***How The Other Half Lives***

Introduction:

During the Progressive era, crusading journalists called muckrakers wrote about social, political, and economic wrongs in the United States, hoping to draw attention to them in order to achieve social reform. Jacob Riis, a New York reporter and photographer, was especially sensitive to the needs of people living in New York tenements and slums. His work *How The Other Half Lives* exposed conditions that affected those slum residents.

**“The Problem of the Children”**

Read the selection, then answer the questions below.

1. How does Riis try to convince readers to support efforts to improve conditions for children living in the New York City slums?
   1. Click here to enter text.
2. How many children does Riis claim were living in specific tenement buildings? What does he note about the area of the “yard” in these tenements?
   1. Click here to enter text.
3. In the first paragraph of the chapter, what does Riis report about the children who have been killed in the tenement? What does he report about the schooling of children?
   1. Click here to enter text.
4. In the second paragraph, Riis makes several points regarding children who are without adult guidance. List at least two things Riis mentions about these children and the difficulties they faced. Describe in your own words, what Riis means when he says, “Rough as he is, if any one doubt that this child of common clay have in him the instinct of beauty.”
   1. Click here to enter text.
5. In the next paragraph, Riis claims that “the children of the poor grow up in joyless homes to lives of wearisome toil.” What examples does he provide to support this statement? In Riis’s view, how did the “domain” in which these children lived affect their lives and the way in which they “confront[ed] the world”?
   1. Click here to enter text.
6. In Paragraph 11, how does Riis describe the condition of the little girls taken in by the Children’s Aid Society? What comments does he make about religion in this paragraph?
   1. Click here to enter text.
7. How does Riis answer those, who, in his words, “lay flattering unction to their souls in the knowledge that to-day New York has, at all events, no brood of the gutters of tender years that can be homeless long unheeded”?
   1. Click here to enter text.
8. In paragraph 13, to what benefit does Riis link the “rescue of the children”? Why does he claim this?
   1. Click here to enter text.
9. In your view, what audience do you think Riis was trying to reach? How effective do you think “The Problem of the Children” would have been at reaching that audience? **Explain.**
   1. Click here to enter text.
10. Assume you are a New York City or New York state government official at the time Riis’s book was published. List at least four suggestions or proposals you would recommend to combat the problems he suggests in *How The Other Half* *Lives.* Add a sentence or two explaining how each might help.
    1. Click here to enter text.
11. Access the images from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2089243/Slumdogs-New-York-The-remarkable-images-capturing-immigrant-families-unrecognisable-19th-century-New-York.html>. What is your reaction to these images? Would they change the minds of turn of the century Americans? What purpose would they serve?
    1. Click here to enter text.