

Performance Tasks

PERFORMANCE TASK ONE: How OLD IS OLD ENOUGH?

SUBJECT AREA(S): Social Studies, English

STANDARDS: Eng. A.12.1, A.12.4, E.12.3, F.12.1; S.S. B.12.1, B.12.4, B.12.5, C.12.8, C.12.14, D.12.2, D.12.14

SETTING THE SCENE

In this day and age, it is very hard to believe that at one time 10- to 12_year-olds in this country often worked six days a week, 12 to 14 hours a day in mines and factories, enduring dangerous and unhealthful situations for a few pennies per day. For the most part, working conditions for children were unspeakably harsh. Boys working deep within mines, particularly coal mines, rarely saw daylight, going to work before sunrise and returning home after dark. The mines were chilly and wet; water dripped from cave ceilings and pooled on the cave floors. Clouds of choking dust billowed around them for most of every day. Seldom did these boys become mature men; they died in mine explosions and accidents, or of lung disease brought on by the ever-present coal dust.

Children who worked in factories fared little better. Boys and girls frequently lost fingers, toes, hands, and even arms to the huge machines used to mill raw cotton into usable cloth. Here, too, billows of lung-clogging, lint-filled air clouded the work areas. Doors and windows were commonly sealed shut to discourage the young workers from visiting the bathroom too often or trying to find a breath of fresh air. In one such factory where young women sewed dresses from dawn to well past sunset in a dark and crowded loft, a fire raged out of control. When the terrified girls tried to escape, they found the doors and windows impossible to open.

THE UNION CONNECTION

While work in the early mines and mills was grueling and dangerous, the work also held the promise of a better life. Wages were low and company stores and housing often claimed a large part of a worker's pay. The desire for a better life often drove parents to risk the health and safety of their young sons by sending them to work at physically demanding and dangerous work in mills and mines.

Unions played a significant role in establishing safer working conditions and restrictions on age and hours of employment. The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire brought major workplace safety violations to public attention and created a tragic argument for union-demanded changes.

TASK A

Imagine yourself living in the early 1900s. You are an investigative reporter who wants to expose the dangerous and exhausting conditions under which some children work. Research several examples of child exploitation, endangerment, and abuse in the workplace of that time. Write a news article or feature article exposing the cruel and dangerous situations to which working children are exposed.

SCORING RUBRIC

Advanced

- The article contains three or more examples of child labor exploitation. The article is well organized, informative, logical, and moving. The article exposes three or more ways that child laborers were endangered. The article has no spelling or grammar errors. Proficient
- The article contains two examples of child labor exploitation.
- The article is organized, informative, and moving. The article exposes two of the ways that child laborers were endangered. The article contains few spelling and grammar errors.

Basic

- The article contains one example of child labor exploitation. The article is somewhat organized.
- The article exposes one of the ways that child laborers were endangered. The article contains numerous spelling and grammar errors.

Minimal

- The article mentions child labor exploitation, but does not cite specific instances.
- The article is disorganized. The article does not expose the dangers that child laborers encountered. The article contains an abundance of spelling and grammar errors.

TASK B

Create a display that illustrates the story you are trying to tell. The display might include a map identifying the locations of child labor exploitations, a bulletin board, or a series of posters.

SCORING RUBRIC

Advanced

- The display includes four or more examples of child labor exploitation.
- The display is neat, attractive and eye-catching.

The display elicits strong emotion in the viewer.
The display illustrates effectively the plight of youthful workers and tells the story.
Proficient
The display includes three examples of child labor exploitation.
The display is neat and attractive.
The display elicits emotion in the viewer.
The display illustrates the plight of youthful workers and tells the story. Basic
The display includes one or two examples of child labor exploitation.
The display is attractive.
The display elicits little emotion in the viewer.
The display locates sites of exploitation but fails to tell the story. Minimal
The display includes one example of child labor exploitation.
The display is messy and does not capture the eye of the viewer.
The display does not elicit emotion in the viewer.
The display fails to illustrate its story.

TASK C

Go on with your research to learn about current child labor laws and regulations. Write a report comparing and contrasting the current status of child labor with what you learned about early child labor exploitation.

SCORING RUBRIC

Advanced

The report contains extensive information about current child labor laws and regulations.
The report contains extensive information about child labor exploitation in the late 1800s and early 1900s.
The report makes insightful observations in comparing and contrasting then and now.
The report is well written and free of spelling and grammar errors. Proficient
The report contains adequate information about current child labor laws and regulations.
The report contains adequate information about child labor exploitation in the late 1800s and early 1900s.
The report makes observations in comparing and contrasting then and now. The report is well written and is nearly free of spelling and grammar errors.

Basic

- The report contains some information about current child labor laws and regulations.
- The report contains some information about child labor exploitation in the late 1800s and early 1900s.
- The report makes at least one comparison and shows at least one contrast between then and now.
- The report contains several spelling and grammar errors.

Minimal

The report contains little information about current child labor laws and regulations.

The report contains little information about child labor exploitation in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

- The report fails to make comparisons or contrasts between then and now. The report contains numerous spelling and grammar errors.

SELECTED RELATED LABOR HISTORY MILESTONES/MARKERS

Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire (1911)

Oshkosh Woodworkers strike (1898)

Wisconsin Child Labor Law (1911)

Keating-Owen Bill (1916)

Fair Labor Standards Act (1938)

PERFORMANCE TASK TWO: SPECIAL INTEREST? WHO, ME?

SUBJECT AREA(S): Social Studies, English

STANDARDS: Eng. A.12.1, A.12.4, B.12.1, B.12.2, B.12.3, C.12.1, C.12.3, D.12.1, F.12.1; S.S. C.12.7, C.12.8, C.12.9, C.12.10, E.12.6

SETTING THE SCENE

Major elections always seem to elicit accusations and counterclaims about candidates' response to political pressure and dollar contributions from special interest groups. The special interest label has been applied to groups as diverse as environmentalists, pharmaceutical companies, and realtors. Unions, including those of firefighters, police officers, and teachers, are also often labeled as special interest groups. Imagine you are hired as a firefighter in your local community. All firefighters, including you, are being asked to contribute \$2 a month to a political action committee. You aren't sure you see the connection between firefighters, unions, and political action.

THE UNION CONNECTION

Unions have long concerned themselves with the wellbeing of their members. Economic issues of wages and hours go well beyond the related dollar amounts to the quality of workers' lives in general. A shorter work day not only is beneficial to the individual, but it also provides an opportunity for workers to become more involved in the lives of their families and in community, state, and national life.

TASK A

Your task is to research the role of your area's firefighter union, or another local union, to learn:

- i. why firefighters (or others such as teachers) as a group might care about who is elected to a particular position.
2. Why individuals with common interests, jobs, or training might join together to create political influence.

Present your findings in writing. Include sufficient information so that others can use your analysis to make decisions about contributing to the political action fund.

Note: Using teachers and teacher unions for this performance task permits students to do their research on-site. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that the information collected is accurate and balanced and that existing or latent school or community stress not be exacerbated.

SCORING RUBRIC

Advanced

- The presentation contains more than two examples of political action by organized groups.
- The presentation is well organized and logical.
- The presentation is informative and factual, and answers a number of questions the reader might have had.
- The presentation shows a clear connection between the employee group and politics.
- The presentation has no spelling or grammar errors. Proficient
- The presentation contains two examples of political action by organized groups. The presentation is organized.
- The presentation is informative and factual.
- The presentation shows some connection between the employee group and politics.
- The presentation has one or two spelling and grammar errors. Basic
- The presentation describes political action, but contains fewer than two examples of political action by organized groups.
- The presentation is somewhat disorganized.
- The presentation is based on opinion rather than fact.
- The presentation makes little connection between the employee group and politics.
- The presentation has numerous spelling and grammar errors.

Minimal

- The presentation mentions political action.
- The presentation is disorganized.
- The content of the presentation is limited.
- The presentation fails to make a connection between the employee group and politics.
- The presentation has an abundance of spelling and grammar errors.

TASK B

Prepare a persuasive presentation either in support of or in opposition to the right of groups to use their combined influence (and dollars) to affect election outcomes.

Your presentation can take the form of a debate, skit, or panel discussion.

SCORING RUBRIC

Advanced

- The presentation captures the attention of the audience.
- The speakers approach the professional level of oral presentation skills.
- The presentation is highly persuasive.
- The information is factual and passionately presented.
- The presentation provides more than two examples.

Proficient

The presentation captures the attention of most of the audience.

= The speakers practice good eye contact, speak clearly, and know the material. The presentation is persuasive.

— The information is factual. The presentation provides two examples.

Basic

— The presentation captures minimal audience attention.

The speakers lack good eye contact, but speak clearly and know the material. The presentation lacks persuasiveness.

— The information reflects opinion more than fact. The presentation provides one example.

Minimal

The presentation makes no attempt to engage the audience.

The speakers exhibit poor oral presentation skills.

The presentation does not attempt to persuade.

The information is very limited.

The presentation does not provide examples.

SELECTED RELATED LABOR HISTORY MILESTONES/MARKERS

Norris-LaGuardia Act (1932)

Civil Rights Act (1965)

Wagner Act (1935)

Davis-Bacon Act (1931)

Wisconsin Labor Relations Act (1937)

Chapter 111.70 (1963)

Taft-Hartley Act (1947)

PATCO strike (1981)

Wisconsin Employment Peace Act (1939)

PERFORMANCE TASK THREE: UNEMPLOYMENT GOES TO THE MOVIES

SUBJECT AREA(S): Economics, Social Studies, Language Arts

STANDARDS: Eng. A.12.2, A.12.3, B.12.1, E.12.2, F.12.1; S.S. C.12.8

SETTING THE SCENE

It is the 1980s and you are a film critic for the *Detroit Free Press* newspaper. A recently released film, *Roger and Me*, is attracting a wide audience and generating a substantial amount of controversy. The film's supporters say the film is an outstanding, incisive, insightful view into the recent closure of an automobile assembly plant and the strain such a plant closing has on a community. Opponents of the film claim it is an exaggeration that attempts to tell only one side of the story and says little of value.

Sympathetic to the plight of the laid-off workers, you are determined to create a defense of the film by showing it in a positive light.

Your task is to summarize the film while identifying its positive aspects. You will need to use a variety of resources to support your defense of the film. The resources may include, but are not limited to, newspaper or magazine articles, other films, personal interviews, and expert or popular opinion. Use a variety of strategies to prepare your film review and influence your audience. For example, analyze your research, summarize, compare and contrast, and evaluate sources.

Your movie review may be written as it would appear in a newspaper, presented live to the class or a small group, or recorded on video.

Note: This performance task lends itself to a team/cooperative learning arrangement. In a team setting, the review arrangement might take a pro/con discussion format with part of team supporting corporation decisions and the other part supporting the views of the laid-off workers.

The film is rated R for profanity. You will want to review it for appropriateness.

With minimal adjustments to the performance task and the scoring rubric, several other labor-related films can be used for this task: Matewan (rated PG for violence), Salt of the Earth (no rating), How Green Was My Valley (no rating), Hoffa (R, violence, nudity), Killing Floor (unrated but would probably be R), Nine to Five (PG), Norma Rae (PG), Silk-wood (R, nudity), The Milagro Beanfield War (R), Erin Brockovich (PG).

THE UNION CONNECTION

The closing of a plant or loss of a major employer affects the home community in profound ways. The event is demoralizing not only for the community at large, but also for affected workers and their families who generally experience grave emotional and financial trauma.

In order to minimize the impact, unions have lobbied for regulations that require giving employees adequate notice of intended plant closings or relocations. In addition, unions work to negotiate contract provisions to guide layoff and closing procedures.

SCORING RUBRIC

Advanced

- The review provides a well-organized and engaging summary of the film.
- The review identifies three or more of the film's strengths and supports the claims. The review presents expert support for its position from three or more sources. The review demonstrates strong communication skills.

Proficient

- The review provides a well-organized summary of the film.
- The review identifies two of the film's strengths and supports the claims. The review presents expert support for its position from two sources. The review demonstrates good communication skills.

Basic

- The review provides a summary of the film.
- The review identifies one of the film's strengths. The review presents expert support for its position from one source. The review demonstrates some communication skills.

Minimal

- The review provides a somewhat disorganized summary of the film.
- The review does not identify any strengths of the film.
- The review does not present expert support for its position.
- The review demonstrates limited communication skills.

SELECTED RELATED LABOR HISTORY MILESTONES/MARKERS

Social Security Act (1935)

Unemployment compensation legislation in Wisconsin (1932)

Plant closing legislation—Wisconsin 60-day notice law

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

World Trade Organization (WTO) demonstrations (1999)

Expanded trade with China, demonstrations (2000)

PERFORMANCE TASK FOUR: HOW SAFE IS SAFE?

SUBJECT AREA(S): English, Social Studies, Family and Consumer Education, Vocational/ Lifework

STANDARDS: Eng. C.12.1, E.12.3; S.S. C.12.8, E.12.15

SETTING THE SCENE

You've got your driver's license, you've got your car, and you've got a new job delivering pizza. On your first night on the job you find that you are expected to deliver to a neighborhood well known for trouble. Are you required to go there? What if something happens to you or your vehicle? From delivering pizza in dangerous neighborhoods to police work to working in a laboratory where life-threatening materials are commonly handled, workers often face serious health and safety risks. Are there any protections? Who decides what is unsafe? Do you have the right to just say no? To whom can you go for help?

Sometimes we face unsafe conditions in our homes, work, and communities. It is very likely that your school was at one time involved in a hazardous material situation. The material is asbestos. If that happened at your school, you might wish to interview school personnel about what happened. Ask about the extent of asbestos-laden material found within the district—or your building—and about the removal process, including the cost of removal and who performed the removal under what kind of protection, if any.

Imagine yourself as an investigative reporter (for TV, radio, a newspaper, or a magazine) whose assignment is to report on the role of labor unions in exposing hazardous working conditions and practices endangering the communities in which they are located. Report your findings in print or on video. Incorporate a timeline of major events or charts or graphs to support your findings.

Or, review the film *Silkwood* or *Erin Brockovich* to learn more about how the unscrupulous use of hazardous industrial materials can affect the lives of workers and community members. Research an actual occurrence and compare and contrast it with the corresponding film. Report your findings in print, orally to your class, or on video. Incorporate a timeline of major events or charts or graphs to support your findings. Discuss why film is an appropriate vehicle for this kind of story.

Teacher Note: Review the films for appropriateness for your students. *Silkwood* is rated R and *Erin Brockovich* is rated PG.

THE UNION CONNECTION

A significant amount of the work performed by employees is sometimes unsafe and occasionally dangerous. Employees are expected to handle hazardous material, operate dangerous equipment, or work in potentially unsafe environments—in deep earth trenches, near explosive gas lines, or in extreme weather conditions.

Working under such conditions is much less common in today's workplace and is regulated by union contract provisions or by federal health and safety standards. These standards are implemented and enforced by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA).

SCORING RUBRIC

Advanced

- The presentation reflects extensive research.
- The presentation reflects an insightful understanding of the issue, including its broad implications.
- The graphic materials are very clear, appealing, and well-designed.
- The presentation reflects extensive knowledge of and skill in the medium (written report, live presentation, video presentation).

Proficient

- The presentation reflects adequate research.
- The presentation reflects a solid understanding of the issue, including its implications.
- The graphic materials are clear and helpful.
- The presentation reflects knowledge of and skill in the medium.

Basic

- The presentation includes reference to research.
- The presentation reflects some understanding of the issue. The graphic materials are somewhat helpful.
- The presentation reflects some knowledge of and skill in the medium. Minimal
- The presentation fails to cite research.
- The presentation reflects a limited understanding of the issue. The graphic materials have limited usefulness.
- The presentation reflects limited knowledge of and skill in the medium.

SELECTED RELATED LABOR HISTORY MILESTONES/MARKERS

- Formation of Lowell Factory Girls Association (1843)
- Wisconsin Workers' Compensation Law (1911)
- Establishment of Industrial Commission of Wisconsin (1911)
- Wisconsin Factory Safety Law (1911)
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) (1970)

EVENTS

- Kohier Company disputes over enamel plant
- Asbestos removal from schools
- “Big Blue” construction crane collapse at the new Milwaukee Brewer Stadium
- United Farmworkers struggle against pesticide use in fields—California

PERFORMANCE TASK FIVE: OPEN ATRIUM

SUBJECT AREA(S): English, Social Studies, Art, Music, Science

STANDARDS: Eng. A.12.2, A.12.3, B (all), C (all), D (all), E (all); S.S. C.12.9, C.12.10; Art; Music

SETTING THE SCENE

Imagine that you attend a school that has a lovely enclosed atrium. It has several small trees and shrubs, lawn areas, a crisscross pattern of sidewalks, and a few perennial plantings. Everyone enjoys looking at it; the problem is that no one, with the exception of the groundskeeper, is allowed into the atrium. You and your friends decide that you would like to negotiate with the principal to open the atrium to students during the noon hour.

In order to prepare yourselves for the negotiations, you need to learn more about the bargaining process. Start by interviewing members of your teachers' negotiations/bargaining committee as well as members of the school board's committee. Ask about how each prepares for bargaining sessions—what kinds of materials they collect, prepare, and study, how they choose a spokesperson, where meetings are held, how ground rules, if any, are set, and how strategies are developed and implemented.

Another source of information is the Central Labor Council in your community. Many councils have materials available and are prepared to teach students about the negotiations process. (Central Labor Councils are also sometimes called Central Labor Bodies or Federations of Labor.)

Or, interview other unionized personnel and their managers about the bargaining (negotiating) process. Other groups might include firefighters, city workers, police, and hospital workers.

THE UNION CONNECTION

The major goal of a union is to improve or protect the wages, hours, and conditions of employment for its members. For example, the standards of the eight-hour day and the five-day workweek are a result of union activity. Union employees work under a labor contract that has been agreed upon by both the employer and the union.

The process of reaching agreement on the contract is called collective bargaining. In this process, representatives of management and the union meet over a period of time to reach agreement on proposed changes to the current labor contract. Most contracts are settled peacefully and within a reasonable period of time. When the process is especially contentious and difficult, a strike may erupt. Even though strikes are relatively rare today, they receive the majority of media and public attention.

Talk to union members in your family or community to learn more about how labor contracts work.

TASK A

Compare and contrast the information that you gather through the interviews. Create a handbook that can be used by your student negotiations committee to prepare for negotiating the "open atrium."

SCORING RUBRIC

Advanced

- The handbook is based on three or more interviews with two or more unions.
- The handbook includes information that is fully developed and easily used.
- The handbook is well organized so as to be extremely helpful.
- The handbook is eye-catching and appealing and contains no errors. Proficient
- The handbook is based on at least two interviews with one union.
- The handbook includes information that is developed and easily used.
- The handbook is organized in a logical and helpful way.
- The handbook is attractive and contains one or two spelling and grammar errors.

Basic

- The handbook is based on one interview.
- The handbook includes some information that is somewhat developed and somewhat easily used.
- The handbook is somewhat organized.
- The handbook is somewhat attractive and contains several spelling and grammar errors.

Minimal

- The handbook contains little information from interviews.
- The handbook is not useful.
- The handbook lacks organization.
- The handbook is unattractive and contains numerous spelling and grammar errors.

TASK B

Create a series of informational and persuasive materials that could be used during the negotiations process to draw attention to the issue and solicit support.

SCORING RUBRIC

Advanced

- The materials reflect a deep understanding of the issue.
- The materials reflect advanced skill and ability in the medium.
- The materials are very attractive, demand attention, and elicit strong audience emotion.

Proficient

- The materials reflect an understanding of the issue.
- The materials reflect skill and ability in the medium.
- The materials are attractive, demand attention, and elicit audience emotion. Basic
- The materials reflect some understanding of the issue.
- The materials reflect limited skill and ability in the medium.
- The materials are somewhat attractive and attention-getting, and elicit some audience emotion.

Minimal

The materials reflect little understanding of the issue.

The materials reflect little skill and ability in the medium.

- The materials lack attractiveness and do not demand attention or elicit audience emotion.

Note: A fourth medium-specific criterion could be added to each proficiency level.

TASK C

Based on what you learned from the interviews, design a negotiations strategy plan for bargaining the use of the atrium on a daily basis.

SCORING RUBRIC

Advanced

The plan is based on three or more interviews.

- The plan includes three or more strategies. The plan is logical and very well organized.

The plan reflects a deep understanding of the bargaining process.

Proficient

- The plan is based on two interviews.

The plan includes two strategies.

The plan is logical and organized.

The plan reflects an understanding of the bargaining process. Basic

The plan is based on one interview.

The plan includes only one strategy.

- The plan is somewhat logical and organized.

The plan reflects some understanding of the bargaining process.

Minimal

The plan does not reflect interview information.

The plan includes undeveloped strategy.

The plan lacks logic and organization.

The plan reflects little understanding of the bargaining process.

TASK D

Review the film *Norma Rae* by yourself, with another student, or with a small group of students. Make a list of the obstacles to establishing a union that the film presents. At the same time, create a list of reasons for forming a union. Summarize the film for your class. Use your lists of obstacles to and reasons for unionizing to organize your presentation.

SCORING RUBRIC

Advanced

- The presentation includes a very well organized and engaging summary of the film.
- The presentation includes four obstacles to establishing the union.
- The presentation includes four or more reasons for forming the union.
- The presentation reflects exceptional communication skills. Proficient
- The presentation includes a well organized and clear summary of the film.
- The presentation includes three obstacles to establishing the union.
- The presentation includes three reasons for forming the union.
- The presentation reflects good communication skills. Basic
- The presentation includes a summary of the film.
- The presentation includes two obstacles to establishing the union.
- The presentation includes two reasons for forming the union.
- The presentation reflects some skill in communication. Minimal
- The presentation includes some film summary information.
- The presentation mentions one obstacle to establishing the union.
- The presentation mentions one reason for forming the union.
- The presentation reflects limited skill in communication.

PERFORMANCE TASK SIX: 9 TO 5

SUBJECT AREA(S): Social Studies, English, Math

STANDARDS: Eng. C.12.1; S.S. C.12.8, C.12.9, C.12.10; Math A.12.1, A.12.2, A.12.4, A.12.5

SETTING THE SCENE

Paid vacations and holidays, the 40-hour work week, health insurance coverage, sick leave provisions, and pension programs are some of the benefits that most employees commonly receive.

Your task is to survey and interview a wide variety of persons—union and non-union—who perform work for pay to determine the kinds of benefits they experience in their jobs. Develop a questionnaire to collect uniform data throughout the interviews. Chart or graph the resulting data. Analyze the data and draw inferences from what you see. Present the data and defend your inferences to a small group using the charts or graphs.

THE UNION CONNECTION

Today's workers experience specific employment conditions while performing their work. For example, some workers start work at 8:00 A.M. and some at 11:00 p.m.; some work three days at home and two days at an office; some work overtime regularly; and some work four 10-hour days and take a three-day weekend. These variations are called conditions of employment. Even when employees don't work under union contracts, the general conventions of work are observed; the efforts of early unionists can be thanked for that.

Employment benefits are also the result of hard-fought union—management negotiations. Health insurance, paid vacation time, sick days, and retirement plans are some common examples of benefits. In today's labor market, however, changes in benefit levels—for example, less vacation time or fewer days of sick leave—are becoming more and more common. What implications for future employees do these changes suggest?

SCORING RUBRIC

Advanced

The interview or survey questions are insightful and cover a wide variety of wage and benefit issues; the data was collected from a broad audience.

The charts or graphs are very clear and eye-catching and provide important information.

The inferences are especially insightful and reflect the data. The report reflects strong communication skills.

Proficient

The interview or survey questions are clear and cover a variety of wage and benefit issues; the data was collected from at least 10 individuals.

The charts or graphs are clear and attractive and provide important information.

The inferences are insightful and reflect the data.

The report reflects adequate communication skills.

Basic

The interview or survey questions are somewhat limited and administered to a small audience.

- The charts or graphs are somewhat attractive and provide some information. The inferences are loosely drawn and do not always reflect the data. The report reflects some communication skills.

Minimal

The interview or survey questions are limited and administered to a limited audience.

The charts or graphs are not attractive and provide limited information.

The inferences are not supported.

The report reflects limited communication skills.

SELECTED RELATED LABOR HISTORY MILESTONES/MARKERS

Muller vs. Oregon (1908)

Adamson Act (1916)

Wisconsin Women's Hours' Law (1911)

Wisconsin Workmans' Compensation Law (1911)

Fair Labor Standards Act (1938)

Medicare (1965)

Equal Rights Amendment (1972)

Family Leave Act (1995)

PERFORMANCE TASK SEVEN: ASK ANYBODY

SUBJECT AREA(S): English, Social Studies, Math

STANDARDS: Eng. C.12.1; S.S. C.12.8, C.12.9, C.12.10; Math A.12.1, A.12.2, A.12.4, A.12.5

SETTING THE SCENE

You've just been given a raise and you're pretty happy about it. You tell a colleague about your raise only to have her tell you that she, too, got a raise and it's a dollar an hour more than you got. You happen to know that you started at the same level and that you are just as productive as she is. What happened? How are workers paid? Does everyone make the same amount for doing the same work? What about a minimum wage? How much income does it take to support the kind of life you want to lead? Are your wages ever reduced? Who decides?

Create a small work group (two to three people) to investigate how wages are set, in what cases wages move upward or downward, and how an individual's pay is determined. Keeping in mind that your grandfather always says that belonging to a union increases earning power, design a survey (or surveys) that will validate what Grand Dad says—or prove him wrong in today's workplace. Distribute the surveys or administer them orally, by phone, or in person, collect the data, analyze the data, and then prepare a report that presents your findings. The report's major findings must be illustrated through graphs or charts.

THE UNION CONNECTION

New technology has helped to change the face of today's labor market, but not all of these changes have been beneficial. For example, relatively high-paying jobs have been eliminated as assembly lines once worked by men and women are now largely operated through robotics, and computers have replaced telephone operators and clerical workers of all kinds. At the same time, societal changes demand more workers who deliver services—workers who are relatively poorly paid.

What else will happen to wages in this changing work world? What role will unions play in meeting tomorrow's employment challenges?

SCORING RUBRIC

Advanced

The survey is very well developed, was administered broadly in a variety of ways, and includes union questions.

The survey data collection is extensive; the organization of the data and the data analysis are extensive.

- The graphs or charts provide solid support for the presentation. The presentation reflects strong communication skills.

Proficient

The survey is well developed, was broadly distributed, and includes union questions.

The survey information is collected, organized, and analyzed.

The graphs or charts provide support for the presentation.

- The presentation reflects considerable communication skills.

Basic

The survey is developed and was distributed and includes union questions.

- The survey information is somewhat limited; the organization and analysis of the data are somewhat limited.
- The graphs or charts provide some support for the presentation. The presentation reflects some communication skills.

Minimal

The survey is poorly developed, was distributed in a limited manner, and may include union questions.

- The survey information is limited; the organization and analysis of the data are limited.
The graphs or charts are poorly designed and provide limited information. The presentation reflects limited communication skills.

SELECTED RELATED LABOR HISTORY MILESTONES/MARKERS

Social Security Act (1935)

Unemployment Compensation (WIS — 1932)

Fair Labor Standards Act (1938)

PATCO Strike

Increases in minimum wage (1949—present)

PERFORMANCE TASK EIGHT: THE PAST IS WITH US STILL

SUBJECT AREA(S): Social Studies, English, Art, Music

STANDARDS: Eng. B.12.1, B.12.2, B.12.3; S.S. C.12.8, C.12.9

SETTING THE SCENE

The status of work and workers is constantly changing in America and around the world. Among the greatest changes is that of the status of female and minority workers. Often that change has come at great cost to individuals and groups.

Picture yourself as a researcher and artist. You want to research the exploitation of women and minority workers in the 1800s and early 1900s and to bring attention to that history. Begin by looking at the garment industry in Massachusetts, particularly the tragedy of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, and at the expansion of railroads and mining across the country as well as here in Wisconsin.

Use your talent as an artist to create a piece of art, music, or literature to illustrate what you have learned and to bring it to the attention of others, or to voice your opposition to practices that exploit specific groups of workers such as women or children.

THE UNION CONNECTION

The issues of fair wages, safe working conditions, and a humane workweek often made unions one of the loudest and strongest voices for those most exploited in the workforce. Although early labor organizations had as their goal the protection of working *men*, modern unions quickly found it desirable to improve the lot of all workers. While not always fully altruistic, unions became the champions of the exploited. After all, a child working in the mine meant one less job for an adult male. Women and minority workers were also taken, perhaps somewhat grudgingly at first, under the wing of unions.

The result is a modern workforce that is skilled, smart, and fairly compensated. Their productivity helped to create a stable domestic economy, a comfortable lifestyle, and a demand around the world for American-made goods and services.

In the last two decades, the exportation of manufacturing and textile jobs from the United States and other developed nations to third world countries has proliferated a pattern of exploitation much like that seen in the early days of this nation. There, incredible poverty drives men, women, and children into cruel and exhausting work situations in order to secure a better life for themselves and their families.

What we also see, however, is the indomitable spirit of workers as they attempt, against formidable odds, to establish unions, secure safe and healthful working conditions, and overcome the grinding poverty they now endure.

SCORING RUBRIC

Advanced

- The work tells an articulate and moving story.
- The work is very interesting and engages the audience.
- The work demonstrates a deep understanding of the issue and provides insights.
- The work demonstrates a high level of skill in and knowledge of the medium. Proficient
- The work tells a story.
- The work is interesting and captures the attention of the audience.
- The work demonstrates a solid understanding of the issue and provides some insights.
- The work demonstrates skill in and knowledge of the medium. Basic
- The work's story is undeveloped.
- The work captures the attention of some of the audience.
- The work demonstrates some understanding of the issue but provides little insight. The work demonstrates some skill in and knowledge of the medium.

Minimal

- The work does not tell a story.
- The work fails to capture the attention of the audience.
- The work demonstrates little understanding of the issues and provides no insights.
- The work demonstrates little skill in and knowledge of the medium.

SELECTED RELATED LABOR HISTORY MILESTONES/MARKERS

Lowell Turnout (1845)—IO-Hour Movement

Haymarket Incident (1 886)—Eight-Hour Movement

Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire (1911)

Flint Sitdown Strike (1937—38)—Women's Emergency Brigade

March on Washington Movement (1941)

Empire Zinc Strike (1950—1951)—Women's Role and Struggle Against the "Mexican Wage"

Kathy Lee Gifford clothing endorsement problem (2000)

UW Reebok contract (2000)

UW sweatshop demonstrations (2000)