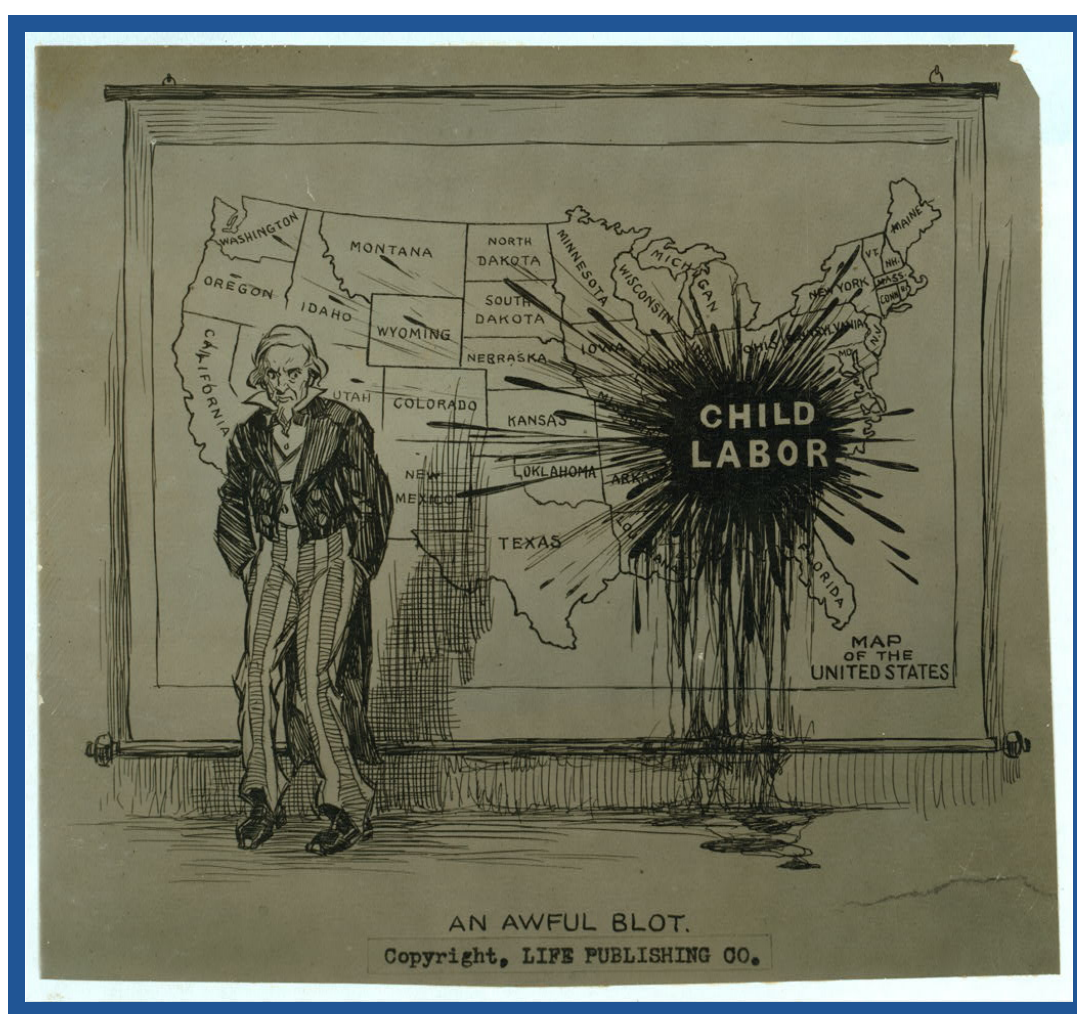


# How did childhood labor impact American childhood and families?



Hine, L. W., photographer. (1914) *Cartoon*. [?] [Image] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ncl2004000340/PP/>.

## Supporting Questions

1. What were the effects of work on the lives of children, both at home and work?
2. What events led to changes in legislation related to child labor?
3. How did changes in labor laws affect family life in United States?

## How did childhood labor impact American childhood and families?

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Inquiry Standard</b>                | C3 Standards Dimension 2 - Change, Continuity and Context; Historical Sources and Evidence  |
| <b>Staging the Compelling Question</b> | Discuss the kinds of industry present in the United States in the 19th century, particularly in the context of what you know about your community. If possible, visit a local 19th century manufacturing site. Below are some links to New England resources that will give a bit of background and generate questions. |

| Supporting Question 1   | Supporting Question 2   | Supporting Question 3   |
|---|---|---|
| What were the effects of work on the lives of children, both at home and work?  | What events led to changes in legislation related to child labor?   | How did changes in labor laws affect family life in United States?  |
| Formative Performance Task  | Formative Performance Task  | Formative Performance Task  |
| Spend time reviewing the resources linked with the question. Reviewing the cartoons from the Library of Congress , as well as images from the National Child Labor Committee Collection , describe the working conditions and the impact of those conditions on the child laborers. Create a graphic organizer to show what you’ve noticed. | Pulling from the identified resources, make a timeline outlining specific events that brought about legislative change. Include details about location of events.                   | Choose two pieces of legislation regarding child labor laws and identify how it impacted life for families.   |
| Featured Sources  | Featured Sources  | Featured Sources  |
| Source A: National Child Labor Committee Cartoon 1913 or 1914<br>Source B: An Awful Blot Source C: The Tread Mill Source D: National Child Labor Committee Collection at the Library of Congress  | Source A: The 1911 Triangle Factory Fire Source B: U.S. Child Labor, 1908-1920 by Michael Jefferies<br>Source C: Child Labor in U.S. History Source D: Vermont Child Labor Timeline | Source A: History of Maine Child Labor Laws Source B: A History of Child Labor Reviewed by Milton Fried Source C: Child Labor Laws in the United States |

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Summative Performance Task</b> | <p><b>ARGUMENT</b><br/>Construct a written argument that explains the value of the safety of children and family structure as opposed to children as an economic unit. Cite evidence to support your argument.</p> <p><b>EXTENSION</b><br/>Choosing images, both photos and cartoons, from the Library of Congress, create an infographic that shows your understanding of the impacts of child labor in the life of a 19th century working family.</p>                           |
| <b>Taking Informed Action</b>     | <p><b>UNDERSTAND</b><br/>Understand the impact of child labor today, particularly in the case of migrant farm families in New England</p> <p><b>ASSESS</b><br/>Assess the costs/benefits of families staying together as they move across the country with the changing seasons.</p> <p><b>ACTION</b><br/>Write a compelling action statement that highlights the value of children being children, including access to education, even in the context of a migratory family.</p> |

## Staging the Compelling Question

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Compelling Question | How did childhood labor impact American childhood and families?   |
| Featured Sources    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Source A:</b> National Child Labor Committee Collection at the Library of Congress</li><li>● <b>Source B:</b> Maine Voices: Family secrets and child labor</li><li>● <b>Source C:</b> Child labor, as depicted in Judy Miller's mural that formerly hung in the Maine Department of Labor, was once common in Maine.</li><li>● <b>Source D:</b> Child Labor in Vermont</li></ul> |

Featured Source A National Child Labor Committee Collection at the Library of Congress

### Excerpt

Founded in 1904, the National Child Labor Committee set out on a mission of "promoting the rights, awareness, dignity, well-being and education of children and youth as they relate to work and working." Starting in 1908, the Committee hired Lewis W. Hine (1874-1940), first on a temporary and then on a permanent basis, to carry out investigative and photographic work for the organization. The more than 5,100 photographic prints and 355 glass negatives in the Prints and Photographs Division's holdings, together with the often extensive captions that describe the photo subjects, reflect the results of this early documentary effort, offering a detailed depiction of working and living conditions of many children--and adults--in the United States between 1908 and 1924. Follow the link in the citation to access the many images of children at work in the early part of the 20th century

### Source:

Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, National Child Labor Committee Collection, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/national-child-lab..>

# Staging the Compelling Question

Featured Source B

Maine Voices: Family secrets and child labor

## Excerpt

FALMOUTH – Recently, Jeffrey Neil Young, an attorney representing the artists suing to reinstall the labor history mural at the Department of Labor, wrote a column about the mural’s significance. In it he describes some of the different scenes depicted, such as Maine mill workers, including child laborers. One of them was my grandmother.

Born in Biddeford in 1872, Emma Bergeron began her work life at 9 years of age as a bobbin girl in the Bates Mill. She pushed what resembled a large shopping cart (empty bobbins in one basket, full ones in another) between the weaving machines and changed the bobbins.

Each weaving machine had a wide, totally unguarded power belt, dangerously close to the bobbin. The eventual result for my grandmother was the loss of a finger. But, I suppose, she was lucky: Somehow she escaped the white lung disease that felled so many of the mill workers.

Many years later, she described to me something of her days spent, from dawn to dusk, in the unventilated, noisy and dangerous weave room but said nothing about what had obviously been the greatest toll: My grandmother, a quite intelligent woman who was fluent in both French and English, could neither read nor write. She could only “make her mark,” like many young mill workers before the protection of child labor laws.

### **FAMILY TIES**

At about the turn of the 20th century, probably long after leaving the mills, Emma Bergeron married Albert O. Marcille, who, in 1910, was elected mayor of Biddeford.

He was the first person of French Canadian extraction to hold that office in the state of Maine, which was a very big deal in predominantly French Biddeford.

Together the couple raised three children who were all to earn degrees beyond high school. One, my Aunt Arline, became a successful teacher in the Biddeford school system. In addition, my grandfather taught night school. But for all of her life until her death in 1969 at 95, my grandmother continued to “make her mark.”

There were the minor problems like being unable to read a cook book or knitting instructions, but there were much more serious consequences.

One day, Cecile Gagne, who lived downstairs in the three decker in which we all lived, came to the door quite upset with the content of an article in *La Presse*, the French language newspaper published in Lewiston.

She placed the paper in my grandmother’s hands and demanded to know what she thought of the article. Even though they had been close friends and neighbors for more than 20 years, Cecile had no inkling that Emma could neither read nor write.

“This should be good,” I thought, but, to my surprise, with carefully worded questions, my grandmother learned everything important in the article and so was able to give her opinion.

All the while, Cecile suspected nothing.

I was beginning to understand the shame being illiterate caused my grandmother and the lengths that she would go to keep her secret.

### **DENIAL**

My grandmother was the long time vice president of the St. Andre Church temperance group, *La Cercle Lacordaire de Sainte Jeanne D’Arc*. Many times the group wanted her to be its president, but she always refused.

She told us privately that she just couldn't pull off being president without someone finding out her secret. I was both very proud of her and sad for her too. It was a great lesson in the importance of literacy for a 7-year-old to learn.

My grandmother, then, was partly responsible for my becoming an English teacher, but all of these years later I wonder why someone in my family didn't teach her to read and write. Was it all denial and secrecy?

I don't know. All those who might have known are dead, and there was no mural in my family to remind us of the toll in human suffering in the workplace before the protection of child labor laws.

Oh, and what about Gov. LePage's role in the removal of the labor history mural? More denial and secrecy or just bad politics?

**Source:**

<http://www.pressherald.com/2011/10/16/family-secre..>

## Staging the Compelling Question

Featured Source C

Child labor, as depicted in Judy Miller's mural that formerly hung in the Maine Department of Labor, was once common in Maine. <http://www.pressherald.com/2011/10/16/family-secre..>



# Staging the Compelling Question

Featured Source D

Child Labor in Vermont

## Excerpt

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In 1845, a fifteen year old Vermonter named Mary Paul went to Lowell, Massachusetts, to work in the **textile mills**. She wrote letters to her family telling them about her work. She was excited to have a job and make money to buy clothes.

By 1910, some people in the United States thought that children should not be working in factories or other dangerous places. Lewis Hine took photographs of children at work to help fight against child labor. He came to Vermont and took photographs in textile mills in North Pownal, Bennington, Burlington and Winooski. He found children doing other jobs in Barre and Rutland. He took their photographs, too.

### Source:

Vermont Historical Society. "Child Labor in Vermont." Vermont History Explorer.  
<https://vermonthistory.org/explorer/activities/chi..> (accessed January 2, 2017).

# Supporting Question 1

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Supporting Question        | What were the effects of work on the lives of children, both at home and work?  |
| Formative Performance Task | Spend time reviewing the resources linked with the question. Reviewing the cartoons from the Library of Congress , as well as images from the National Child Labor Committee Collection , describe the working conditions and the impact of those conditions on the child laborers. Create a graphic organizer to show what you've noticed. |
| Featured Sources           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Source A:</b> National Child Labor Committee Cartoon 1913 or 1914</li><li>● <b>Source B:</b> An Awful Blot</li><li>● <b>Source C:</b> The Tread Mill</li><li>● <b>Source D:</b> National Child Labor Committee Collection at the Library of Congress</li></ul>                                   |

Featured Source A National Child Labor Committee Cartoon 1913 or 1914



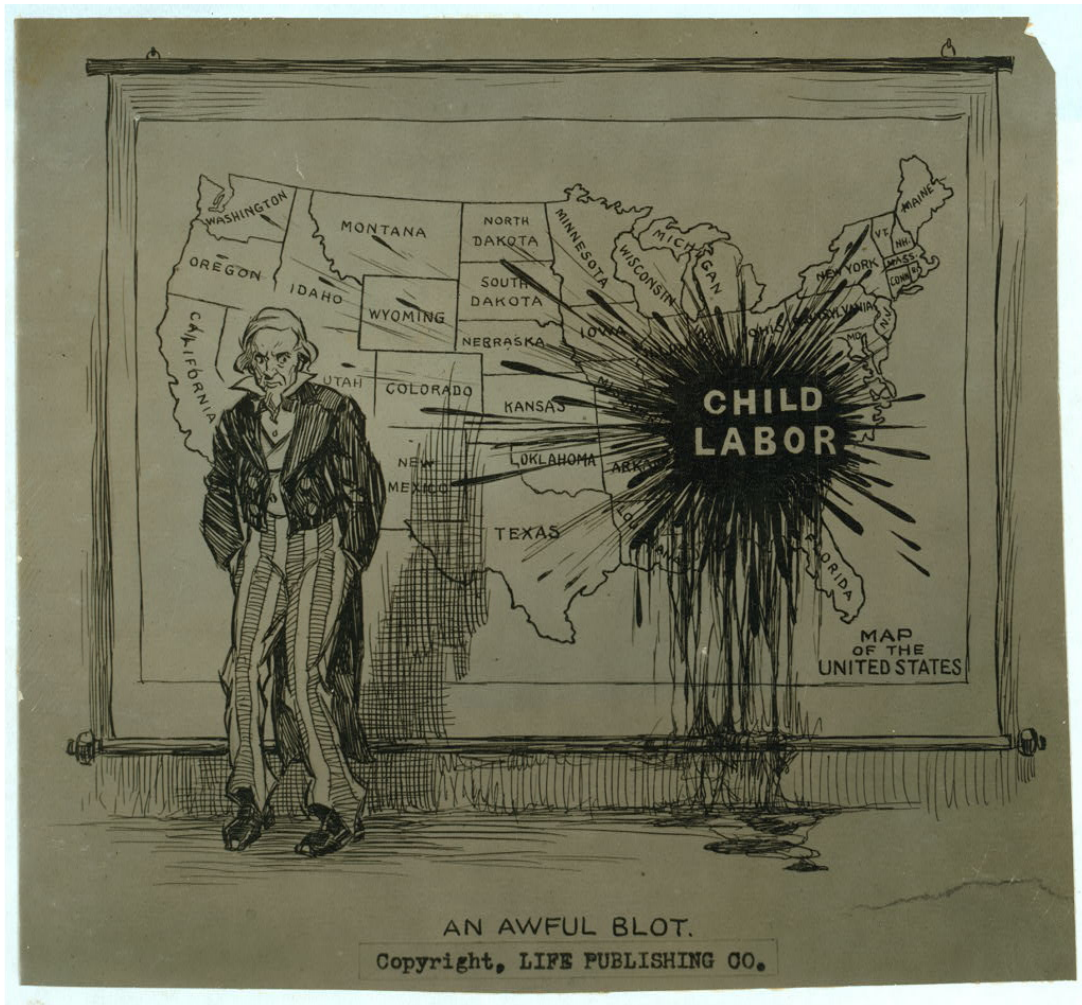
Hine, L. W., photographer. (1913) *Cartoon*. [or 1914?] [Image] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ncl2004002788/PP/>.



# Supporting Question 1

Featured Source B

An Awful Blot

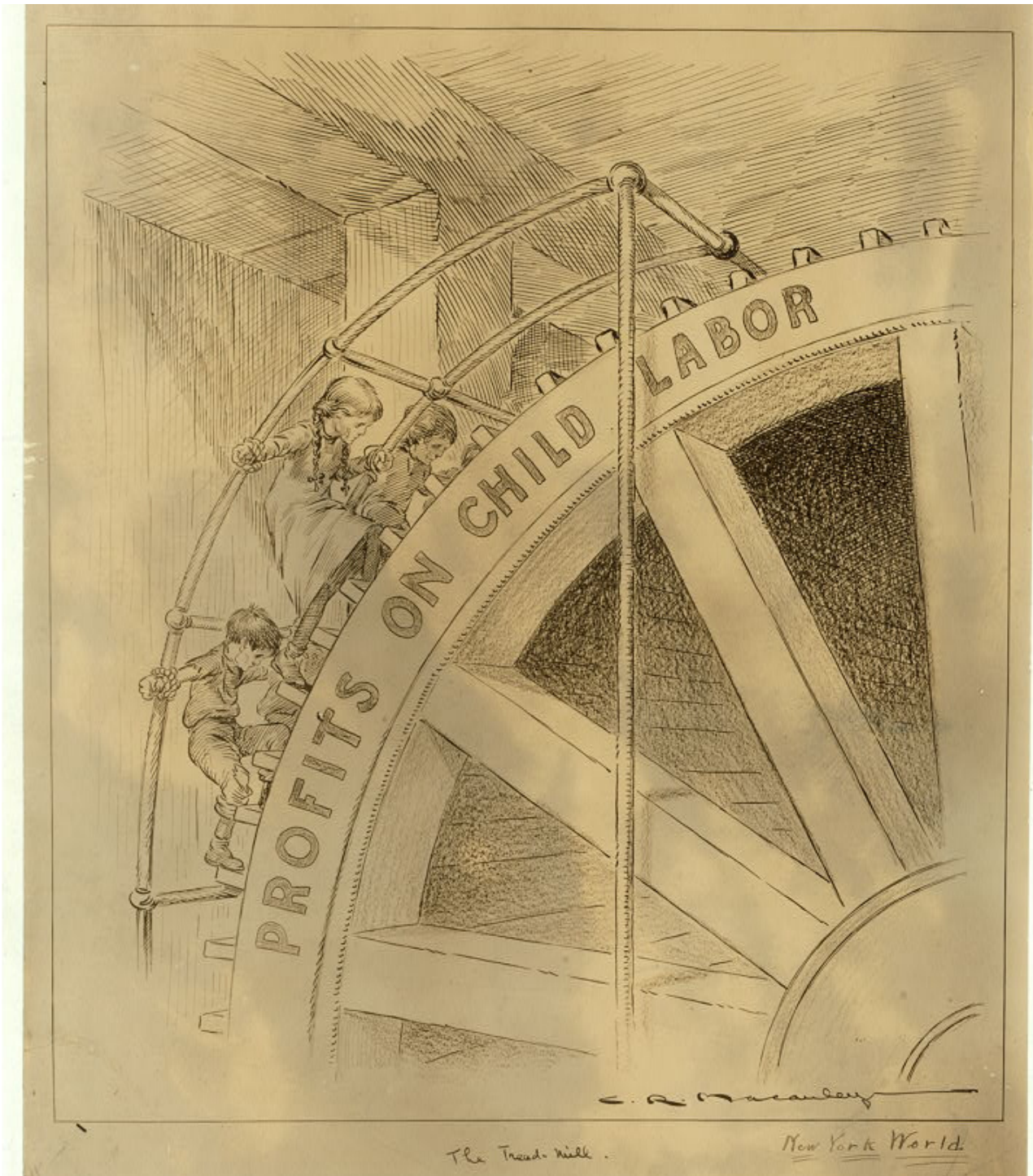


Hine, L. W., photographer. (1914) *Cartoon*. [?] [Image] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ncl2004000340/PP/>.

# Supporting Question 1

Featured Source C

The Tread Mill



Macauley, C. R. (ca. 1913) *The Tread Mill*. [?] [Image] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ncl2004002839/PP/>.

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source D

National Child Labor Committee Collection at the Library of Congress

### Excerpt

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Founded in 1904, the National Child Labor Committee set out on a mission of "promoting the rights, awareness, dignity, well-being and education of children and youth as they relate to work and working." Starting in 1908, the Committee hired Lewis W. Hine (1874-1940), first on a temporary and then on a permanent basis, to carry out investigative and photographic work for the organization. The more than 5,100 photographic prints and 355 glass negatives in the Prints and Photographs Division's holdings, together with the often extensive captions that describe the photo subjects, reflect the results of this early documentary effort, offering a detailed depiction of working and living conditions of many children--and adults--in the United States between 1908 and 1924. Follow the link in the citation to access the many images of children at work in the early part of the 20th century

### Source:

Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, National Child Labor Committee Collection, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/national-child-lab..>

## Supporting Question 2

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Supporting Question        | What events led to changes in legislation related to child labor?  |
| Formative Performance Task | Pulling from the identified resources, make a timeline outlining specific events that brought about legislative change.<br>Include details about location of events.   |
| Featured Sources           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Source A:</b> The 1911 Triangle Factory Fire</li><li>• <b>Source B:</b> U.S. Child Labor, 1908-1920 by Michael Jefferies</li><li>• <b>Source C:</b> Child Labor in U.S. History</li><li>• <b>Source D:</b> Vermont Child Labor Timeline</li></ul> |

Featured Source A      The 1911 Triangle Factory Fire

### Excerpt

# NEAR CLOSING TIME ON MARCH 25, 1911,

a fire broke out at the Triangle Waist Factory in New York City. Within 18 minutes, 146 people were dead as a result of the fire. This site includes original sources on the fire held at the ILR School's Kheel Center, an archive of historical material on labor and industrial relations.

**Source:**

<https://trianglefire.ilr.cornell.edu/index.html>

## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source B

U.S. Child Labor, 1908-1920 by Michael Jefferies

### Excerpt

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A look at child labor in the early 20th century in the United States as represented through the photography of Lewis W. Hine. The film documents the use of child labor in industry, including the exploitation of children and the lower classes in American society. Many of the jobs were extremely dangerous and numerous children and adults were injured or killed in the attempt to advance in society. The viewer must understand the context of the situation at the time and think of the individuals from the perspective that it could be one of their ancestors, in order to fully grasp the emotion of the video.

Source:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tY1gk6J6zc>

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Featured Source C

Child Labor in U.S. History

### Excerpt

The Child Labor Public Education Project of the University of Iowa Labor Center and Center for Human Rights provides educational workshops and materials on a range of issues regarding child labor in the U.S. and other countries:

- causes and consequences of child labor
- history of child labor in the U.S.
- effects of child labor on children's health and workers' rights and international issues such as workers' rights, trade, and economic policies.

**Note:** The adult and k-12 workshop materials available on this website may be downloaded and distributed at no charge. These materials were developed as part of the Child Labor Public Education Project from 2002-2004, and were last updated in 2011.

Source:

<http://www.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/laborctr/chil..>

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Featured Source D

Vermont Child Labor Timeline

### Excerpt

Details from Paul Gillies, "Regulating Child Labor in Vermont," in *The Mills at Winooski Falls*, ed. Laura Krawitt (Winooski: Onion River Press, 2000), 153-170.

Source:

<https://vermonthistory.org/images/stories/childlab..>

## Supporting Question 3

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Supporting Question        | How did changes in labor laws affect family life in United States?   |
| Formative Performance Task | Choose two pieces of legislation regarding child labor laws and identify how it impacted life for families.  |
| Featured Sources           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Source A:</b> History of Maine Child Labor Laws</li> <li>● <b>Source B:</b> A History of Child Labor Reviewed by Milton Fried</li> <li>● <b>Source C:</b> Child Labor Laws in the United States</li> </ul> |

Featured Source A History of Maine Child Labor Laws

### Excerpt

Maine first passed a child labor law during the industrial revolution when child labor and sweatshops were on the rise. The 1847 law addressed the amount of formal schooling a child must have in order to work. The intent of the legislation was to prevent the exploitation of children and to emphasize the importance of education.

Truancy laws passed in 1887 required children under 15 to attend at least 16 weeks of school in a school year to work in manufacturing and mechanical workplaces.

Social reforms at the turn of the century focused attention on the conditions under which children were working. Maine began inspecting businesses for sanitation, hours of labor, and other conditions harmful to children.

In 1915, the Maine Legislature stipulated that children under 14 could not work during the hours that public schools were in session. The law also required working papers for children 14 to 16 years old.

The 1940s and 1950s saw great technological advances and business expansion. To protect children, the Maine Legislature enacted stricter youth employment laws. Recognizing the value of education to the growing economy, educational requirements for working minors were strengthened.

Changes to youth employment laws and educational attendance requirements passed in 1991 addressed persistent problems of low graduation and high truancy and dropout rates in Maine schools.

The list of occupations prohibited for minors was revised in 2001 and again in 2003 to better protect minors from the hazards they face at work.\*

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Source:

[http://www.maine.gov/labor/labor\\_laws/publications..](http://www.maine.gov/labor/labor_laws/publications..)

## Supporting Question 3

Featured Source B

A History of Child Labor Reviewed by Milton Fried

### Excerpt

In the late 1700's and early 1800's, power-driven machines replaced hand labor for making most manufactured items. Factories began to spring up everywhere, first in England and then in the United States. The factory owners found a new source of labor to run their machines — children. Operating the power-driven machines did not require adult strength, and children could be hired more cheaply than adults. By the mid-1800's, child labor was a major problem.

Children had always worked, especially in farming. But factory work was hard. A child with a factory job might work 12 to 18 hours a day, 6 days a week, to earn a dollar. Many children began working before the age of 7, tending machines in spinning mills or hauling heavy loads. The factories were often damp, dark, and dirty. Some children worked underground, in coal mines. The working children had no time to play or go to school, and little time to rest. They often became ill.

By 1810, about 2 million school-age children were working 50- to 70-hour weeks. Most came from poor families. When parents could not support their children, they sometimes turned them over to a mill or factory owner. One glass factory in Massachusetts was fenced with barbed wire "to keep the young imps inside." These were boys under 12 who carried loads of hot glass all night for a wage of 40 cents to \$1.10 per night.

Church and labor groups, teachers, and many other people were outraged by such cruelty. The English writer Charles Dickens helped publicize the evils of child labor with his novel *Oliver Twist*.

Britain was the first to pass laws regulating child labor. From 1802 to 1878, a series of laws gradually shortened the working hours, improved the conditions, and raised the age at which children could work. Other European countries adopted similar laws.

In the United States it took many years to outlaw child labor. By 1899, 28 states had passed laws regulating child labor. Many efforts were made to pass a national child labor law. The U.S. Congress passed two laws, in 1918 and 1922, but the Supreme Court declared both unconstitutional. In 1924, Congress proposed a constitutional amendment prohibiting child labor, but the states did not ratify it. Then, in 1938, Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act. It fixed minimum ages of 16 for work during school hours, 14 for certain jobs after school, and 18 for dangerous work. Today all the states and the U.S. government have laws regulating child labor. These laws have cured the worst evils of children working in factories.

But some kinds of work are not regulated. Children of migrant workers, for example, have no legal protection. Farmers may legally employ them outside of school hours. The children pick crops in the fields and move from place to place, so they get little schooling.

The Canadian provinces today have child labor laws similar to those in the United States. Most other countries have laws regulating child labor, too. But the laws are not always enforced. Starting in 1999, over 160 countries approved an International Labor Organization (ILO) agreement to end the worst forms of child labor. The ILO is a part of the United Nations and the agreement came into effect in the year 2000. According to the ILO, the number of child laborers around the world has been falling. However, as of 2006, there were still 218 million child laborers worldwide; 126 million of them were engaged in hazardous work. The ILO also runs the world's largest program to help countries eliminate child labor.

#### Source:

Child Labor. (2014). (M. Fried, Rev.). *The New Book of Knowledge*. Retrieved June 26, 2014 (use the date you accessed this page), from Grolier Online <http://nbk.grolier.com/ncpage?tn=/encyc/article.ht.>

## Supporting Question 3

Featured Source C

Child Labor Laws in the United States

### Excerpt

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**Child labor laws in the United States** address issues related to the employment and welfare of minors and children in the workforce. It is the employment of children in any work that deprives them of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school, and that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful. This practice is considered exploitative by many international organisations. The most sweeping federal law that restricts the employment and abuse of child workers is the **Fair Labor Standards Act** (FLSA). Child labor provisions under FLSA are designed to protect the educational opportunities of youth and prohibit their employment in jobs that are detrimental to their health and safety. FLSA restricts the hours that youth under 16 years of age can work and lists hazardous occupations too dangerous for young workers to perform.

States have varying laws covering youth employment. Each state has minimum requirements such as, earliest age a child may begin working, number of hours a child is allowed to be working during the day, number of hours a child is allowed to be worked during the week. The **United States Department of Labor** lists the minimum requirements for agricultural work in each state.<sup>[3]</sup> Where state law differs from federal law on child labor, the law with the more rigorous standard applies.<sup>[1]</sup>

Follow the link below to read a comprehensive Wikipedia Article on Child Labor History.

**Source:**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child\\_labor\\_laws\\_in\\_..](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_labor_laws_in_..)



## Summative Performance Task

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Compelling Question | <b>How did childhood labor impact American childhood and families?</b>   |
| Argument            | Construct a written argument that explains the value of the safety of children and family structure as opposed to children as an economic unit. Cite evidence to support your argument.                  |
| Extension           | Choosing images, both photos and cartoons, from the Library of Congress, create an infographic that shows your understanding of the impacts of child labor in the life of a 19th century working family. |

## Taking Informed Action

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Understand | Understand the impact of child labor today, particularly in the case of migrant farm families in New England  |
| Assess     | Assess the costs/benefits of families staying together as they move across the country with the changing seasons.   |
| Action     | Write a compelling action statement that highlights the value of children being children, including access to education, even in the context of a migratory family. |

