

## LESSON PLAN:

# Childhood Lost: Child Labor in the United States, 1830-1930

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**Grade:** 5, 11

**Subject:** U.S. History

**Time required:** two 50-60 min. class periods

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### OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will use photographs by Lewis Hines and others to describe working conditions that child laborers faced and how these photographs helped change child labor laws.

### GOAL

Students will

- describe the working conditions for child laborers
- understand that photographs of children at work helped to change labor laws.

### OBJECTIVES

The learner will

- hypothesize what working conditions were like for child laborers.
- interpret a visual primary source to describe the working conditions child laborers faced.
- synthesize information from class discussion and reading to create a “biography” for the child in their photograph.

### INVESTIGATIVE QUESTION

What would it be like to be a kid and have a full-time job during the Industrial Revolution and Progressive Era (1830-1930) in the United States?



### MATERIALS USED

- Child Labor Photo Analysis Worksheet—5<sup>th</sup> grade
- Child Labor Photo Analysis Worksheet—11<sup>th</sup> grade
- “Child Labor in U.S. History” from *Child Labor Public Education Project*  
[http://www.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/laborctr/child\\_labor/about/us\\_history.html](http://www.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/laborctr/child_labor/about/us_history.html)

## MATERIALS USED

### Library of Congress Primary Sources

- Noon hour at An Indianapolis Cannery. Aug., 1908. Location: Indianapolis, Indiana. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ncl2004000154/PP/>
- Breaker boys in Kohinor mine, Shenandoah City, Pa. [1891] <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/93500119/>
- Boys "linking" bed-springs. 14 and 15 years old. Location: Boston, Massachusetts <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ncl2004004919/PP/>
- 3 year old girl and 2 boys hulling berries at Johnson's Canning Camp, Seaford, Del. Location: Seaford, Delaware. [1910] <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ncl2004002312/PP/>
- A Basket Factory, Evansville, Ind. Girls Making Melon Baskets. Location: Evansville, Indiana. [1908] <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ncl2004000234/PP/>
- One of the small boys in J. S. Farrand Packing Co. and a heavy load. J. W. Magruder, witness. Location: Baltimore, Maryland. [1909; *see detail on p. 1*] <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ncl2004000722/PP/>
- Rhodes Mfg. Co., Lincolnton, N.C. National Child Labor Committee. No. 282. Girl on left said...[1908] <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ncl2004000962/PP/>
- Knoxville Knitting Works. Location: Knoxville, Tennessee. [1910; *see detail at right*] <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ncl2004002577/PP/>
- Manuel, the young shrimp-picker, five years old, and a mountain of child-labor oyster shells behind him. He worked... [1911] <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ncl2004002656/PP/>
- Little Nettie ?, a regular oyster-shucker in Alabama Canning Co. She speaks no English. Note the condition of her shoes... [1911] <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ncl2004002660/PP/>



## CURRICULUM STANDARDS

### 5<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies

- 5.5.spi.4. Recognize the rights that workers fought for in the late 1800s (i.e., wages, hours, insurance, and working conditions).
- 5.5.tpi.5. Publish a class magazine showing how industry and mechanization changed American life from 1870-1900.
- 5.5.tpi.6. Distinguish fact from fiction by examining documentary sources.
- 5.5.tpi.7. Analyze primary sources not limited to but including artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, art, documents, newspapers, contemporary media and computer information systems to make generalizations about events and life in United States history since 1865.

### 11<sup>th</sup> grade U.S. History

- 7.3 performance indicators state. Recognize the progress of political and social reform in America during this era (i.e., Women's Suffrage, Regulation of food and drug, Initiative, Referendum, and Recall, protection of workers' rights, Antitrust Supreme Court decisions, Muckrakers).

## PROCEDURE:

- Step 1: Connect** Before class begins, divide students into groups of 3 or 4. Print one copy of “Noon hour at An Indianapolis Cannery” for each group or arrange to display it with an LCD projector. Print one of the other photographs and its bibliographic information for each group.
- \* If this will be the first time your students work with visual primary sources, choose another photograph for whole class discussion. Either print a copy of it for each group or arrange to display it with the projector. This primary source will be used in Step 4.
- Step 2: Connect** Show students the photograph “Noon hour at An Indianapolis Cannery” and ask the students to come up with a theory of what is happening in the photograph. Discuss their responses. Explain that the children shown were on a lunch break from their jobs.
- Step 3: Wonder** Ask students to speculate what working conditions for children were like in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Record student responses on a white board or transparency
- Step 4: Construct** (Optional) If this is the first time your students have worked with visual primary sources, include this step; otherwise skip to Step 5.
- Pass out copies of the photograph chosen earlier for class discussion or display it using the projector. Give each group a copy of the analysis handout you will be using. Lead a class discussion that guides the students to answer the questions on the handout.
- Step 5: Construct** Pass out an additional analysis handout and one photograph with bibliographic information for each group. Allow the students ample time to discuss the photograph and answer the questions.
- Step 6: Express** Allow students to display their photograph and share their responses with the class.
- Step 7: Reflect** Display the list of working conditions the students created earlier. Allow the students to add, subtract or alter their earlier assumptions based on viewing the photographs.
- END OF DAY 1
- Step 8: Construct** Student groups should have same photograph as yesterday. Give each student a copy of “Child Labor in U.S. History.” Ask students to read and discuss the information within their groups. They should highlight any facts from the reading they found surprising. Depending on the reading level of the class, you may need to divide the reading into shorter passages.

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- Step 9: Express** Allow groups to share their “surprising” facts from the reading. Discuss why they were surprising.
- Step 10: Connect** Explain to students that many of the photographs they have been studying were taken as evidence of child labor practices and were used to help get laws concerning child labor passed.
- Step 11 (5<sup>th</sup> grade): Express** Ask students to imagine that they are one of the children in the photographs. They should work as a group to write a paragraph describing the child’s life as a laborer. Encourage them to use descriptive language and details from the class discussion in their paragraph. Remind the students to look at the bibliographic information for their photographs as a starting point.
- Step 11 (11<sup>th</sup> grade): Express** Ask the students to imagine that they are members of the National Child Labor Committee. They are planning a full page ad in tomorrow’s newspaper in support of a constitutional amendment to regulate child labor. They have just received the photograph from one of their photographers in the field and must now write a paragraph to accompany the photograph and to persuade citizens to support the amendment.

## EVALUATION

Use the following rubric to evaluate student paragraphs:

90-100	Paragraph has 5 to 6 sentences, uses descriptive language and details from class discussion and correct grammar.
80-89	Paragraph has 4 to 5 sentences, uses some descriptive language and some details from class discussion and mostly correct grammar.
70-79	Paragraph has 3 to 4 sentences, uses little descriptive language or few details from class discussion and incorrect grammar.
69 and below	Paragraph has 3 sentences, uses little descriptive language or few details from class discussion and mostly incorrect grammar.

## EXTENSION

- Allow students to correct and revise paragraphs then display them along with the photograph in a booklet or in the hallway for parents’ night.
- Compare child labor in the U.S. in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century with child labor in the modern world. Compare the photographs of modern child laborers at [http://www.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/laborctr/child\\_labor/](http://www.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/laborctr/child_labor/) with the historic photographs. Discuss the similarities and differences.
- (11<sup>th</sup> Grade) Ask students with part-time jobs to describe their working conditions and the regulations that their employers are supposed to follow. Ask them to reflect on the similarities and differences of modern working conditions with those of the past.