

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

Score _____

The Jungle - Reading Comprehension / Plot Analysis

WS 2

Directions: Fill in the blanks with the correct response. 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.”

Excerpts from *The Jungle*

http://www.socialstudies.com/c/article.html?article@sinclair_thejungle1+s@QVB7l1sqOnV0c

http://www.socialstudies.com/c/article.html?article@sinclair_thejungle2+s@QxzDx9myHsyk6

Read each source, then answer the following questions.

1. Look at the first excerpt. Describe what Sinclair called “Bubbly Creek.”

2. How does Sinclair describe the hands of the men who worked in the “pickle room”?

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”?

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?

5. Next, look at the second excerpt. How does Sinclair describe how “rejected sausage from Europe” would be used?

6. How does Sinclair describe the meat that “tumbled onto the floor”?

7. How did Sinclair describe how meat could become contaminated by rats?

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?

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?

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.
