

Name _____ Date _____

Advanced English

The Jungle - Upton Sinclair

Upton Sinclair wrote this novel at the turn of the 20th century at the height of the industrial boom and *laissez-faire* capitalism. His stated intent was to illustrate the plight of industrial workers in the U.S. and to swing popular opinion toward a socialist economy.

Answer each question in a complete paragraph.

1. Is Jurgis really a victim, or could he have escaped life in the Chicago stockyards if he truly wished? Explain.

2. At what point did you think Jurgis had reached “rock bottom” and that things couldn’t possibly get any worse for him? Were you correct, or did he continue to sink to new lows?

3. Describe how the immigrants in Packingtown were “forced” into poverty. Is there any way for them to overcome this situation? Explain.

4. Do a little research on the novel’s background and include the following:
 - how Sinclair did his research for writing it
 - the claims he made in the novel about conditions in the meat-packing industry and its workers, and whether those claims were verified or substantiated
 - since he failed at his stated goal in writing the book (see above), what *did* he accomplish with it?