

Reform Movements of the Nineteenth Century Reference Sheet

HANDOUT

Guiding Question

- How did reform movements in the early nineteenth century address the social and economic challenges of the era?

Objectives

- ☐ I can analyze reform movements from the nineteenth century.
- ☐ I can analyze a historical quote and match it to the reform movement it supports.

Directions: Read the description of each reform movement. Then cut the quote from the sheet given by your teacher and place it in the white space. Check you have the correct quotes before pasting the quotes.

Movement	Information
Abolition	The Abolition Movement was a major reform effort in the 1800s to end slavery in the United States. Abolitionists believed slavery was morally wrong and went against the country's founding principles of liberty and equality. They used speeches, newspapers, books, and petitions to spread their message. Some well-known abolitionists included Frederick Douglass, a formerly enslaved man who became a powerful speaker and writer, and William Lloyd Garrison, who published an anti-slavery newspaper called <i>The Liberator</i> . The movement faced strong resistance, especially in the South, but it grew over time and helped build momentum for the Civil War and the eventual end of slavery with the Thirteenth Amendment.

Education	<p>During the 1800s, reformers pushed to improve public education in the United States. Many believed that a strong democracy needed informed citizens, and that education could help reduce poverty and crime. Horace Mann, known as the “Father of Public Education,” led efforts to create free, tax-supported schools for all children. He also worked to train teachers and set standards for schools. Education reformers wanted schools to teach basic skills, good behavior, and citizenship. Their work helped make schooling more widely available, especially in the North, though access was still limited for girls, Black children, and others.</p>
Prison	<p>In the 1800s, Dorothea Dix led a major reform movement to improve the treatment of prisoners and people with mental illnesses. At the time, many jails were overcrowded, unsanitary, and cruel. After visiting dozens of prisons, Dix was horrified by the conditions and began campaigning for change. She wrote detailed reports and spoke directly to lawmakers, convincing many that people with mental illnesses deserved care, not punishment. Her efforts led to the creation of state hospitals and reforms in prison systems across the country, helping shift public opinion toward more humane treatment.</p>
Religion	<p>The Second Great Awakening was a religious revival movement that swept through the United States in the early 1800s. It encouraged people to take a more personal and emotional approach to faith, often through large outdoor revivals and passionate preaching. Leaders like Charles Grandison Finney believed that individuals could choose to be saved and had a duty to improve the world around them. This movement inspired many Americans to get involved in social reform, including abolition, temperance, and women’s rights. It helped connect religious belief with the idea that people could—and should—work to make society more moral and just.</p>

Temperance	A social reform effort in the 1800s aimed to reduce or completely ban the use of alcohol. Many reformers believed alcohol was the cause of serious problems like poverty, domestic violence, and crime. The movement was especially strong among women and religious groups who saw alcohol as a threat to families and moral values. Organizations like the American Temperance Society spread the message through speeches, pamphlets, and rallies. The movement eventually led to Prohibition in the early 1900s, when alcohol was banned nationwide for over a decade.
Women's Rights	The Women's Rights Movement in the 1800s began as women became more involved in other reform efforts, like abolition and temperance, and started to fight for their own rights. Many women were frustrated by laws that denied them the right to vote, own property, or speak in public. In 1848, leaders like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized the Seneca Falls Convention, the first major women's rights meeting in the U.S. There, they wrote the <i>Declaration of Sentiments</i> , demanding equality and the right to vote. While change came slowly, this movement laid the foundation for future progress in women's rights.

"I proceed, gentlemen, briefly to call your attention to the present state of insane persons confined within this Commonwealth, in cages, closets, cellars, stalls, pens! Chained, naked, beaten with rods, and lashed into obedience."

"I ask no favor for my sex. All I ask of our brethren is that they take their feet off our necks."

"The world is moving forward, and the time will come when a man will be ashamed to admit that he ever used intoxicating drinks."

"There is not a man beneath the canopy of heaven that does not know that slavery is wrong for him."

"Revival is the great work of God, and it is the great work of man to promote it."

"Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men—the balance-wheel of the social machinery."

