

Jane Addams, Social Reformer

Part A. Read the following excerpt from Jane Addams' autobiography, and answer the questions at the end.

Our very first Christmas at Hull House, when we as yet knew nothing of child labor, a number of little girls refused the candy which was offered them as part of the Christmas good cheer, saying simply that they "worked in a candy factory and could not bear the sight of it." We discovered that for six weeks they had worked from seven in the morning until nine at night, and they were exhausted as well as satiated. . . .

The visits we made in the neighborhood constantly discovered women sewing upon sweatshop work, and often they were assisted by incredibly small children. I remember a little girl of four who pulled out basting threads hour after hour, sitting on a stool at the feet of her Bohemian mother, a little bunch of human misery. But even for that there was no legal redress, for the only child labor law in Illinois, with any provision for enforcement, had been secured by the coal miners' unions, and was confined to children employed in mines.

. . . While we found many pathetic cases of child labor and hard-driven victims of the sweating system who could not possibly earn enough in the short busy season to support themselves during the rest of the year, it became evident that we must add carefully collected information to our general impression of neighborhood conditions if we would make it of any genuine value.

There was at that time no statistical information on Chicago industrial conditions, and Mrs. Florence Kelley, an early resident of Hull House, suggested to the Illinois State Bureau of Labor that they investigate the sweating system in Chicago with its attendant child labor. The head of the Bureau adopted this suggestion and engaged Mrs. Kelley to make the investigation. . . .

As a result of its investigations, this committee recommended to the Legislature the provisions which afterwards became those of the first factory law of Illinois, regulating the sanitary conditions of the sweatshop and fixing fourteen as the age of which a child might be employed. . . .

It was, perhaps, a premature effort, though certainly founded upon a genuine need, to urge that a clause limiting the hours of all women working in factories or workshops to eight a day, or forty-eight a week, should be inserted in the first factory legislation of the State. Although we had lived at Hull House but three years when we urged this legislation, we had known a large number of young girls who were constantly exhausted by night work; for whatever may be said in defense of night work for men, few women are able to endure it. A man who works by night sleeps regularly by day, but a woman finds it impossible to put aside household duties which crowd upon her, and a conscientious girl finds it hard to sleep with her mother washing and scrubbing within a few feet of her bed.

. . . The eight-hour clause in this first factory law met with much less opposition in the Legislature than was anticipated, and was enforced for a year before it was pronounced unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Illinois. . . . The entire experience left on my mind a distrust of all legislation which was not preceded by full discussion and understanding. A premature measure may be carried through a legitimate means and still fail to possess vitality and a sense of maturity.

. . . many newly arrived immigrants were first employed in gangs upon railroad extensions and similar undertakings. The sturdy peasants eager for work were either the victims of the padrone who fleeced them unmercifully, both in securing a place to work and then in supplying them with food, or they became the mere sport of unscrupulous

employment agencies . . . a movement [began] to procure free employment bureaus under State control until a law authorizing such bureaus and giving the officials intrusted with their management power to regulate private employment agencies, passed the Illinois Legislature in 1899.¹

1. Identify three social problems which Jane Addams wanted to reform.
2. What methods did Addams use to bring about change?
3. What successes did Addams have in effecting reforms?

Labor Reform Chart

Part B. Use your text or an encyclopedia to complete the labor reform chart below by identifying the main points found in each law or Supreme Court decision listed in the second and third columns. When completed, this chart will give you the necessary information to develop a short essay showing the continuity of reform movements.

Themes	Early Legislation	Later Legislation
1. The treatment of children in some factories was harsh and often cruel.	Keating-Owens Act (1916)	Fair Labor Standards Act (1938)
2. Women were often expected to endure long working hours in factories and still complete the household duties of a full-time wife and mother.	<i>Muller vs. Oregon</i> (1908)	
3. Immigrant families often struggled to survive in the face of exploitation by some employers.	Labor Laws of 1885 or Illinois labor laws of 1899 (see reading)	

¹Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1938), 198, 204, 209.

Part C. In earlier lessons, you have written well-developed paragraphs which contain a thesis statement, supporting evidence, and a conclusion which shows the significance of the topic. Now choose two of the themes from the chart in Part B to use as a basis to write a four-paragraph essay which will show the relationship between the reform period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the New Deal of the 1930s.

1. *Paragraph One*

There is a time lag between the public recognition of a national problem and its practical resolution. Use this statement as your topic sentence. Complete paragraph one by adding a sentence indicating which themes you will address in your essay.

2. *Paragraph Two*

Take one of your selected topics and copy the corresponding theme given from the list in Part B. Use this statement as your topic sentence for paragraph two. Complete paragraph two by giving examples from Jane Addams' autobiography which support this idea. Then show how New Deal legislation offered more comprehensive reforms for it.

3. *Paragraph Three*

Follow the instructions for paragraph two using your second topic choice.

4. *Paragraph Four*

The notion of reform did not end with the Progressive Era but change continued as the need for other, more comprehensive reforms became evident.

Use this statement as the topic for your concluding paragraph. Complete this paragraph by relating the reforms you discussed in paragraphs two and three with the general idea expressed in the above sentence.

Remember to proofread your essay. Make sure that the evidence you use fits the chosen topics. You may use legislative examples other than those given, but any such examples should have been passed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, or during the 1930s.

