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Aim: Why did Jacob Riis sensationalize life on the Lower East Side ?

Do Now: List things that you need to convict someone of murder

Add to the list of physical evidence the idea that a sympathetic jury is also integral to getting a conviction

Hang 8 to 10 of Jacob Riis photos around the room and explain to students that, in the spirit of crime reporter Riis, they are to gather evidence from the photos about the living conditions of immigrants on the Lower East Side

Students then share their evidence, creating a list of problems that are identified in the book *How the Other Half Lives*.

Raise the question : If these scenes create an unsympathetic portrait of immigrant life, how would the book promote reform ?

Have students read the first page of the Introduction to *How the Other Half Lives* and answer these questions :

- 1 Why didn't the one half of the world know how the other lived originally ?
- 2 What violent upheaval did Riis mention specifically and when did it occur ?
- 3 How did Riis tie crime to the living conditions of criminals ?
- 4 What shift in the population balance of New York City did Riis point to ?
- 5 Explain Riis' quote " We know now that there is no way out; that the "system" that was the evil offspring of public neglect and private greed has come to stay, a storm-centre forever in our civilization."
- 6 What tone is Riis setting in the introduction to *How the Other Half Lives* and why ?

Group discussion / Summary:

Given that many of the photos are staged, what message was Riis trying to send about the lives of immigrants ?

How did the introduction of *How the Other Half Lives* expand on this message ?

How did the sense of crisis that Riis created in *How the Other Half Lives* become a call to action for reform ?

