

Directions for Child Labor Simulation

Scenario: Today we will imagine that we are living in the mid 19th century in Britain, each of you are a members of the British Parliament. A bill has been presented before Parliament that would make it illegal to employ children under the age of 16. Your class will conduct a debate in which you weigh the pros & cons of child labor in the Industrial Age.

Directions:

- 1) Read the document that you have been given silently; be sure you are familiar with its contents and argument.
- 2) Decide if the author of your document was in support of or opposed to the use of child labor.
- 3) If your document supports child labor, move to the right side of the classroom, if it is opposed to child labor move to the left side of the room.
- 4) Conduct a debate with your classmates, if you are on the right side of the room you will argue against the law banning child labor, if you are on the left side you will argue in support of the law banning child labor.

Rules:

- 1) ALL students must participate (this is a graded assignment and, the quality of your contribution will determine your grade).
- 2) Students are bound by the information in their document. (you can't make stuff up, your arguments must come right from the documents)
- 3) The debate must take the form of a point counter point debate.
 - a. We will start with a person on the left, a supporter of the law banning child labor, this person will make one statement supporting the law.
 - b. Next a person on the right will make a statement that counters the first person's argument.
 - c. This will continue: statement from right then left, until everyone has had a chance to speak at least once.
- 4) No raising your voice, talking while others are talking, or disruptive behavior.
- 5) After debate is over, students vote on the proposed bill. Vote as if you were there; use historical empathy – base your vote on the evidence presented not your personal opinion.

1) (1) Ralph Mather described the work of the children in Richard Arkwright's factories in his book *An Impartial Representation of the Case of the Poor Cotton Spinners in Lancashire* (1780)

Arkwright's machines require so few hands, and those only children, with the assistance of an overlooker. A child can produce as much as would, and did upon an average, employ ten grown up persons. Jennies for spinning with one hundred or two hundred spindles, or more, going all at once, and requiring but one person to manage them.

Within the space of ten years, from being a poor man worth £5, Richard Arkwright has purchased an estate of £20,000; while thousands of women, when they can get work, must make a long day to card, spin, and reel 5040 yards of cotton, and for this they have four-pence or five-pence and no more.

(2) Advert that appeared in *The Derby Mercury* on 20th September, 1781.

Wanted at Cromford. Forging & Filing Smiths, Joiners and Carpenters, Framework-Knitters and Weavers with large families. Likewise children of all ages may have constant employment. Boys and young men may have trades taught them, which will enable them to maintain a family in a short time.

1) (1) Ralph Mather described the work of the children in Richard Arkwright's factories in his book *An Impartial Representation of the Case of the Poor Cotton Spinners in Lancashire* (1780)

Arkwright's machines require so few hands, and those only children, with the assistance of an overlooker. A child can produce as much as would, and did upon an average, employ ten grown up persons. Jennies for spinning with one hundred or two hundred spindles, or more, going all at once, and requiring but one person to manage them.

Within the space of ten years, from being a poor man worth £5, Richard Arkwright has purchased an estate of £20,000; while thousands of women, when they can get work, must make a long day to card, spin, and reel 5040 yards of cotton, and for this they have four-pence or five-pence and no more.

(2) Advert that appeared in *The Derby Mercury* on 20th September, 1781.

Wanted at Cromford. Forging & Filing Smiths, Joiners and Carpenters, Framework-Knitters and Weavers with large families. Likewise children of all ages may have constant employment. Boys and young men may have trades taught them, which will enable them to maintain a family in a short time.

(3) *The Derby Mercury* (14th November, 1777)

John Jefferies, a gunsmith of Cromford, has been committed to the House of Correction at Derby for one month; and to be kept to hard labour. John Jefferies was charged by Mr. Arkwright, Cotton Merchant, with having absented himself from his master's business without leave (being a hired servant).

(4) *The Derby Mercury* (22nd October, 1779)

There is some fear of the mob coming to destroy the works at Cromford, but they are well prepared to receive them should they come here. All the gentlemen in this neighbourhood being determined to defend the works, which have been of such utility to this country. 5,000 or 6,000 men can be at any time assembled in less than an hour by signals agreed upon, who are determined to defend to the very last extremity, the works, by which many hundreds of their wives and children get a decent and comfortable livelihood.

(5) James Farington, diary entry (22nd August, 1801)

In the evening I walked to Cromford, and saw the children coming from their work out of one of Mr. Arkwright's factories. These children had been at work from 6 to 7 o'clock this morning and it is now 7 in the evening.

(6) William Dodd interviewed John Reed from Arkwright's Cromford's factory in 1842.

John Reed is a sadly deformed young man living in Cromford. He tells his pitiful tale as follows: "I went to work at the cotton factory of Messrs. Arkwright at the age of nine. I was then a fine strong, healthy lad, and straight in every limb. I had at first instance 2s. per week, for seventy-two hours' work. I continued to work in this factory for ten years, getting gradually advanced in wages, till I had 6s. 3d. per week; which is the highest wages I ever had. I gradually became a cripple, till at the age of nineteen I was unable to stand at the machine, and I was obliged to give it up. The total amount of my earnings was about 130 shillings, and for this sum I have been made a miserable cripple, as you see, and cast off by those who reaped the benefit of my labour, without a single penny."

Here is a young man, who was evidently intended by nature for a stout-made man, crippled in the prime of life, and all his earthly prospects blasted for ever! Such a cripple I have seldom met with. He cannot stand without a stick in one hand, and leaning on a chair with the other; his legs are twisted in all manner of forms. His body, from the forehead to the knees, forms a curve, similar to the letter C. He dares not go from home, if he could; people stare at him so. He is now learning to make children's first shoes, and hopes ultimately to be able to get a living in this manner.

I have taken several walks in the neighbourhood of this beautiful and romantic place, and seen the splendid castle, and other buildings belonging to the Arkwrights, and could not avoid contrasting in my mind the present condition of this wealthy family, with the humble condition of its founder in 1768. One might expect that those who have thus risen to such wealth and eminence, would have some compassion upon their poor cripples. If it is only that they need to have them pointed out, and that their attention has hitherto not been drawn to them, I would hope and trust this case of John Reed will yet come under their notice.

(5) James Farington, diary entry (22nd August, 1801)

In the evening I walked to Cromford, and saw the children coming from their work out of one of Mr. Arkwright's factories. These children had been at work from 6 to 7 o'clock this morning and it is now 7 in the evening.

(6) William Dodd interviewed John Reed from Arkwright's Cromford's factory in 1842.

John Reed is a sadly deformed young man living in Cromford. He tells his pitiful tale as follows: "I went to work at the cotton factory of Messrs. Arkwright at the age of nine. I was then a fine strong, healthy lad, and straight in every limb. I had at first instance 2s. per week, for seventy-two hours' work. I continued to work in this factory for ten years, getting gradually advanced in wages, till I had 6s. 3d. per week; which is the highest wages I ever had. I gradually became a cripple, till at the age of nineteen I was unable to stand at the machine, and I was obliged to give it up. The total amount of my earnings was about 130 shillings, and for this sum I have been made a miserable cripple, as you see, and cast off by those who reaped the benefit of my labour, without a single penny."

Here is a young man, who was evidently intended by nature for a stout-made man, crippled in the prime of life, and all his earthly prospects blasted for ever! Such a cripple I have seldom met with. He cannot stand without a stick in one hand, and leaning on a chair with the other; his legs are twisted in all manner of forms. His body, from the forehead to the knees, forms a curve, similar to the letter C. He dares not go from home, if he could; people stare at him so. He is now learning to make children's first shoes, and hopes ultimately to be able to get a living in this manner.

I have taken several walks in the neighbourhood of this beautiful and romantic place, and seen the splendid castle, and other buildings belonging to the Arkwrights, and could not avoid contrasting in my mind the present condition of this wealthy family, with the humble condition of its founder in 1768. One might expect that those who have thus risen to such wealth and eminence, would have some compassion upon their poor cripples. If it is only that they need to have them pointed out, and that their attention has hitherto not been drawn to them, I would hope and trust this case of John Reed will yet come under their notice.

(3) Edward Baines, *The History of the Cotton Manufacture* (1835)

It is not true to represent the work of piecers and scavengers as continually straining. None of the work in which children and young persons are engaged in mills require constant attention. It is scarcely possible for any employment to be lighter. The position of the body is not injurious: the children walk about, and have the opportunity of frequently sitting if they are so disposed.

(1) Frances Trollope, Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy (1840)

A little girl about seven years old, who job as scavenger, was to collect incessantly from the factory floor, the flying fragments of cotton that might impede the work... while the hissing machinery passed over her, and when this is skillfully done, and the head, body, and the outstretched limbs carefully glued to the floor, the steady moving, but threatening mass, may pass and repass over the dizzy head and trembling body without touching it. But accidents frequently occur; and many are the flaxen locks, rudely torn from infant heads, in the process.

(2) Frances Trollope, *Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy* (1840)

In the room they entered, the dirty, ragged miserable crew, were all active performance of their various tasks; the overlookers, strap in hand, on the alert; the whirling spindles urging the little slaves who waited on them. Lean and distorted limbs - sallow and sunken cheeks - dim hollow eyes... a look of hideous premature old age.

(1) Andrew Ure, *The Philosophy of Manufactures* (1835).

At Quarry Bank, near Wilmslow in Cheshire, is situated the great firm of Greg and Son. At a little distance from the factory, on a sunny bank, stands a handsome house, two stories high, built for the accommodation of the female apprentices. They are well fed, clothed and educated. The apprentices have milk-porridge for breakfast, potatoes and bacon for dinner, and meat on Sundays.

(2) Andrew Ure, *The Philosophy of Manufactures* (1835).

I have visited many factories, both in Manchester and the surrounding districts, during a period of several months and I never saw a single instance of corporal punishment inflicted on a child. The children seemed to be always cheerful and alert, taking pleasure in using their muscles. The work of these lively elves seemed to resemble a sport. Conscious of their skill, they were delighted to show it off to any stranger. At the end of the day's work they showed no sign of being exhausted.

(3) Andrew Ure, *The Philosophy of Manufactures* (1835).

On my recent tour through the manufacturing districts, I have seen tens of thousands of old, young and middle-aged of both sexes earning abundant food, raiment, and domestic accommodation, without perspiring at a single pore, screened meanwhile from the summer's sun and the winter's frost, in apartments more airy and sulubrious than those of the metropolis in which our legislature and fashionable aristocracies assemble.

1) Edward Holme was interviewed by Lord Kenyon's House of Lords Committee on 22nd May, 1818.

Question: How long have you practised as a physician in Manchester?

Answer: Twenty-four years.

Question: Have you, in Manchester, occasion to visit any public establishments?

Answer: I am physician to the principal medical establishments. The medical establishments with which I am connected, and have been for twenty-four years are, the Manchester Infirmary, Dispensary, Lunatic Hospital and Asylum, and the House of Recovery.

Question: Has that given you opportunities of observing the state of the children who are ordinarily employed in the cotton-factories.

Answer: It has.

Question: In what state of health did you find the persons employed?

Answer: They were in good health generally. I can give you particulars, if desired, of Mr. Pooley's factory. He employs 401 persons; and, of the persons examined in 1796, 22 were found to be of delicate appearances, 2 were entered as sickly, 3 in bad health, one subject to convulsions, 8 cases of scrofula: in good health, 363.

Question: Am I to understand you, from your investigations in 1796, you formed rather a favourable opinion of the health of persons employed in cotton-factories.

Answer: Yes.

Question: Have you had any occasion to change that opinion since?

Answer: None whatever. They are as healthy as any other part of the working classes of the community.

Question: If children were overworked for a long period, would it, in your opinion as a medical man, affect their health so as to be visible in some way?

Answer: Unquestionably; if a child was overworked a single day, it would incapacitate him in a great measure for performing his work the next day; and if the practice was continued for a longer period, it would in a certain time destroy his health altogether.

Question: Then you are to be understood, that, from the general health among the children in the cotton-factories, you should form an opinion that they were not worked beyond their physical powers?

Answer: Certainly not.

Question: The result of your observation did not indicate any check of growth arising from their employment.

Answer: It did not.

Question: Would you permit a child of eight years old, for instance, to be kept standing for twelve hours a day?

Answer: I did not come here to answer what I would do if I had children of my own.

Question: Would it be injurious to a child, in your judgement as a medical man, if at the time he got his meals he was still kept engaged in the employment he was about?

Answer: These are questions which I find a great difficulty in answering.

Question: Who applied to you to undertake the examining of these children in Mr. Pooley's factory?

Answer: Mr. Pooley.

Question: Suppose I put this question to you. If children were employed twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen hours out of twenty-four, should you think that conducive to the health of a delicate child?

Answer: My conclusion would be this: the children I saw were all in health; if they were employed during those ten, twelve, or fourteen hours, and had the appearance of health, I should still say it was not injurious to their health.

1) Michael Sadler, speech in the House of Commons, 16th March 1832.

The parents rouse them in the morning and receive them tired and exhausted after the day has closed; they see them droop and sicken, and, in many cases, become cripples and die, before they reach their prime; and they do all this, because they must otherwise starve. It is a mockery to contend that these parents have a choice. They choose the lesser evil, and reluctantly resign their offspring to the captivity and pollution of the mill.

3) John Fielden, speech in the House of Commons (9th May, 1836)

At a meeting in Manchester a man claimed that a child in one mill walked twenty-four miles a day. I was surprised by this statement, therefore, when I went home, I went into my own factory, and with a clock beside me, I watched a child at her work, and having watched her for some time, I then calculated the distance she had to go in a day, and to my surprise, I found it to be nothing short of twenty miles.

(4) Charles Wing, *Evils of the Factory System* (1837)

Mr. Fielden's cotton-mill at Todmorden employs 840 hands. The labour is sixty-seven hours and a half week, being an hour and a half less than most others. No children were employed under nine. A school is attached to the mill. If the liberal management pursued in Mr. Fielden's mill were generally adopted, there would be few evils to complain of.

2) Lord Ashley, speech in the House of Commons, 9th May, 1836

Of the thirty-one medical men who were examined, sixteen gave it as their most decided opinion that ten hours is the utmost quantity of labour which can be endured by the children, with the slightest chance of preserving their health. Dr. Loudon reports, "I am of the opinion no child under fourteen years of age should work in a factory of any description more than eight hours a day." Dr. Hawkins reports, "I am compelled to declare my deliberate opinion, that no child should be employed in factory labour below the age of ten; that no individual, under the age of eighteen, should be engaged in it longer than ten hours daily."

(3) Lord Ashley, speech in the House of Commons, 4th August, 1840

The future hopes of a country must, under God, be laid in the character and condition of its children; however right it may be to attempt, it is almost fruitless to expect, the reformation of its adults; as the sapling has been bent, so will it grow. The first step towards a cure is factory legislation. My grand object is to bring these children within the reach of education.

(4) William Dodd, *A Narrative of William Dodd,; A Factory Cripple* (1841)

The fat of horses, dogs, pigs, and many other animals, which die a natural death, or are killed with some incurable disease upon them, is sold to the manufacturers, and kept for the purpose of greasing the heavy machinery. It may be imagined what sort of smell will arise from the application of this fat to shafts almost on fire.

(1) On the 26th April, 1816, Robert Owen appeared before Robert Peel's House of Commons Committee about New Lanark.

Seventeen years ago, a number of individuals, with myself, purchased the New Lanark establishment from Mr. Dale. I found that there were 500 children, who had been taken from poor-houses, chiefly in Edinburgh, and those children were generally from the age of five and six, to seven to eight. The hours at that time were thirteen. Although these children were well fed their limbs were very generally deformed, their growth was stunted, and although one of the best schoolmasters was engaged to instruct these children regularly every night, in general they made very slow progress, even in learning the common alphabet. I came to the conclusion that the children were injured by being taken into the mills at this early age, and employed for so many hours; therefore, as soon as I had it in my power, I adopted regulations to put an end to a system which appeared to me to be so injurious.

(1) George Courtauld, letter to Mr. Mann (11th December, 1813)

I have 8 children coming from Islington on Tuesday next and 8 or 10 more on Thursday. I had my choice from upwards of 50 girls of different ages and accepted all but one that were within the age of 10 and thirteen. They are from a very well-conducted workhouse and I really expect and earnestly hope that by continued care and attention my establishment of apprentices will prove a nursery of respectable young women fitted for any of the humble walks of life.

(2) In a letter to Joseph Wilson, George Courtauld explained the duties of his four daughters in the Braintree Mill (24th September, 1814)

The winding, drawing and doubling floor, where the scale is fixed, should at every instance of time during working hours have one of them present that their constant eye and whole attention be given to the people of that floor in maintaining perfect silence except the singing of hymns which we find a useful relaxation and a help to industry, attention and orderly conduct.

Chadwick's Report on Sanitary Conditions, Edwin Chadwick (1800-1890) had taken an active part in the reform of the Poor Law and in factory legislation before he became secretary to a commission investigating sanitary conditions and means of improving them.

That the annual loss of life from filth and bad ventilation are greater than the loss from death or wounds in any wars in which the country has been engaged in modern times.

That of the 43,000 cases of widowhood, and 112,000 cases of destitute orphanage relieved from the poor's rates in England and Wales alone, it appears that the greatest proportion of deaths of the heads of families occurred from the above specified and other removable causes; that their ages were under 45 years; that is to say, 13 years below the natural probabilities of life as shown by the experience of the whole population of Sweden.

That the public loss from the premature deaths of the heads of families is greater than can be represented by any enumeration of the pecuniary burdens consequent upon their sickness and death.

That, measuring the loss of working ability amongst large classes by the instances of gain, even from incomplete arrangements for the removal of noxious influences from places of work or from abodes, that this loss cannot be less than eight or ten years.

The Physical Deterioration of the Textile Workers, P. Gaskell, The Manufacturing Population of England. London, 1833, pp.161-162, 202-203.

Any man who has stood at twelve o'clock at the single narrow door-way, which serves as the place of exit for the hands employed in the great cotton-mills, must acknowledge, that an uglier set of men and women, of boys and girls, taking them in the mass, it would be impossible to congregate in a smaller compass. Their complexion is sallow and pallid--with a peculiar flatness of feature, caused by the want of a proper quantity of adipose substance to cushion out the cheeks. Their stature low--the average height of four hundred men, measured at different times, and different places, being five feet six inches. Their limbs slender, and playing badly and ungracefully. A very general bowing of the legs. Great numbers of girls and women walking lamely or awkwardly, with raised chests and spinal flexures. Nearly all have flat feet, accompanied with a down-tread, differing very widely from the elasticity of action in the foot and ankle, attendant upon perfect formation. Hair thin and straight--many of the men having but little beard, and that in patches of a few hairs, much resembling its growth among the red men of America. A spiritless and dejected air, a sprawling and wide action of the legs, and an appearance, taken as a whole, giving the world but "little assurance of a man," or if so, "most sadly cheated of his fair proportions..."

A Cotton Manufacturer on Hours of Labor, John Fielden, M.P., The Curse of the Factory System. London, 1836, pp. 34-35.

Here, then, is the "curse" of our factory-system; as improvements in machinery have gone on, the "avarice of masters" has prompted many to exact more labour from their hands than they were fitted by nature to perform, and those who have wished for the hours of labour to be less for all ages than the legislature would even yet sanction, have had no alternative but to conform more or less to the prevailing practice, or abandon the trade altogether. This has been the case with regard to myself and my partners. We have never worked more than *seventy-one* hours a week before Sir JOHN HOBHOUSE'S Act was passed. We then came down to *sixty-nine*; and since Lord ALTHORP'S Act was passed, in 1833, we have reduced the time of adults to *sixty-seven and a half hours* a week, and that of children under thirteen years of age to *forty-eight* hours in the week, though to do this latter has, I must admit, subjected us to much inconvenience, but the elder hands to more, inasmuch as the relief given to the child is in some measure imposed on the adult. But the overworking does not apply to children only; the adults are also overworked. The increased speed given to machinery within the last thirty years, has, in very many instances, doubled the labour of both.

The Benefit of the Factory Legislation, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates. Apr. 4, 1879. 3rd Series, vol. CCXLV, pp. 355-356.

The other is the old, the often-repeated, and as often-refuted, argument that the work is light. Light! Why, no doubt, much of it is light, if measured by the endurance of some three or four minutes. But what say you, my Lords, to a continuity of toil, in a standing posture, in a poisonous atmosphere, during 13 hours, with 15 minutes of rest? Why, the stoutest man in England, were he made, in such a condition of things, to do nothing during the whole of that time but be erect on his feet and stick pins in a pincushion, would sink under the burden. What say you, then, of children--children of the tenderest years? Why, they become stunted, crippled, deformed, useless. I speak what I know--I state what I have seen. When I visited [Bradford](#), in [Yorkshire](#), in 1838, being desirous to see the condition of the children--for I knew that they were employed at very early ages in the worsted business....I asked for a collection of cripples and deformities. In a short time more than 80 were gathered in a large courtyard. They were mere samples of the entire mass. I assert without exaggeration that no power of language could describe the varieties, and I may say, the cruelties, in all these degradations of the human form. They stood or squatted before me in all the shapes of the letters of the alphabet. This was the effect of prolonged toil on the tender frames of children at early ages. When I visited Bradford, under the limitation of hours some years afterwards, I called for a similar exhibition of cripples; but, God be praised! there was not one to be found in that vast city. Yet the work of these poor sufferers had been light, if measured by minutes, but terrific when measured by hours.

