The Industrial Revolution ‖ The Jungle

## Goals & Objectives

Goals:

Students will learn about the conditions of the meatpacking industry by reading and discussing excerpts from Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*.

Students will recognize how a literary work, such as *The Jungle,* can lead to social change in society.

Objectives:

Students will be able to discuss and analyze information from Sinclair’s text using a series of discussion questions. After students read their assigned reading excerpt, they will discuss the questions with their group in order to decode (the vocabulary and early 1900s verbiage) and assess the readings. After each group presents their findings with the class, students will identify and evaluate primary resource documents from an activity on docsteach.org.

## California State Content Standards

CA.HSS.11.2.1: Know the effects of industrialization on living and working conditions, including the portrayal of working conditions and food safety in Upton Sinclair's The Jungle.

## Common Core Literacy Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

## Driving Historical Question

### Explain how literature and satire can cause political and social change within society.

### Lesson Introduction (Anticipatory Set/Hook/Accessing Prior Knowledge) ‖ **Time: 5 minutes**

Hook (*The Jungle* video): This video briefly explains the meatpacking industry in the early 1900s. It also explains how Sinclair developed the narrative for his novel and the effect of the novel on American society. This video serves as a review of prior discussions on changing dynamic of the American workplace and how an industrialized America was dangerous for new immigrant workers and migrants from the South.

### Vocabulary (Content Language Development) ‖ **Time: 3 minutes**

Before reading, the instructor will explain some terminology from “The Jungle” such as “pickle room” and “borax.” The instructor will also inform students that, during the reading, if they need the instructor to explain part of the excerpt, they just need to ask.

For additional vocabulary support, each student will receive a dictionary.

### Content Delivery (Method of Instruction) ‖ **Time: 5 minutes**

Students will be given direction to split-up into five pre-assigned reading groups. These five groups will each read and interpret an excerpt from The Jungle. These pre-assigned groups are heterogeneous and include advanced readers, striving readers, and English Learners. The goal of this exercise is allow students to have equitable access to content material. Before students start reading, the instructor will ask two questions for students to reflect upon when they commence their group discussion. These questions will also be the focus of the brief group presentations.

Questions:

1. Explain the main idea of this excerpt and use a vivid (descriptive) quote in your explanation.

2. Do you feel that cruel, inhumane working conditions were only in the meatpacking industry? Explain your answer.

### Student Engagement (Critical Thinking & Student Activities) ‖ **Time: 25 minutes**

Jigsaw Groups: Students will silently read their assigned excerpt from *The Jungle.* While they read, they will note the gruesome nature of their passage and underline brief moments of the passage to quote during their presentations.

After each group has finished reading and has had several minutes to discuss their excerpt, the students will briefly describe their excerpt to the class in the form of a brief presentation. While one group is presenting, other students will be taking notes on their classmates’ presentation.

### Lesson Closure ‖ **Time: 15-17**

After presentations have concluded, the instructor will briefly present the students with a quick activity from docsteach.org. This activity uses primary resource documents to highlight “The Path to Food Safety” in the United States. The instructor will use the Promethean Smart Board to quickly open (look at the National Archives’ summary of each document), click, and drag the documents. Due to time constraints, part of this activity may have to be pushed back to the next day of class.

### Assessments (Formative & Summative)

Formative (informal): In the student presentations and “The Path to Food Safety” activity, the instructor will note student understanding and comprehension. Additional instruction may be added if jigsaw presentations inadequately address each excerpt.

Summative (formal): In the unit test, there will be a question on this exercise that states “Explain the impact of Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* on American society. Use examples of meatpacking practices during the early 1900s in your response.”

### Accommodations for English Learners, Striving Readers and Students with Special Needs

All students will be pre-organized to heterogeneous groups that include advanced readers, English learners, striving readers, and students with special needs. The instructor will also mediate group discussion to clarify Sinclair’s verbiage and vocabulary. English learners will also be able to use their smart phones or other applicable translation devices to suit their needs. Additionally, the instructor make sure that each English learner and striving reader is able to participate and “chime-in” during group discussions.

### Resources (Books, Websites, Handouts, Materials)

1. *The Jungle* Excerpts

2. Promethean Smart Board (w/ pen)

3. Youtube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xxe9nosWawM)

4. Docsteach.org (http://docsteach.org/activities/17804)

5. Dictionaries

**The following is an excerpt from “The Jungle” by the muckraker Upton Sinclair. He described the filthy conditions of the meat packing industry in Chicago during the Progressive Era. As you read the following sections think about how progressive leaders would want to use the government to regulate the production of food and working conditions in the late 1800s.**

**Excerpt A- Workplace Hazards**

Let a man so much as scrape his finger pushing a truck in the pickle rooms, and he might have a sore that would put him out of the world; all the joints in his fingers might be eaten by the acid, one by one. Of the butchers and floorsmen, the beef-boners and trimmers, and all those who used knives, you could scarcely find a person who had the use of his thumb; time and time again the base of it had been slashed, till it was a mere lump of flesh against which the man pressed the knife to hold it. The hands of these men would be criss- crossed with cuts, until you could no longer pretend to count them or to trace them. They would have no nails, – they had worn them off pulling hides; their knuckles were swollen so that their fingers spread out like a fan. There were men who worked in the cooking rooms, in the midst of steam and sickening odors, by artificial light; in these rooms the germs of tuberculosis might live for two years, but the supply was renewed every hour. There were the beef-luggers, who carried two-hundred-pound quarters into the refrigerator-cars; a fearful kind of work, that began at four o'clock in the morning, and that wore out the most powerful men in a few years. There were those who worked in the chilling rooms, and whose special disease was rheumatism; the time limit that a man could work in the chilling rooms was said to be five years. There were the wool-pluckers, whose hands went to pieces even sooner than the hands of the pickle men; for the pelts of the sheep had to be painted with acid to loosen the wool, and then the pluckers had to pull out this wool with their bare hands, till the acid had eaten their fingers off. There were those who made the tins for the canned meat; and their hands, too, were a maze of cuts, and each cut represented a chance for blood poisoning. Some worked at the stamping machines, and it was very seldom that one could work long there at the pace that was set, and not give out and forget himself and have a part of his hand chopped off. There were the "hoisters," as they were called, whose task it was to press the lever which lifted the dead cattle off the floor. They ran along upon a rafter, peering down through the damp and the steam; and as old Durham's architects had not built the killing room for the convenience of the hoisters, at every few feet they would have to stoop under a beam, say four feet above the one they ran on; which got them into the habit of stooping, so that in a few years they would be walking like chimpanzees. Worst of any, however, were the fertilizer men, and those who served in the cooking rooms. These people could not be shown to the visitor, – for the odor of a fertilizer man would scare any ordinary visitor at a hundred yards, and as for the other men, who worked in tank rooms full of steam, and in some of which there were open vats near the level of the floor, their peculiar trouble was that they fell into the vats; and when they were fished out, there was never enough of them left to be worth exhibiting, – sometimes they would be overlooked for days, till all but the bones of them had gone out to the world as Durham's Pure Leaf Lard!

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**Excerpt B- Reusing Waste**

It seemed that he was working in the room where the men prepared the beef for canning, and the beef had lain in vats full of chemicals, and men with great forks speared it out and dumped it into trucks, to be taken to the cooking room. When they had speared out all they could reach, they emptied the vat on the floor, and then with shovels scraped up the balance and dumped it into the truck. This floor was filthy, yet they set Antanas with his mop slopping the "pickle" into a hole that connected with a sink, where it was caught and used over again forever; and if that were not enough, there was a trap in the pipe, where all the scraps of meat and odds and ends of refuse were caught, and every few days it was the old man's task to clean these out, and shovel their contents into one of the trucks with the rest of the meat!

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**Excerpt C- Using “Tainted” Meat**

All of these were sinister incidents; but they were trifles compared to what Jurgis saw with his own eyes before long. One curious thing he had noticed, the very first day, in his profession of shoveler of guts; which was the sharp trick of the floor bosses whenever there chanced to come a "slunk" calf. Any man who knows anything about butchering knows that the flesh of a cow that is about to calve, or has just calved, is not fit for food. A good many of these came every day to the packing houses – and, of course, if they had chosen, it would have been an easy matter for the packers to keep them till they were fit for food. But for the saving of time and fodder, it was the law that cows of that sort came along with the others, and whoever noticed it would tell the boss, and the boss would start up a conversation with the government inspector, and the two would stroll away. So in a trice the carcass of the cow would be cleaned out, and entrails would have vanished; it was Jurgis' task to slide them into the trap, calves and all, and on the floor below they took out these "slunk" calves, and butchered them for meat, and used even the skins of them.

One day a man slipped and hurt his leg; and that afternoon, when the last of the cattle had been disposed of, and the men were leaving, Jurgis was ordered to remain and do some special work which this injured man had usually done. It was late, almost dark, and the government inspectors had all gone, and there were only a dozen or two of men on the floor. That day they had killed about four thousand cattle, and these cattle had come in freight trains from far states, and some of them had got hurt. There were some with broken legs, and some with gored sides; there were some that had died, from what cause no one could say; and they were all to be disposed of, here in darkness and silence. "Downers," the men called them; and the packing house had a special elevator upon which they were raised to the killing beds, where the gang proceeded to handle them, with an air of businesslike nonchalance which said plainer than any words that it was a matter of everyday routine. It took a couple of hours to get them out of the way, and in the end Jurgis saw them go into the chilling rooms with the rest of the meat, being carefully scattered here and there so that they could not be identified.

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**Excerpt D- “Bubbly Creek”**

"Bubbly Creek" is an arm of the Chicago River, and forms the southern boundary of the yards: all the drainage of the square mile of packing houses empties into it, so that it is really a great open sewer a hundred or two feet wide. One long arm of it is blind, and the filth stays there forever and a day. The grease and chemicals that are poured into it undergo all sorts of strange transformations, which are the cause of its name; it is constantly in motion, as if huge fish were feeding in it, or great leviathans disporting themselves in its depths. Bubbles of carbonic acid gas will rise to the surface and burst, and make rings two or three feet wide. Here and there the grease and filth have caked solid, and the creek looks like a bed of lava; chickens walk about on it, feeding, and many times an unwary stranger has started to stroll across, and vanished temporarily. The packers used to leave the creek that way, till every now and then the surface would catch on fire and burn furiously, and the fire department would have to come and put it out. Once, however, an ingenious stranger came and started to gather this filth in scows, to make lard out of; then the packers took the cue, and got out an injunction to stop him, and afterward gathered it themselves. The banks of "Bubbly Creek" are plastered thick with hairs, and this also the packers gather and clean.

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**Excerpt E- Usage of Chemicals**

Cut up by the two-thousand-revolutions- a-minute flyers, and mixed with half a ton of other meat, no odor that ever was in a ham could make any difference. There was never the least attention paid to what was cut up for sausage; there would come all the way back from Europe old sausage that had been rejected, and that was moldy and white – it would be dosed with borax and glycerine, and dumped into the hoppers, and made over again for home consumption. There would be meat that had tumbled out on the floor, in the dirt and sawdust, where the workers had tramped and spit uncounted billions of consumption germs. There would be meat stored in great piles in rooms; and the water from leaky roofs would drip over it, and thousands of rats would race about on it. It was too dark in these storage places to see well, but a man could run his hand over these piles of meat and sweep off handfuls of the dried dung of rats. These rats were nuisances, and the packers would put poisoned bread out for them; they would die, and then rats, bread, and meat would go into the hoppers together. This is no fairy story and no joke; the meat would be shoveled into carts, and the man who did the shoveling would not trouble to lift out a rat even when he saw one – there were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was a tidbit. There was no place for the men to wash their hands before they ate their dinner, and so they made a practice of washing them in the water that was to be ladled into the sausage. There were the butt-ends of smoked meat, and the scraps of corned beef, and all the odds and ends of the waste of the plants, that would be dumped into old barrels in the cellar and left there. Under the system of rigid economy which the packers enforced, there were some jobs that it only paid to do once in a long time, and among these was the cleaning out of the waste barrels. Every spring they did it; and in the barrels would be dirt and rust and old nails and stale water – and cartload after cartload of it would be taken up and dumped into the hoppers with fresh meat, and sent out to the public's breakfast. Some of it they would make into "smoked" sausage – but as the smoking took time, and was therefore expensive, they would call upon their chemistry department, and preserve it with borax and color it with gelatine to make it brown. All of their sausage came out of the same bowl, but when they came to wrap it they would stamp some of it "special," and for this they would charge two cents more a pound.