

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Urbanization & Political Machines

Definition of Urbanization:

Definition of Tenement Housing:

<p>PRIMARY SOURCE ACTIVITY #1 – JACOB RIIS <i>Documenting Urbanization</i></p>

Read the segment from Jacob Riis and answer the guiding questions.

SOURCING:

Who wrote this? What type of document is this?

The author's purpose in writing this was . . .

I think the sort of people who read this were. . .

I do/don't trust this document because. . .

CONTEXTUALIZATION:

I already know that at this time . . .

From this document I would guess that people at this time. . .

This document might not give me the whole picture because . . .

CLOSE READING:

The author is trying to convince the readers that...

The author tries to convince the readers by using the words...

Political Bosses and Machines

Political Boss:

Political Machine:

As you watch the documentary on Political Bosses/Machines, take notes in the space below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwQpsiIRRK8>

PRIMARY SOURCE ACTIVITY #2 – PLUCKITT
Honest Graft (political corruption)

**“I Seen My Opportunities and I Took ‘Em.”:
George Washington Pluckitt on Honest Graft**

*In partners, read the statement from George Pluckitt on his involvement at Tammany Hall and how he made all his money and then respond to the questions below:
Graft: means political corruption.*

SOURCING:

Who wrote this? What type of document is this?

The author’s purpose in writing this was . . .

CLOSE READING:

How does Pluckitt describe the difference between honest and dishonest graft?

The author is trying to convince the readers that...

Do you feel Pluckitt is convincing as he justifies his use of his political power for personal gain? Explain.

"I Seen My Opportunities and I Took 'Em.": An Old-Time Pol Preaches Honest Graft

Source: William L. Riordan, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* (1905; reprint, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1963), 3–6.

Everybody is talkin' these days about Tammany men growin' rich on graft, but nobody thinks of drawin' the distinction between honest graft and dishonest graft. There's all the difference in the world between the two. Yes, many of our men have grown rich in politics. I have myself. I've made a big fortune out of the game, and I'm gettin' richer every day, but I've not gone in for dishonest graft—blackmailin' gamblers, saloonkeepers, disorderly people, etc.—and neither has any of the men who have made big fortunes in politics.

There's an honest graft, and I'm an example of how it works. I might sum up the whole thing by sayin': "I seen my opportunities and I took 'em."

Just let me explain by examples. My party's in power in the city, and it's goin' to undertake a lot of public improvements. Well, I'm tipped off, say, that they're going to lay out a new park at a certain place.

I see my opportunity and I take it. I go to that place and I buy up all the land I can in the neighborhood. Then the board of this or that makes its plan public, and there is a rush to get my land, which nobody cared particular for before.

Ain't it perfectly honest to charge a good price and make a profit on my investment and foresight? Of course, it is. Well, that's honest graft. Or supposin' it's a new bridge they're goin' to build. I get tipped off and I buy as much property as I can that has to be taken for approaches. I sell at my own price later on and drop some more money in the bank.

Wouldn't you? It's just like lookin' ahead in Wall Street or in the coffee or cotton market. It's honest graft, and I'm lookin' for it every day in the year. I will tell you frankly that I've got a good lot of it, too.

...

I've told you how I got rich by honest graft. Now, let me tell you that most politicians who are accused of robbin' the city get rich the same way.

They didn't steal a dollar from the city treasury. They just seen their opportunities and took them. That is why, when a reform administration comes in and spends a half million dollars in tryin' to find the public robberies they talked about in the campaign, they don't find them.

The books are always all right. The money in the city treasury is all right. Everything is all right. All they can show is that the Tammany heads of departments looked after their friends, within the law, and gave them what opportunities they could to make honest graft. Now, let me tell you that's never goin' to hurt Tammany with the people. Every good man looks after his friends, and any man who doesn't isn't likely to be popular. If I have a good thing to hand out in private life, I give it to a friend. Why shouldn't I do the same in public life?

Another kind of honest graft. Tammany has raised a good many salaries. There was an awful howl by the reformers, but don't you know that Tammany gains ten votes for every one it lost by salary raisin'?

The Wall Street banker thinks it shameful to raise a department clerk's salary from \$1500 to \$1800 a year, but every man who draws a salary himself says: "That's all right. I wish it was me." And he feels very much like votin' the Tammany ticket on election day, just out of sympathy.

Tammany was beat in 1901 because the people were deceived into believin' that it worked dishonest graft. They didn't draw a distinction between dishonest and honest graft, but they saw that some Tammany men grew rich, and supposed they had been robbin' the city treasury or levyin' blackmail on disorderly houses, or workin' in with the gamblers and lawbreakers.

As a matter of policy, if nothing else, why should the Tammany leaders go into such dirty business, when there is so much honest graft lyin' around when they are in power? Did you ever consider that?

Now, in conclusion, I want to say that I don't own a dishonest dollar. If my worst enemy was given the job of writin' my epitaph when I'm gone, he couldn't do more than write:

"George W. Plunkitt. He Seen His Opportunities, and He Took 'Em."