

WASAH Lesson Plan/Unit Project Proposal  
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1. **Historical Topic**

The historical topic I am planning a lesson/unit around is child labor of the late 1800s into the early 1900s. The lesson will consist of class discussions, looking at photographs from the progressive era, reading stories of child laborers, using political cartoons, and journal writing. We also will look at some of the things written about child labor at the time, and then look at today's laws regarding minors in the workforce and how these laws came to be. I think it would be valuable to also discuss what types of labor children have historically been involved in, even before the rise of industry, and what types of labor today's children are involved in. This topic interests me since I think I can make connections for my students with their lives and the past. Also, this topic lends itself to having student centered learning, and not direct instruction from me. I hope to address questions of what life was like 100-150 years ago for children as compared to today. I hope to gain a greater knowledge of the topic and time frame and to convey to my students that knowledge.

2. **WASAH Scholars**

I don't know that I will directly work with any WASAH teaching scholars or presenters for this school year, but I will use information from James Schmidt's presentation in my plan. His session on "Young Workers and the Violence of Industrial Freedom" will influence a lot of my plan. I will use notes from his session and his reading he provided in my classroom. As the year progresses I may find opportunities to reach out to other participants for my lesson. I found this to be the case last year. As with any collaboration, knowledge of new information and methods to teach that information can be gained.

3. **In-Service**

For an in-service, I would like to share with other teachers in my district the information about the Backward Design of teaching. I think this is something our middle and high school teachers should sit down and look at.

4. **Lesson Description**

The lesson would begin after a lesson on the industrial age and making sure all students grasp the concepts of the industrial era and the need for workers. Also, some discussion on why families might need everyone, including children, to go to work. I would begin by asking what types of work the class does (babysitting, mowing lawns, paper boys, etc.), followed with questions about what types of work they think children their age have done in the past (babysitting, farm work, paper boy). Students would then be divided into groups that would rotate to different stations in the room. At those stations would be various images, cartoons, and writings from the time. Students would be given questions to answer at each station; these will help to guide follow-up discussion. After completing the rotations I would have them get into different groups for small group discussions about what they saw and read, followed by a whole class discussion—sharing the small group thoughts. Then I would talk about today's labor laws regarding children their

age. Hopefully this would generate discussion about the differences in the past and today. We would look at how and why these laws came about. I would then have the students journal their thoughts and feelings about child labor in the past and how they might have felt had they grown up then. The closing discussion would focus on the idea of freedom. How did working give those children and their families' freedom? Did children in the past have more freedom than children today? Why or why not? Did children in the past have a different kind of freedom than children today? Was it a better freedom or not? Does working today give children freedom? How?

#### 5. **Class Description**

This lesson will be presented to my eighth grade United States history classes. The school district is a small, more rural than urban area just outside of Oshkosh. Most of the families are middle to lower middle socioeconomic status, with a few middle to upper class families mixed in. Most of my students have gone to school together since first grade and know each other well. I have everything from gifted and talented students to every level of learning disabled in my class. All eighth grade students take my social studies class. My lesson should align with the following Wisconsin academic standards: B.8.1, B.8.2, B.8.4, B.8.5, B.8.8, B.8.9, and B.8.10. These will also be the district standards, they match the state standards.

#### 6. **Relevant Resources**

I will use the book *Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor* by Russell Freedman. Scholastic publishes this book. I will also use the web site <http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/> for images. Two other web sites I will employ are [www.boondocksnet.com/gallery/child\\_labor\\_intro.html](http://www.boondocksnet.com/gallery/child_labor_intro.html) for cartoons and <http://www.ic21.org/childlabor2.html> for stories. Also from the WASAH workshops, I will use the reading provided by James Schmidt, "Young Workers and the Violence of Industrial Freedom." Notes taken during the presentation will also be used. I will continue throughout the year to look for other resources before I teach this lesson too.