Read and study the sources about political machines, corruption, and Progressive reforms. Then use the four sources and your knowledge of U.S. history to answer the questions.

Source 1

Excerpt from To Hold Your District: Study Human Nature and Act Accordin’
by George Washington Plunkitt

This excerpt is from a speech given by George Washington Plunkitt, a member of the Tammany Hall machine, who also served as a state senator between 1884 and 1904.

THERE’s only one way to hold a district: you must study human nature and act accordin’. . . .

To learn real human nature you have to go among the people, see them and be seen. I know every man, woman, and child in the Fifteenth District . . . I know what they like and what they don’t like, what they are strong at and what they are weak in, and I reach them by approachin’ at the right side. . . .

What tells in holdin’ your grip on your district is to go right down among the poor families and help them in the different ways they need help. I’ve got a regular system for this. If there’s a fire in Ninth, Tenth, or Eleventh Avenue, for example, any hour of the day or night, I’m usually there with some of my election district captains as soon as the fire engines. If a family is burned out I don’t ask whether they are Republicans or Democrats, and I don’t refer them to the Charity Organization Society, which would investigate their case in a month or two and decide they were worthy of help about the time they are dead from starvation. I just get quarters\(^1\) for them, buy clothes for them if their clothes were burned up, and fix them up till they get things runnin’ again. It’s philanthropy, but it’s politics, too—mighty good politics. Who can tell how many votes one of these fires bring me? The poor are the most grateful people in the world, and, let me tell you, they have more friends in their neighborhoods than the rich have in theirs.

If there’s a family in my district in want I know it before the charitable societies do, and me and my men are first on the ground. I have a special corps to look up such cases. The consequence is that the poor look up to George W. Plunkitt as a father, come to him in trouble—and don’t forget him on election day.

Another thing, I can always get a job for a deservin’ man. I make it a point to keep on the track of jobs, and it seldom happens that I don’t have a few up my sleeve ready for use. 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.

\(^1\)quarters: lodgings
Source 2

*The Spirit of Tweed is Mighty Still*

by Thomas Nast

This political cartoon was published by *Harper’s Weekly* in 1886 with the caption: “The spirit of Tweed is mighty still . . . and even yet you don’t know what you are going to do about it!”

Source: Library of Congress.
This excerpt is from campaign literature for Senator Robert La Follette that was published in the early twentieth century.

**What Will the Harvest Be?**

There was a time in Wisconsin when the boss and representatives of the railroads nominated the candidates for both parties. How? By intervening between the voter and the nomination and “getting” the delegates.

You remember how it was done; railroad passes, entertainment, money, influence. Men who could not be elected as delegates sat in conventions on proxies\(^1\) purchased as merchandise. Delegates honestly elected were unseated by fraud, and contesting delegates seated. These were some of the means.

There was a time in Wisconsin when the railroads ruled and ruled supreme. They openly boasted of their power. For more than thirty years no law was enacted except by consent of the railroads.

La Follette secured the anti-lobby law and drove from the capitol some of the most corrupt and notorious characters of the age. This law must be enforced.

La Follette secured the anti-pass law and thus did away with the common and wholesale bribery of public officials.

La Follette secured the corrupt practices acts designed to purify the caucuses\(^2\) and elections. This law must be strengthened and enforced. It has been flagrantly violated in recent years.

La Follette, with a clear vision, saw then what Roosevelt and Hughes\(^3\) see now—that the people must be freed from boss rule.

La Follette secured the primary election law. Under the primary law you vote direct for your choice, your vote is your own, if there is failure it is your failure. Make the fight for right men and right laws in the open, as you can, and you will win.

This great movement in Wisconsin has given Wisconsin a reputation throughout the nation. It is the Wisconsin Idea and other states are following in its wake.

\(^1\)proxies: substitutes, representatives

\(^2\)caucuses: meetings of political party members to select candidates

\(^3\)Hughes: Charles Evans Hughes, a Republican governor who was part of the Progressive movement
Political Reforms during the Progressive Era

1883
- Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act is passed for federal civil service

1884
- New York is the first state to adopt a civil service system for state workers

1888
- Louisville, Kentucky, is the first municipality to adopt the secret ballot

1889
- Massachusetts is the first state to adopt the secret ballot

1898
- South Dakota is the first state to adopt the initiative and the referendum on a statewide level

1899
- Minnesota is the first state to adopt a mandatory statewide political primary system

1901
- Wisconsin is the first state to hold direct primaries

1903
- Florida is the first state to hold a presidential primary election
- Los Angeles is the first municipality to adopt recall elections

1908
- Michigan and Oregon are the first states to adopt recall elections for state officials

1913
- Congress ratifies the Seventeenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution
1. Based on Source 1, which statements best describe the relationship between political machines and local communities in the late nineteenth century?

Select the two correct answers.

☐ A. Political machines provided aid to urban communities in exchange for votes.

☐ B. Political machines worked with labor unions to expand their influence in local communities.

☐ C. Political machines emerged among immigrant groups in rural communities.

☐ D. Political machines used a system of patronage to gain the support of voters and their communities.

☐ E. Political machines worked with voters to eliminate corruption in government.

☐ F. Political machines worked with voters to block immigrants from moving into their communities.

2. Based on Source 2, which statement about political machine bosses would Thomas Nast most likely have supported?

☐ A. Political machine bosses were victims of political harassment.

☐ B. Political machine bosses fought graft in government.

☐ C. Political machine bosses worked selflessly for their constituents.

☐ D. Political machine bosses threatened the democratic process.

3. Based on Source 3, which group was viewed as the main source of political corruption by Progressives such as Robert La Follette, Sr.?

☐ A. immigrants

☐ B. labor unions

☐ C. corporations

☐ D. muckraking journalists
4. Based on Source 4, which statement best explains how Progressive reformers influenced the political process?

☐ A. Reform efforts expanded suffrage to racial minorities.
☐ B. Reform efforts increased public participation in politics.
☐ C. Reform efforts restricted the power of the federal government.
☐ D. Reform efforts created a political system with two parties.

5. Political machines emerged in the late nineteenth century.

Drag and drop the four correct events into the flow chart in chronological order from earliest to most recent to show the rise of political machines and their effects.
6. Based on the sources and your knowledge of U.S. history, describe one problem caused by political corruption and explain how Progressives proposed to reform that problem.
## Answer Key

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<td>Constructed Response (CR)</td>
<td>See Rubric and Scoring Notes</td>
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### Rise of Political Machines

- The Industrial Revolution leads to increased economic development in the Northeast.
- Cities in the Northeast grow quickly and experience problems with rapid urbanization.
- Political machines emerge in northeastern cities to help immigrant voters with their problems.
- Party bosses use political machines to encourage immigrant voters to elect them to local government offices.
- Corruption and graft become common in local government.
### Constructed-Response Rubric and Scoring Notes

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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Student’s response correctly describes <strong>one</strong> problem caused by political corruption <strong>and</strong> correctly explains how Progressives proposed to reform that problem.</td>
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</table>
| 1            | Student’s response correctly describes **one** problem caused by political corruption but does **not** correctly explain how Progressives proposed to reform that problem.  
 **OR**  
 Student’s response does **not** correctly describe **one** problem caused by political corruption but correctly explains how Progressives proposed to reform a problem caused by political corruption. |
| 0            | Student’s response does **not** correctly describe one problem caused by political corruption **or** correctly explain how Progressives proposed to reform a problem caused by political corruption.  
 **OR**  
 Student’s response is blank, irrelevant, or too brief to evaluate. |

Problems caused by political corruption and responses proposed by Progressives to address those problems:

- Political corruption contributed to government inefficiencies and various social ills, especially in large urban areas where political machines often controlled the local government. Child labor, ineffective workplace safety laws, poor sanitation, overcrowded housing, and poor transportation networks were chronic problems that afflicted cities. However, many politicians had little incentive to solve the problems faced by the urban poor, or to improve the quality of government services, as long as they were able to buy the votes of their constituents. Rather than focusing on long-term public policies and projects, these politicians focused on appealing to voters by providing them with basic goods or temporary jobs. Progressives urged local, federal, and state governments to reform laws relating to child labor, sanitation, transportation, and workplace safety. In addition, Progressives supported political reforms such as initiatives, referendums, recall elections, and the direct election of senators. They believed such reforms would make politicians accountable for their actions, force them out of office, and allow for the election of politicians who were more responsive to the needs of the people.
• Political corruption allowed many politicians to become wealthy through illegal means, which were often beneficial to the wealthy and to corporations. These politicians voted for projects and laws that favored corporations and wealthy citizens, in exchange for bribes and kickbacks from these groups. They also took advantage of inside information that they learned from discussions with businessmen and with other politicians. This information allowed the corrupt politicians to invest in properties and businesses that were expected to make a lot of money, especially if the government enacted certain policies. Progressives believed that journalists should investigate and expose the conduct of politicians who used their political offices to enrich themselves, so that these politicians could be tried in court. To reduce the political influence of corporations and the wealthy, Progressives proposed the passage of legislation to tax the incomes of the wealthy and to break up corporations that they believed had become too powerful.

• Political corruption allowed political parties to become powerful through cronyism, the spoils system, and voter fraud. This undermined the democratic process. Political machine bosses developed relationships with ward bosses and their supporters. Frequently, the politicians hired or appointed supporters who lacked the skills or qualifications to perform their jobs. These ward bosses felt obligated to meet the needs of the political machine bosses rather than genuinely solving real problems facing their constituents. In addition, many voters had little incentive, beyond voting for political bosses and their supporters, to be more active in the corrupt political process, since their votes were often effectively forced or bought. Progressives believed in civil-service reforms that required job applicants to take tests to demonstrate that they were qualified for their positions. Progressives also proposed the adoption of recall elections, referendums, and direct elections to provide voters with a greater voice in public policy and to remove ineffective politicians.

Accept other reasonable answers.