

Young Boy at Work, 1912

Lesson type: Worksheet

Historical Context

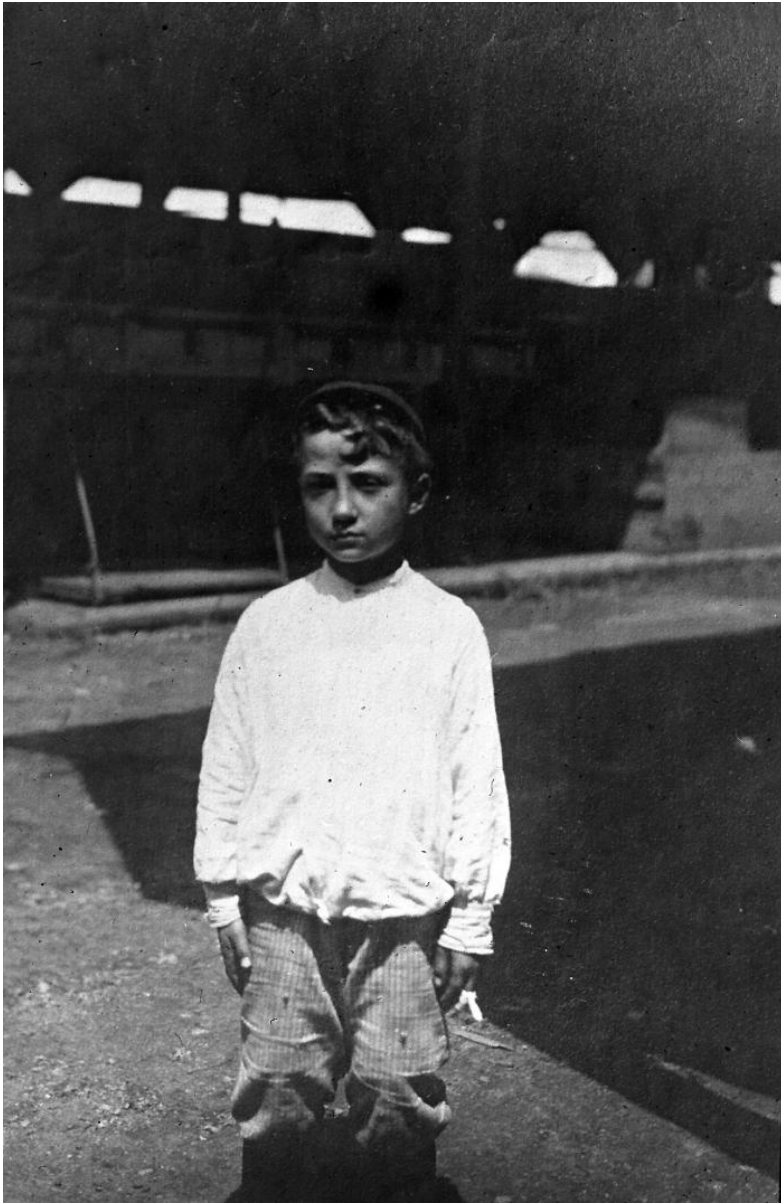
Children who worked illegally in factories were as young as six years old. Their parents, many of whom were new immigrants to the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, were desperate for the additional money. Orphans were treated as slaves, working nineteen-hour days for what their overseers justified as compensation for room and board. Children would work anywhere from twelve to nineteen hours a day, with only a one-hour break. Children often worked near or with large, dangerous, and dirty machines, and often were hurt or killed. The youngest children were assigned as assistants to the older workers, and the older workers often physically or verbally abused the children. Sometimes boys were forced to leave their clothes at work at the end of the day. They were sent home and then back to work the next day naked so they would not be tardy.

Essential Question

How did industrialization change society?

Check for Understanding

Describe the scene in the photograph and evaluate the impact of industrialization on this individual?



Young boy at work, New York State Archives, NYSA_A3029-78_B1_F7

Document Description

Young boy at work from the Factory Investigation Commission records, 1912.

Questions

1. If these children worked all day, when did they go to school?

Historical Challenge

Research the life of a child laborer. Use the book *Lewis W. Hine* by Vicki Goldberg.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Math: If a child made half of what a woman made in one week, and a woman made \$2.78 a week, how much did the child make? If a man made four times what the child made, how much did the man make that week?

Science: Why is it unhealthy for children to work long hours?

English Language Arts: Pretend you are a child laborer. Write a journal entry about what you would rather be doing than working in a factory.

Resources

1. Goldberg, Vicki. *Lewis W. Hine: Children at Work*. Prestel Publishing, September 1999. ISBN: 3791321560