

DBQ6: Child Labor

WebQuest Description: Looking at Child Labor in the early-mid 19th century through the use of primary and secondary documents.

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum: Social Studies

Keywords: Elizabeth Bentley, Child Factory Labor, Child Mine Workers, John Charles Spencer, Michael Sadler

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Introduction

The four documents below tell us about child labor during the early Industrial Revolution and how different people saw the issue.

Tasks

DOCUMENT BASED QUESTIONS Create a DOCUMENT in Google Drive and name it DBQ6-Child Labor. Put your responses to the questions that show up for each document here. Study the selections and answer the questions that follow. Examine the selections and answer the questions that follow. After you have studied the documents, you will be asked to describe the connection between child labor and public attitudes. You will need to use evidence from these selections and from our study to support the position you take in your explanation.

Process

In 1815 the British Parliament sent out researchers to interview child workers and learn more about factory conditions. Here is an excerpt from an interview with a young woman who had worked in a textile mill. Q. What were the hours of labour* when you were not so thronged [busy]? A. From six in the morning till seven at night. Q. What time was allowed for meals? A. Forty minutes at noon. Q. Had you any time to get your breakfast or drinking? A. No, we had to get it as we could. Q. Do you consider doffing a laborious employment? A. Yes. Q. Explain what you had to do. A. When the frames are full, they have to stop the frames, and take the flyers off, and take the full bobbins off, and carry them to the roller, and then put empty ones on, and set the frame going again. Q. Does that keep you constantly on your feet? A. Yes, there are so many frames and they run so quick. Q. Your labour is very excessive? A. Yes, you have not time for anything. Q. Suppose you flagged [slowed down] a little, or were late, what would they do? A. Strap [whip] us. Q. And they are in the habit of strapping those who are last in doffing? A. Yes. Q. Constantly? A. Yes. *labour is the BRITISH spelling of the word labor. Document 1a. What were some of the problems that Elizabeth Bentley faced at the factory? b. How does Elizabeth's plain way of speaking affect your reaction to her testimony?

Factory owners preferred to hire children and women rather than men. Men expected higher wages, and employers suspected that they were more likely to rebel against the strict rules and conditions that were common in factories. The children were subject to harsh punishment if they were late, fell behind in their work, or talked too much. Document 2a. Describe what this scene shows. b. Does this illustration confirm or contradict what was said in Document 1? Explain your answer.

Children were also hired to work in Great Britain's coal mines. In this drawing, you see an older, stronger worker (a woman) wearing a harness and pulling a cart full of coal. Smaller children push the cart from behind. Document 3a. Describe what would happen to the small children if the worker in the harness were to fall or stumble? b. How do you think the person who drew this picture felt about children working in the mines?

John Charles Spencer was a member of the British Parliament's House of Commons. Although he supported some reforms for child workers, he was against a proposed law to limit their work day to 10 hours. Here he addresses Michael Sadler, a fellow member who proposed the law, in a speech. I am of the opinion that the effect... must necessarily be a fall in the rate of wages, or, what is more probable, that children would cease to be employed at all in manufactories. Now I appeal to the honourable member whether a measure which would prevent children from obtaining any employment in factories would not be more injurious than beneficial to the labouring classes? As long as we have a manufacturing population in the kingdom it will be impossible to render their occupation as wholesome as that of agricultural labourers, or persons engaged in our-door labour. This is an evil that

cannot be remedied. It is too late now to argue about the unwholesome nature of manufacturing population, and it must be employed. Any measure which shall have the effect of diminishing the means of employment to labourers engaged in manufactures will produce extensive misery. Document 4a. What is Spencer's main argument against the proposal to limit children's workday to 10 hours? b. What social class does Spencer seem to represent, and whose interests is he upholding?

Create an entry in your KID BLOG. Give the title DBQ 6- Child Labor Do the following in that entry. What do you think were the connections among child labor, factory conditions, attitudes about capitalism, reactions to capitalism, and the rise of labor movements? Using the documents above and information from our study, form a thesis that might explain the general impact of child labor on public opinion. Then create a Graphic Organizer (a digital version of the example below) supporting your position. Be sure to include: 1. THESIS STATEMENT 2. SUPPORT FOR YOUR THESIS (Check out the files below before you begin) The LAST file is an example of using DOCUMENTS to create a THESIS statement and then supporting it. Check it out.

Evaluation

Criterion D: Thinking critically Maximum: 8 You should be able to: •analyze concepts, events, issues, models and/or arguments •make connections between information to make valid, well-supported arguments.

Category and Score					Score
				Total Score	

Conclusion

Problems with Child Labor are alive and well today. Across the globe there are factories, fields, and other places that exploit children to do hard manual labor. Many of the things that happened in the past of the so called INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS of today, are still practiced in the DEVELOPING NATIONS that are trying to "catch up."

Teacher Page

Mr. Beavers has worked at JT Moore Middle School through 2013. He joined the faculty of Hillsboro Comprehensive High School in the Fall of 2013 as a member of the Freshman Academy. Mr. Beavers is originally from Florence, Alabama where his family now lives, but grew up in Columbia, Tennessee graduating from Columbia Academy. He has lived in Nashville since 1986.

Standards

Credits

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Other