

Preparing for the Progressive Era in American History

What are the qualities of a free and humane society?

I. Below are a number of actions, both in the past in the present, that were taken by either a state, a local, or the federal government.

For each action (column I) decide if it made or is currently making America a more free (column II), and/or a more humane society (column III).

II. Possible ways to view each of the actions

In completing this activity you may decide for each of the actions that it makes society

- more free, but less humane
- less free, but more humane
- both more free and more humane
- both less free and less humane

III. Below are sample dictionary definitions of “free” and “humane.” You should use these definitions to help explain your thinking for each action.

Free –

- Enjoying personal freedom: not subject to the control or domination of another (Merriam Webster online dictionary).
- Not restricted in rights: not subject to censorship or control by a ruler, government, or other authority, and enjoying civil liberties (MSN Encarta)

Humane –

- Marked or motivated by concern with the alleviation of suffering. (Webster’s Online Dictionary).
- Characterized by kindness, mercy or compassion. (American Heritage College Dictionary).

Column I – Actions	Column II Does this action make American society more or less free? Justify your answer.	Column III Does this action make American society more or less humane? Justify your answer.
<p>1) In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, all 50 states passed mandatory school attendance laws, requiring students to attend school.</p>		
<p>2) Passed by Congress on July 2, 1909, and ratified February 3, 1913, the 16th amendment established Congress's right to impose a Federal income tax. This tax pays for many government services, including national defense, roads and highways, disaster relief, unemployment insurance, food and nutrition programs, and health care.</p>		
<p>3) The famous Supreme Court case, <i>Roe v. Wade (1973)</i>, made it legal for woman to have an abortion.</p>		

<p>4) In 1994, California voters passed the “3 Strikes Law” which required that individuals who received 3 separate felonies would serve 25 years to life in prison.</p>		
<p>5) In 2003, New York became one of the many states to ban smoking in most enclosed public places.</p>		
<p>6) San Francisco has a law that requires businesses with 20 or more employees to contribute to the cost of workers' health care, Restaurants in San Francisco with more than 20 workers now add an additional 4% charge to the cost of each meal to help pay for their workers' health care.</p>		
<p>7) In November a ballot initiative was passed that changed the California Constitution to make same sex marriage illegal.</p>		

II. Now that you have completed this activity complete the following three sentences, using your own words, ideas, and beliefs.

1) *A free society* is a society that _____

2) *A humane society* is a society that _____

3) *A humane and free society* is a society that _____

