

Jane Addams and Child Labor



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The Student Worksheets linked on slide 4 will also require you to make a copy to edit.

For Teachers:

Time: One 45 minute class period

Objectives and Standards as set forth by the college board for AP U.S. History

Objectives: Unit 7: Learning Objective D - Compare the goals and effects of the Progressive reform movement.

Historical Developments:

KC-7.1.II.A Some Progressive Era journalists attacked what they saw as political corruption, social injustice, and economic inequality, while **reformers, often from the middle and upper classes and including many women, worked to effect social changes** in cities and among immigrant populations

KC-7.1.II.B **On the national level, Progressives sought federal legislation that they believed would effectively regulate the economy, expand democracy, and generate moral reform.** Progressive amendments to the Constitution dealt with issues such as prohibition and women's suffrage.

Suggested Skill:

Claim and Evidence in Sources - Analyze arguments in primary and secondary sources.

- 3.B Identify the evidence used in a source to support an argument.

Argumentation - 6.A Make a historically defensible claim. 6.B Support an argument using specific and relevant evidence.

For Teachers:

Student Worksheets:

Worksheet 1 - Structure: (a) Prompt (b) Documents (c) Breakdown of prompt for students to organize their ideas.

Worksheet 2 - Structure: (d) Graphic Organizer to guide students in their analysis of documents

How this lesson meets the AP objectives:

KC-6.3.II.B - Documents show how many reformers, like Jane Addams, argued against the widespread use of child labor in America.

Historical Thinking Skill - Claim and Evidence in Sources - 3.B - Worksheet is based around identifying the evidence used in a source to support an argument.

For Teachers:

This lesson can be completed in a variety of ways:

- (1) Go through this presentation and analyze the documents as a class focusing attention on Addams' major claims about child labor in America and the evidence she utilized to support these claims.
- (2) Review background information on Slides 8 and 9 with students (5-10 minutes). Then have students complete the DBQ worksheet individually or in groups (30-40 minutes). If appropriate - assign last page of worksheet for homework
- (3) Review background information on Slides 8 and 9 with students. Then complete the DBQ worksheet as a jigsaw:
 - (a) Put students into 5 groups, assigning each group a single document to read and analyze together using the graphic organizer found on the student worksheet. (About 10 minutes)
 - (b) Put students into different groups with a member from each document represented.
 - (c) Students take turns explaining their document, focusing on Addams' claim in each and the evidence she utilized to support her position. (About 25 minutes)
 - (d) Answer questions on the final page of the worksheet (help students understand how they would formulate a real response to the DBQ prompt). The questions can be answered either individually, within their group, or for homework. (About 10 minutes)



For more lesson plans and to access documents
visit <https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/>

Child Labor in Early 20th Century America



Child Labor in Early 20th Century America



- In 1900, 18% of all American workers were under the age of 16.
- Children fit in small spaces and used small machinery in America's growing industrial economy.
- Children worked long hours for lower wages than adults.
- Many children were injured, maimed, or killed on the job given the danger of their work.
- Many child laborers were from poor immigrant families that needed the extra income.
- Progressive reformers supported legislation that would regulate or outlaw child labor.

Jane Addams: Her Life and Work



- Born into a wealthy family
- While touring Europe she came across a settlement house and decided to create her own settlement house in the United States
- Set up Hull House in Chicago in 1890
- Hull House offered classes and services to immigrants in the area
- Addams acted as the public face of the settlement house movement.
- Addams sought to change the way that society treated workers and the less fortunate.
- Gained the reputation as a progressive thinker
- After 1900 Addams became more involved in city and national politics
- Addams saw clearly that child labor was a unique result of industrialism and a societal problem to be addressed.

Lesson Objective →

Use the Documents on the DBQ to learn more about Jane Addams and her efforts to address child labor in Early 20th Century America.

Use the provided documents to answer the following prompt:

How and why did Jane Addams argue against the use of child labor in America?

Focus your response on the following:

- The major arguments Jane Addams made against child labor
- The evidence Jane Addams used to support her arguments against child labor.

Document 1: [LINK](#)

Source: "Child Labor and Pauperism." National Conference of Charities and Correction, Proceedings (1903): 114-21.

. . . we are tempted as never before to use the labor of little children and that the temptation to exploit premature labor is peculiar to this industrial epoch.

What then are we doing about it? How deeply are we concerned that this labor shall not result to the detriment of the child, and what excuses are we making to ourselves for thus prematurely using up the strength of a child? Of course it is always difficult to see the wrong in a familiar thing and it is a test of moral insight to be able to see that an affair of familiar intercourse and daily living may also be wrong. I have taken a Chicago street car on a winter's night in December at ten o'clock when dozens of little girls who have worked in the department stores all day are also boarding the cars. I know as many others do that these children will not get into their beds much before midnight, and that they will have to be up again early in the morning to go to their daily work. And yet I take my car almost placidly -- I am happy to say not quite placidly -- because I have seen it many times. Almost every day at six o'clock I see certain factories pouring out a stream of men and women and boys and girls. The boys and girls have a peculiar hue, a color so distinctive that any one meeting them on the street even on Sunday in their best clothes and mixed up with other children who go to school and play out of doors, can distinguish almost in an instant the children working in factories. There is also on their faces a something indescribable, a premature anxiety and sense of responsibility which we should declare pathetic if we were not used to it.

Document 1:

Claim: Addams argues that child labor is explicitly to the detriment of the child. She states, “How deeply are we concerned that this labor shall not result to the detriment of the child, and what excuses are we making to ourselves for thus prematurely using up the strength of a child?”

Evidence Used to Support Claim:

Addams supports this argument with specific examples of the detrimental impact of child labor on the children. Her examples include the following:

- “The boys and girls have a peculiar hue, a color so distinctive that any one meeting them on the street even on Sunday in their best clothes and mixed up with other children who go to school and play out of doors, can distinguish almost in an instant the children working in factories.”
- “There is also on their faces a something indescribable, a premature anxiety and sense of responsibility which we should declare pathetic if we were not used to it.”

Document 2: [LINK](#)

Source: "Effect of Child Labor". Appeal to Reason. April 5, 1902. p. 4.

In a recent address on this subject before the Chicago Business Woman's Club, Miss Addams said: "Child labor undertaken too early or performed in excess is responsible for a large number of the tramps and ambitionless wayfarers of America. The boy or girl who works too early is surfeited with labor, bankrupt of ambition long before the time when work should begin at all."

The belief that tramping often is recruited from the ranks of youthful toilers who have been overcome by an intense and terrible physical and moral fatigue because they overtaxed their strength is now new, but so far it has hardly been made the subject of careful investigation. At Hull House those facts have been observed for a number of years, and data are being collected. "We notice," says Miss Addams, "that the child workers who were bright and eager and ambitious when commencing work some six or seven years ago, are different now. Nearly all of them are dull and lifeless, lacking energy and without ambition. Many are actual tramps."

Document 2

Claim: Addams argues that child labor has resulted in large numbers of children ending up on the streets as homeless “tramps.” Specifically she notes, “Child labor undertaken too early or performed in excess is responsible for a large number of the tramps and ambitionless wayfarers of America.

Evidence Used to Support Claim:

Addams shares the following as evidence to support her contention that child labor produces “ambitionless wayfarers:”

- “The boy or girl who works too early is surfeited with labor, bankrupt of ambition long before the time when work should begin at all.”
- “that the child workers who were bright and eager and ambitious when commencing work some six or seven years ago, are different now. Nearly all of them are dull and lifeless, lacking energy and without ambition. Many are actual tramps.

Document 3: [LINK](#)

Source: Jane Addams, American Academy of Political and Social Science, Annals 25 (1905 May): 516-17.

During the past year marked advance has been made in securing child labor legislation throughout the states of the Union. Women's clubs have been active in this movement which has consisted both in enacting new laws and in amending old ones. The argument against this legislation which has been most universally encountered has been that the earnings of little children are needed to support widowed mothers. The Committee on Child Labor is convinced that the argument has been unfairly used, that the number of poor widows in any community is limited, and that among that limited number there are comparatively few whose oldest children are between the ages of ten and fourteen years -- the time when the temptation to use the premature labor of children is strongest. Nothing could be more valuable to the cause of child labor than to lay this ghost which has so long frightened many of the sincere friends of little children, and has furnished the basis of the emotional appeal so often used against sober argument.

Document 3

Claim:

Addams suggests that child labor is a significant enough problem that it requires nationwide legislation to address.

Evidence Used to Support Claim:

Addams supports her assertion that nationwide legislation is essential by addressing the argument made against such laws. Specifically, Addams suggests, “The argument against this legislation which has been most universally encountered has been that the earnings of little children are needed to support widowed mothers. The Committee on Child Labor is convinced that the argument has been unfairly used, that the number of poor widows in any community is limited . . .”

Document 4: [LINK](#)

Source: "Child Labor Legislation: A Requisite for Industrial Efficiency," American Academy of Political and Social Science Annals, 25 (May 1905): 542-50.

Uniform compulsory education laws in connection with uniform child labor legislation are the important factors in securing educated producers for the nation, but there is another side to the benefits of child labor legislation represented by the time element, the leisure which is secured to the child for the pursuit of his own affairs, quite aside from the opportunity afforded him to attend school. Helplessness in childhood, the scientists tell us, is the guarantee of adult intellect, but they also assert that play in youth is the guarantee of adult culture. It is the most valuable instrument the race possesses to keep life from becoming mechanical. The child who cannot live life is prone to dramatize it, and the very process is a constant compromise between imitation and imagination as the overmastering impulse itself which drives him to incessant play is both reminiscent and anticipatory. In proportion as the child in later life is to be subjected to a mechanical and one-sided activity and as a highly-subdivided labor is to be demanded from him, it is therefore most important that he should have his full period of childhood and youth for this play expression, that he may cultivate within himself the root of that culture which can alone give his later activity a meaning, and this is true whether or not we accept the theory that the [aesthetic] feelings originate from the play impulse with its corollary—that the constant experimentation found in the commonest plays are to be looked upon as "the principal source of all kinds of art." In this moment, when individual forces are concentrated and unified as never before, unusual care must be taken to secure to the children their normal play period, that the art instinct may have some chance and that the producer himself may have enough coherence of character to avoid becoming a mere cog in the vast industrial machine.

Document 4

Claim:

Addams argues that compulsory education laws must complement laws regulating child labor. She sees a larger benefit in this, notably that children will have more leisure time. Addams argues that this leisure time allows for better overall development.

Evidence Used to Support Claim:

Addams uses evidence such as the following to support her argument about the critical importance of leisure time that will result from better regulation of child labor:

- “. . . play in youth is the guarantee of adult culture. It is the most valuable instrument the race possesses to keep life from becoming mechanical.”
- “. . . it is therefore most important that he should have his full period of childhood and youth for this play expression, that he may cultivate within himself the root of that culture which can alone give his later activity a meaning, and this is true whether or not we accept the theory that the [aesthetic] feelings originate from the play impulse.”
- “. . . unusual care must be taken to secure to the children their normal play period, that the art instinct may have some chance and that the producer himself may have enough coherence of character to avoid becoming a mere cog in the vast industrial machine.”

Document 5: [LINK](#)

Source: Jane Addams, "Child Labor and Other Dangers of Childhood," *Humane Advocate*, 2 (December 1906): 20-22.

To my mind, much of the evil which threatens and surrounds childhood is due to the vast enterprises which are now being pushed forward with such vigor and are connected intimately with the industrial situation. I refer to the employment of children in industrial centers, in short, to child labor which we know exists to an alarming extent, and which it is the duty of every thinking man and woman to limit as far as possible, if it cannot be abolished. I think we all agree that the child is entitled to all the advantages of education in the public schools, and is entitled to the advantages which result from an opportunity to play and develop, and the doctors put more stress on the child's advantages to play, as being the very basis of a health development of the mind and body; and if we assume, as we must, that the child is entitled to those advantages, then we must admit that putting him or her to work prematurely deprives the child of those advantages which by right it is entitled to. There is no need to discuss that proposition, for it is too self-evident to need discussion. If we want to go into child labor as England goes into it, then it is easy to say that children should be put to work at 12 years of age, at which age child labor is legal in England; that is, the child may work half a day and attend school half a day, if the parents consent to it, but with such a law it has been proven that the child has been deprived of the advantages to which it is entitled, and that its development, both mentally and physically, is impaired and undermined thereby. It has been found by repeated examinations and tests, that if a child who has been put to work thus early is measured and weighed and the result compared with that of children who go to school all day and are afforded the opportunities for play and development which is natural, the first child was an inch and a half shorter, weighed considerably less, and was stunted in other directions. Those are facts, and cannot be controverted.

Document 5

Claim:

Addams argues against child labor but noting that doctors suggest the critical importance of education and play for students to be able to develop appropriately. Addams believes that child labor prematurely disadvantages students from being able to have these developmental experiences.

Evidence Used to Support Claim:

Addams supports her argument with the following evidence about the physical development of children who did, or did not work, during their formative years;

- “. . . It has been found by repeated examinations and tests, that if a child who has been put to work thus early is measured and weighed and the result compared with that of children who go to school all day and are afforded the opportunities for play and development which is natural, the first child was an inch and a half shorter, weighed considerably less, and was stunted in other directions.”

OPTIONAL Extension - Modern Day Child Labor Research

Step 1 → Research the problem of child labor throughout the world today. As a starting point, consider using the sources provided [HERE](#).

Step 2 → Research to determine how modern day organizations are trying to address child labor around the world. As a starting point, consider using the sources provided [HERE](#).

Step 3 → Make connections by considering the following:

- In what ways is contemporary child labor different from what you explored in America in the early 20th century?
- In what ways is contemporary child labor similar to what you explored in America in the early 20th century?
- What are the parallels between how Jane Addams sought to address child labor and ways that international organizations today are trying to address the issue? Are there any differences that stand out?

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