

# American Industrial Revolution

## INTRODUCTION

The American Industrial Revolution marked a new age of technological progress and commercial production. Spanning from the 1820s to the 1870s, the Industrial Revolution brought advancements in areas such as steam power, transportation, communication technologies, electricity, and chemical manufacturing. With the increase of production brought on by these advances, the need for laborers grew rapidly. Both adults and children worked in factories, coal mines, and mills. Children were particularly useful because their small size allowed them to navigate narrow spaces and handle tiny machine parts, and employers could pay them less than adults even though they were expected to work just as hard. At this time, primary school attendance was not mandatory and many boys and girls were forced to go to work to help financially support their families. Given the poor labor conditions, many children suffered from long term illnesses, amputation, and even death. By 1900 people began to advocate for labor reform and many men and women began photographing factories and child laborers to spur public support. In this lesson, students will learn about the Industrial Revolution through original photographs of child laborers by Ewing Galloway.

## GRADES 9-10 MATERIALS

- » Primary Source Documents: Two photographs of child laborers by Ewing Galloway.
- » Investigative Worksheet.

## STANDARDS

### NY State Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

### Common Core: CC6-8RH/SS2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

### AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner: 2.1.1

Continue an inquiry-based research process by applying critical thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, organization) to information and knowledge in order to construct new understandings, draw conclusions, and create new knowledge.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Using primary sources related to child labor, students will:

- » Learn about primary sources, what they are and how they can be used to help understand the past.
- » Expand their understanding of the role of child laborers during the American Industrial Revolution.
- » Apply their critical thinking skills to create a newspaper front page that uses headlines, articles (investigative pieces, opinion columns, statistics), and images to advocate for child labor reform during the American Industrial Revolution.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment should be largely based on the student's creation of a newspaper front page that their ability to:

- » Decipher primary source documents.
- » Demonstrate their understanding of the rise of child labor laws during the American Industrial Revolution.
- » Use different visual and textual strategies to convince the public that labor reform for children is important.

*Working individually, students should take what they have learned during the lesson about child labor and create the front page of a newspaper that uses headlines, images, and articles (investigative pieces, opinion columns, and statistics) to advocate for child labor reform during the American Industrial Revolution. The newspaper front page should exhibit proper grammatical structure and as well as a creative use of typography, design, and images.*

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## GETTING STARTED

- » Explain that primary sources are original documents that tell us about the historical moments in which they were written. Ask the following questions: How can you tell that you are looking, touching, or listening to a primary source? What is a secondary source? Explain that secondary sources are interpretations of primary sources.
- » Introduce the skill of the lesson. In this lesson students will learn about the American Industrial Revolution and the difficulties faced by child laborers (See Teacher's Notes). Explain that during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries people began to advocate for legal reforms that would protect children who worked in factories. In order to get new regulations and laws passed, these reformers needed to convince the public that child labor was an important issue. One of the most persuasive ways of getting public support was to use the mass media of the time, such as newspapers.
- » Explain that the students will each create a newspaper front page that uses different strategies to convince the public that child labor reform is important. The students will need to use their textbooks and/or other secondary sources to provide factual background information for their newspaper front page.

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### DIRECT INSTRUCTION

1. Show the students the “Child Mascot of Coal Miners for Wilkes-Barre Coal” and the “Destitute Children Picking up Coal from Waste Piles before Winter.” Ask students to describe and discuss what they see.
2. Break the students into groups to develop questions they might ask child laborers if they were investigative reporters who worked during the Industrial Revolution. Have the groups share the questions they would ask the child laborers.
3. Ask the students: What kind of information would the public need to know in order to convince them that child labor needed to be reformed? Have the students give pro and con points of view to further discussion. Write the students’ ideas on the board.
4. Have the students look at examples of the front page of a newspaper and discuss the strategies used by the newspapers to grab a reader’s attention, such as the use of photographs and headlines. Point out other aspects of the newspaper front page, such as the date, weather, location, reporter’s bylines, and the use of tables and statistics. After looking at the sample newspapers ask the students if they have any other ideas to add to the board.
5. Give each student a large blank sheet of newsprint paper. For homework, each student should create a newspaper front page on that sheet using one of the two primary source photographs like and an interview by an investigative reporter based on their in-class work as a starting point. The students should also use the ideas generated in class to create other types of articles that advocate for (or against) child labor reform. Remind students that their newspaper should look like they are from the time of the American Industrial Revolution (1820s to the 1870s).

### REFLECTION AND SHARING

- » Have the students hang their newspaper front pages around the classroom and discuss the different strategies that they used to grab the attention of readers.
- » Ask the students to compare the arguments made for labor reform with other kinds of reform.
- » Ask the students to reflect on how images are used in mass media today to persuade people. How are images used online, on television, and in advertisements to persuade us to do things?



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“Destitute Children Picking up Coal from Waste Piles before Winter,” n.d., Ewing Galloway Collection of Photographs, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.



“Child Mascot of Coal Miners for Wilkes-Barre Coal,” n.d., Ewing Galloway Collection of Photographs, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.