The rapid growth of cities made these problems worse and complicated the ability of urban governments to respond to these problems.

Crime was a growing problem in American cities. Minor criminals, such as pickpockets, swindlers, and thieves, thrived in crowded urban living conditions. Major crimes multiplied as well. From 1880 to 1900, the murder rate jumped sharply from 25 per million people to more than 100 per million people.

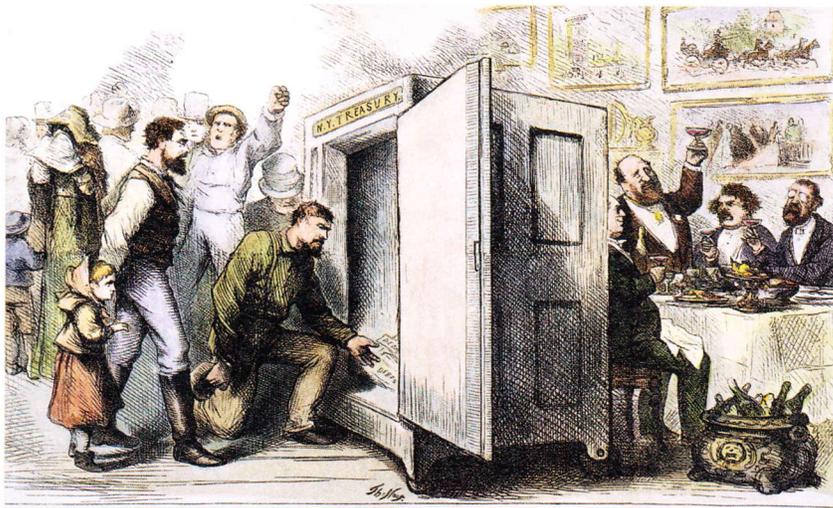
Disease and pollution posed even bigger threats. Improper sewage disposal contaminated city drinking water and **triggered** epidemics of typhoid fever and cholera. Though sewer systems existed in the 1870s, pollution remained a severe problem. Horse manure was left in the streets, chimney's belched smoke, and soot and built up from coal or wood fires.

The **political machine**, an informal political group designed to gain and keep power, came about partly because cities had grown much faster than their governments. New city dwellers needed jobs, housing, food, heat, and police protection. In exchange for votes, political machines and the **party bosses** who ran them eagerly provided these necessities. George Plunkitt, one of New York's most powerful bosses, explained the benefit of political machines: “I can always get a job for a deservin' man. . . . I know every big employer in the district and in the whole city, for that matter, and they ain't in the habit of sayin' no to me when I ask them for a job.”

trigger to cause an action that causes a greater reaction

political machine an organization linked to a political party that often controlled local government

party boss the person in control of a political machine



Critics of political machines said that they took bribes and gave contracts to friends, robbing cities of resources. In this image, workers in New York find the city treasury empty, while behind the scenes, Boss Tweed and other city politicians enjoy a sumptuous feast.

1 Making Inferences What point is the artist trying to make?

2 Predicting Consequences What problems could develop in cities as a result of the fraud of political machines?

The party bosses also controlled the city's finances. Many machine politicians grew rich as the result of fraud or **graft**, gaining money or power illegally. Outright fraud occurred when party bosses accepted bribes from contractors who were supposed to compete fairly to win contracts to build streets, sewers, and buildings. Corrupt bosses also sold permits to their friends to operate public utilities, such as railroads, waterworks, and power systems. Tammany Hall, the New York City Democratic political machine, was the most infamous such organization. William "Boss" Tweed was its leader during the 1860s and 1870s. Tweed's corruptness led to a prison sentence in 1874.

City machines often controlled all the city services, including the police department. In St. Louis, the "boss" never feared arrest when he called out to his supporters at the police-supervised voting booth, "Are there any more repeaters out here that want to vote again?"

Opponents of political machines, such as cartoonist Thomas Nast, blasted corrupt bosses. Defenders argued that political machines provided necessary services and helped assimilate new city dwellers.

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Identifying Why were political machines so influential in cities?

graft the acquisition of money in dishonest ways, as in bribing a politician

PHOTO: The Granger Collection, New York

LESSON 2 REVIEW



Reviewing Vocabulary

1. Explaining Explain why tenements were a difficult place to live for the urban working class.

Using Your Notes

2. Summarizing Use your notes on urban problems to explain why life in cities could be so difficult.

Answering the Guiding Questions

3. Interpreting How do you think life in big cities was different from life on farms and in small towns?

4. Comparing and Contrasting How did the living conditions of the urban working class differ from those of other social classes?

5. Making Connections What types of problems developed due to the rapid growth of urban areas?

Writing Activity

6. ARGUMENT Take on the role of an urban planner in a major city in the late 1800s. Write a letter to members of the city government listing specific reasons for the importance of setting aside city land for parks and recreational areas.