

## Child Labor in Mississippi

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/tr11c.html#obj3>

### Overview/Prior Knowledge

In previous lessons, students have read informational text articles on the Industrial Revolution and the involvement of children in the labor force. Students are familiar with terms and domain specific vocabulary including: *textiles*, *doffer*, *spinning jenny*, *bobbins*, and *shift*. This lesson will focus on child labor in Mississippi. In addition, during ELA class, students are reading the novel, *Counting on Grace*. This piece of historical fiction depicts a young girl, Grace, and the experiences she and her family encounter during the Industrial Revolution.

### Objectives

- Students will identify domain specific words and terms used by Hine to describe his observations and experience.
- Students will apply primary source evaluation tools to dissect the findings of Hine in his visit to the cotton mill in Meridian, Mississippi.
- Students will analyze Edward F. Brown's letter on Child Labor in the Gulf Coast.
- Students will contextualize the two sources in relationship to the 1908 Mississippi child labor law.

### Time Required

50 minutes

### Recommended Grade Range

7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>

### Subject/Sub-Subject

American History / Mississippi Studies



## Standards

### *Social Studies*

#### MCCRS Social Studies 8.6

Interpret the causes, challenges, and effects of the Industrial Revolution.

### *English Language Arts*

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

## Library of Congress - Teaching with Primary Sources Skills:

- Identify the primary source, author, setting, and purpose.
- Incorporate prior knowledge into primary sources and historical content.
- Examine and investigate primary sources clearly to interpret meaning and purpose.
- Infer and make conclusions using text-based evidence.

## Highlighted Strategies:

- Written document analysis
- CSI
- Cooperative learning

## Credits

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## Materials

- Primary Sources – See Resource Guide at the end of this document.
- CSI example
- Projector/White board
- Observe-Reflect-Question Document Analysis Tool from the Library of Congress – Manuscripts:  
[http://www.loc.gov/teachers/primary-source-analysis-tool/;](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/primary-source-analysis-tool/)  
[http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing\\_Manuscripts.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Manuscripts.pdf)

## Procedures

### Introduction

1. Teacher will inquire of students, “What is a primary source? What are some examples?” The teacher will facilitate the discussion based on student responses. Other questions that could guide the discussion:
  - A. How is a primary source different from a secondary source?
  - B. What might make one or the other more reliable?
  - C. How does who created the source and its purpose impact its reliability?
2. The teacher will then review student understanding of child labor to activate prior knowledge as needed.
3. The teacher will ask the students, “Are laws always followed?” “Why would a law maybe not be followed?” “Do you think there were laws that protected children at work during the industrial revolution?” (These questions will be revisited after the analysis of the letters.)

### During

4. Students will receive:
  - A copy of Lewis Hine’s letter, Child Labor in the Cotton Mills of Mississippi April – May 1911. <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/vc004894.jpg>
  - Students will also be given a primary source analysis tool from the Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/primary-source-analysis-tool/>
5. Students will read Hine’s letter for observation. The teacher will use the Library of Congress Teacher’s Guide for Analyzing Manuscripts, [http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing\\_Manuscripts.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Manuscripts.pdf), to facilitate discussion and guide observations.
  - As analysis and discussion continues, the teacher will use the Library of Congress Teacher’s Guide for Analyzing Manuscripts to further investigation and identify appropriate questions to further discussion through the reflection and question portions.
  - Sample observation questions include: Who wrote this? What information is included? What important details are found in the letter?
  - Sample reflection questions include: Who do you think was intended to read it?; What can you learn from this?; What materials were used to create it?; What can you learn from examining this?
  - Sample question section stems can include: Who, what, where, when, why, how? to develop observations into questions.
6. The process repeats itself with a second primary source, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/s55.4a.jpg> The teacher will facilitate and guide the students through this primary source. Students will be given another copy of the Library of Congress primary analysis tool for this exercise. Sample questions include:
  - A. What does it say?
  - B. What do you see on the page besides writing?

- C. Does anything look strange or unfamiliar?
7. The teacher will then help the students contextualize the two manuscripts. Both were written after 1908. The teacher will provide brief background information about the 1908 child labor law enacted in Mississippi.
- A. In 1908, a law was enacted that implemented a 10-hour work day and 58-hour work week for children 12 and over.
    - i. How did Mr. Lopez argue that he was not using child labor?
    - ii. How would you disprove Mr. Lopez’s claim that children work for their parents not the factory?
    - iii. What evidence would you cite from the second primary sources?
    - iv. Did Mr. Lopez’s firm violate the 1908 law?
    - v. Why might parents bring children to work?
    - vi. Why might the owner disobey the child labor law?
8. After analysis of both manuscripts, students will use the CSI strategy from *Making Thinking Visible*. In this activity, students will incorporate important themes they have seen throughout out these two primary sources and develop a CSI – color, symbol, image.
- Each student chooses a color based on the essence of the idea and explain the meaning behind the color he/she chose with text evidence. For example, red would represent the danger present for children in the cotton mills of Mississippi and along the Gulf Coast.
  - Then each student chooses a symbol that represents the essence of the idea and explains meaning based on text evidence. For example, a factory would represent employment and working conditions.
  - Lastly, each student will sketch an image that best captures the essence of the idea represented in the primary sources. For example, a sketch/drawing of a time card illustrating 60-hour work weeks for children.
  - For each color, symbol, image – the students need to explain and justify their selections/creations. It is important at this point to get students to justify their selections because this is where the thinking can be made visible. If they are not quite getting to the justification/explanation to the degree that makes their reasoning clear, ask them “What makes you say that?” or something similar to extend their thinking.

## Assessment

- **Formative:** Color, Symbol, Image (*Making Thinking Visible*)

## Differentiation

- Accelerated learners would complete a second CSI based on their ELA novel, *Counting on Grace*
- Students with varying ability levels will be allowed to create a collage using magazine imagery

## Supplementary Materials

- The Seafood Industry in Biloxi: Its Early History, 1848-1930  
<http://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/articles/209/the-seafood-industry-in-biloxi-its-early-history-1848-1930>
- Was Mississippi part of progressivism?  
<http://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/articles/249/was-mississippi-a-part-of-progressivism>
- MDAH Timeline: <https://www.mdah.ms.gov/timeline/zone/1908/>

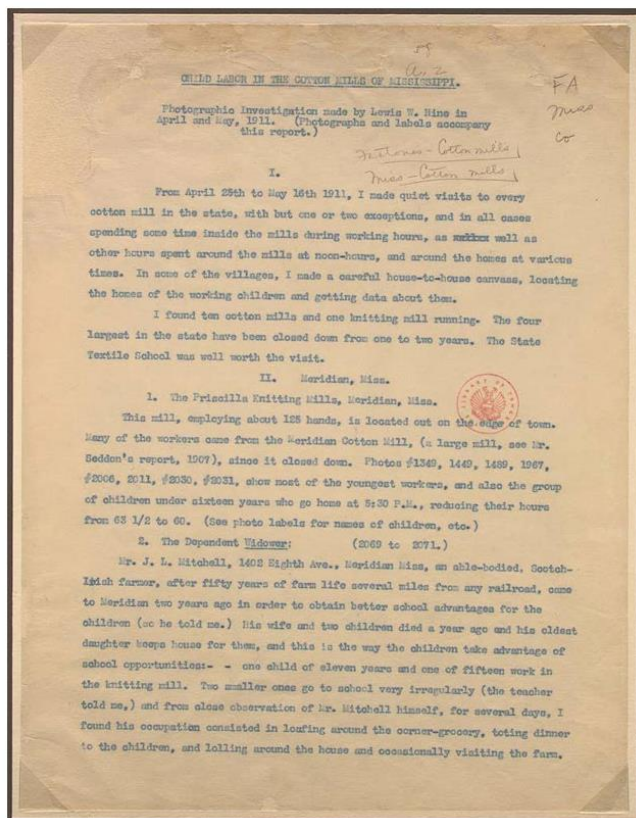
## Teaching with Primary Sources Resource Guide

**Title:** Lewis Hine: Child Labor in Mississippi

**Historical Background:**

Child labor was common in Mississippi as it was elsewhere in the United States. Child labor was particularly common in cotton fields, cotton gins, and in seafood processing along the coast. While Mississippi did pass a law against children younger than 12 working in factories in 1908, the two sources here indicate that the law was not followed or enforced effectively.

**Source 1:**

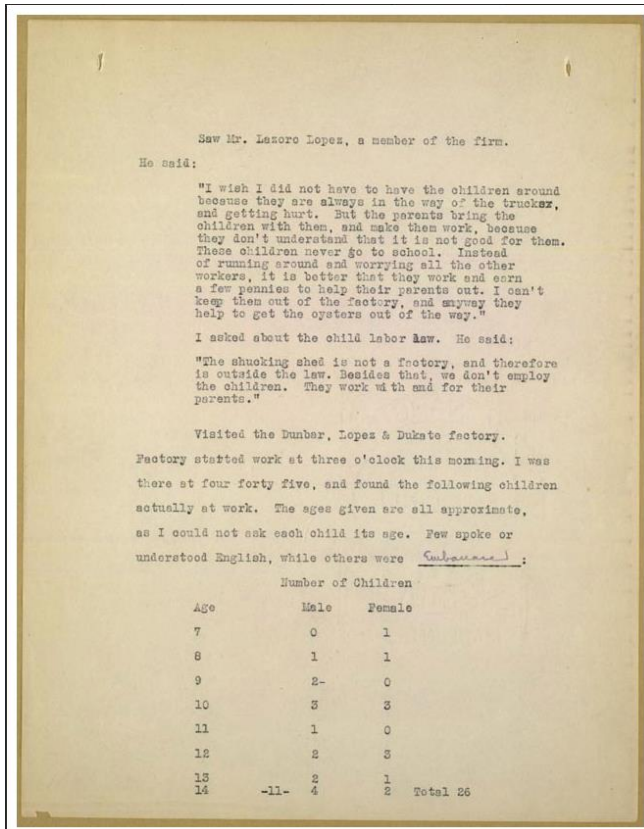


Title: Lewis Hine’s letter – Child Labor in the Cotton Mills of Mississippi

Link: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/tr11c.html#obj3>

Purpose: Students will apply primary source evaluation tools to dissect the findings of Hine in his visit to the cotton mill in Meridian, Mississippi.

Source 2:



Title: Edward F. Brown - Child Labor in the Gulf Coast

Link: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/tr11c.html#obj3>

Purpose: Students will analyze Edward F. Brown's letter on Child Labor in the Gulf Coast. This source includes a quote from a factory owner justifying the role of children in the shucking shed.