

Maine Labor Laws for Minors

Subject: History/Social Studies/Current Affairs/Labor Laws

Grades: 7-12

Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Research● Writing● Critical Thinking	Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Access to Google Slides● Link to interactive slides
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Summary:

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, 2003, and 2018 to be more aligned with Federal Restrictions.

Courtesy of the Maine Department of Labor

Instructions:

Use our Industrial history digital unit and Child Labor Unit for background information.

This assignment can be completed individually or in groups of two.

Give students 3 minutes to brainstorm reasons that children under 18 might choose to work today. Share answers with the class. Are there similarities to the reasons children worked during the Industrial Revolution? Are the reasons different? Is there a difference between children working and child labor?

Share the information above about laws passed in Maine to protect child workers. Make a copy of the Maine Child Labor Laws Webquest [here](#) and share with students (this can be added to a Google Classroom site for students to download and turn in directly to teacher or link can be shared via email). Have students enter the information directly onto the slides. Remind them they are to use the provided link and not to search Google on their own.