**Urban Immigrant Life/*The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair**

Introduction:

Written in 1906, Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* “provided a voice to the great masses of immigrants who came to America yearning to be free and comfortable and who found instead the wage slavery and misery of mill, factory, sweatshop, and slum. Sinclair highlighted the factory workers’ conditions⎯“physical danger, insecurity, fear, exploitation, corruption and filth.” *The Jungle* gives us a glimpse into immigrant life in U.S. cities between 1880 and 1920. For years, many Americans bought meat from butcher shops and grocery stores, never thinking about the type of conditions under which livestock had been butchered and the meat had been processed. Then in 1906, author Upton Sinclair wrote *The Jungle,* an exposé of the Chicago meat-packing industry. Millions of people who read the book were shocked by the unsanitary practices Sinclair described. His work led to sweeping reforms in the meat-packing industry, along with federal regulations regarding sanitary practices in the industry. As Sinclair said, “I aimed for the public’s heart, and hit it in the stomach instead.”

**Chapter 1**

Read the first chapter and answer the following questions:

1. What country are the main characters in *The Jungle* from? Where do the immigrants live? How many others live in the neighborhood, and what is their cultural background?
   1. Click here to enter text.
2. Describe Tamoszius Kuszleika’s clothing. What is he wearing? Why?
   1. Click here to enter text.
3. Describe the difference between the older immigrants and the younger immigrants.
   1. Click here to enter text.
4. What is Jokubas’s and/or Aniele’s economic situation?
   1. Click here to enter text.
5. Why won’t Ona take off from work on her wedding?
   1. Click here to enter text.
6. What can we learn about factory life from the first chapter?
   1. Click here to enter text.
7. Why do the immigrants hold this celebration even though they really can’t afford it? What does this tell us about how “assimilated” these urban immigrants felt?
   1. Click here to enter text.

3 Ronald Gottesman in his introduction to The Jungle, reprinted in 1986 (Penguin Books).

***The Jungle* Chapter 9, 14**

**Excerpts from *The Jungle***

1. Look at the first excerpt. Describe what Sinclair called “Bubbly Creek.”
   1. Click here to enter text.
2. How does Sinclair describe the hands of the men who worked in the “pickle room”?
   1. Click here to enter text.
3. According to Sinclair, what was the “special disease” of those who worked in the “chilling rooms”? What was the “time limit a man could work in the chilling rooms”?
   1. Click here to enter text.
4. Speculate as to why men might have continued working in the packing houses under such conditions. Why do you think they didn’t seek other employment, or seek to unionize at this point?
   1. Click here to enter text.
5. Next, look at the second excerpt. How does Sinclair describe how “rejected sausage from Europe” would be used?
   1. Click here to enter text.
6. How does Sinclair describe the meat that “tumbled onto the floor”?
   1. Click here to enter text.
7. How did Sinclair describe how meat could become contaminated by rats?
   1. Click here to enter text.
8. What does Sinclair say regarding cleaning the waste barrels? Describe what was often in the barrels. What would happen with the materials from the barrels?
   1. Click here to enter text.
9. Do you think that after publication of *The Jungle* meat-packing companies would have been willing to eliminate the problems Sinclair wrote about? Why or why not?
   1. Click here to enter text.
10. Do you think Sinclair’s descriptions of the conditions in the meat-packing plants were exaggerated or sensationalistic? In your opinion, would *The Jungle* have been as effective if Sinclair had hit the public’s “heart” instead of its “stomach”? ***Explain.***
    1. Click here to enter text.