

Introductory Lesson: Children at Work: A Brief Look
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AHTC Summer Institute: 2008

Abstract:

In this lesson students will examine their own ideas about labor/work in general, and more specifically about work for young people.

Essential Questions/Enduring Understandings:

- What does labor mean?
- Who is supposed to perform labor or work?
- What work can and should young people do?

Assessment:

The students will participate in small and large group discussions and will respond in writing to several quotations about child labor.

Setting the Purpose:

Students will consider what work is, who should work, and what kind of work young people should do. They will use this background knowledge as they explore the history of child labor in the United States and the existence of child labor today.

Duration:

One class period.

Procedure:

Part 1: Building Background

- Be sure students understand that labor and work are synonyms.
- Have students think about the work that they do by filling out the Personal Reflection sheet.
- After students have had a few minutes to complete the sheet, ask them to tell a partner about their response.
- As a group, define the word “work”, including different kinds.
- Finally, make a class chart of the types of work that the students said they did.

Part 2: Quotation Activity

- Prepare 5” x 8” cards with one labor quotation on each. See the Quotations page for ideas.
- Put students into groups of 3 or 4 and give each group a Response to Quotations sheet. As time allows, give the groups time to read and respond to several quotations, rotating the quotation cards through the groups.

Part 3: Group Discussion

- Either in small groups or as a whole group, have the students

discuss the following questions:

- Should children work?
- What age is appropriate for children to work?
- What kind of work is OK for children to do?
- Should children of different ages be able to do different kinds of work?
- What kinds of work are not appropriate for children to do?

Analysis of Primary Sources:

Students will use the Response to Quotations sheet to consider the primary sources.

Attachments:

- Personal Reflection
- Quotations
- Response to Quotations