

**LESSON PLAN**

**Hard Work: Children and Assembly Lines**

FOUNDATION: *UNIT V. International Human Rights in the Domestic US Context*

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LENGTH	NEBRASKA SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS	McREL NATIONAL STANDARDS
2 – 3 days	US History: 12.1.5 World History: 12.1.13, 12.2.8, 12.2.9 World Geography: 12.4.4	US History: 12.1.2, 12.1.4 World History: 12.3.2 Government: 12.7.2

OBJECTIVES	TERMS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students will role-play a day in the life of a turn of the century assembly line employee.</li><li>2. Students will react to and discuss the pros and cons of life as an assembly line worker to discover why there became a need for Child Labor laws.</li><li>3. Students will compare their experience (and the result of Child Labor laws) to sweat shops of today to decide whether or not the US is violating International laws against workers.</li></ol>	Assembly Line Child Labor Laws Sweatshop

MATERIALS
Scratch paper and pens or pencils Board or easel Websites: US Dept. of Labor: Youth and Labor <a href="http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/youthlabor/">http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/youthlabor/</a> Child Labor in the US <a href="http://www.stopchildlabor.org/USchildlabor/fact1.htm">http://www.stopchildlabor.org/USchildlabor/fact1.htm</a> The History Place: Child Labor in America <a href="http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/">http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/</a> Bureau of International Labor Affairs <a href="http://www.dol.gov/ilab/">http://www.dol.gov/ilab/</a> International Child Labor Laws <a href="http://www.rugmark.org/index.php?cid=30">http://www.rugmark.org/index.php?cid=30</a> CRC (Rights of the Child) <a href="http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm">http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm</a> BBC: Gap and Nike: No Sweat <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/panorama/archive/970385.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/panorama/archive/970385.stm</a> PBS: No Sweat: Labor's Pains <a href="http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/business/jan-june97/sweatshops_4-14.html">http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/business/jan-june97/sweatshops_4-14.html</a>

*(This lesson could follow class chapter study on the Industrial Revolution and the creation of the assembly line.)*

**Day One:**

- I. Have each student draw a sketch of a doll on a piece of scratch paper, but do not give away why. Tell students not to put their names on them.
- II. Shuffle the pictures and have the students vote on the top three dolls in the pile. Keep the three and discard the rest.

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**Day Two**

- III. Before students enter the classroom, move the desks into three equal rows, all facing the front of the room in single file lines. At the front of each row place a stack of scratch paper and one of the three doll pictures.
- IV. As the students enter the room, the teacher begins role-play of an assembly line foreman. Direct the students where to sit, allow no talking or laughing, and turn lights off to add to the feel of authenticity. Explain to students that they are workers on an assembly line at a paper doll company. Each row is its own line and each line is responsible for completing as many EXACT replicas of the picture in front of them as possible. Have the students pass the picture down the row so that each person has the opportunity to see what they will be drawing.
- V. Next, give each student in each row a specific job in creating the whole doll. For example, first in line is responsible for the outline of the head and ears, next: shoulders and arms, third: legs, fourth: shoes, fifth: face, sixth: details, etc.
  - a. The next to last person will be Quality Control, whose job will be to pick and choose only the pictures closest to the original. Quality Control is the only person on the line allowed to speak and direct the rest of the group.
  - b. Last person in line will be the Counter, who must keep track of how many dolls are useable and how many are not.
  - c. Teacher's role: It's up to the teacher to make the students' experience feel real by role-playing the foreman as well as possible.
- VI. After directions are given and keeping the lights off, begin the experiment by telling the students that their shift has just begun at 4A.M. Blow a whistle or holler, "Go!" Each group is in competition for keeping their jobs. Only the assembly line that creates the most useable number of dolls will stay employed.
  - a. Add to the experience by yelling, throwing away pictures that are not close, firing assembly workers, and then directing the person in front of or behind the fired employee that he or she is now responsible for the missing link's work as well as his or her own.
  - b. Continue the experience for 20-30 minutes. Go through an entire day (lights off in the morning, no rest break for lunch, lights on for night). Then after their shift, blow the whistle again and have assembly lines count up useable paper dolls.
- VI. On the board in front of the room create three columns, and label each with the following groups:
  - a. Assembly worker adult
  - b. Foreman
  - c. Assembly worker child
- VII. Open up the discussion with Pros and Cons for each type of worker.  
Example: What were some pros about being on the assembly line?  
Possible Responses: Easy work, Only responsible for one job

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***Day Three:***

- VIII.** Refer to Day Two's list that included child workers. Introduce the idea of Child Labor laws. Why did we need them?
- a. Using computers, have students locate information regarding Child Labor laws. (Use those listed above as starting points, but encourage further exploration.)
  - b. Have the students browse through the information looking for specific examples of laws created as a possible result of employee treatment on the assembly lines.
- IX.** Assessment: Have the students write an opinion paper on how sweatshops of today compare to turn of the century assembly line treatment.
- a. Compare modern sweatshops to older assembly lines.
  - b. Could the United States be held responsible for violating Child Labor laws by using sweatshops? Explain