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# **Workplace Health and Safety**

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# **U.S. GOVERNMENT UNIT**

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## **TEACHER'S INTRODUCTION**

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### **Why discuss workplace health and safety in a government class?**

Many teens hold jobs while attending school, and nearly all will work eventually. Students need basic health and safety awareness so they can protect themselves on the job. They especially need to be aware of the laws that regulate health, safety, and other working conditions.

In U.S. Government classes, students learn about the principles of democracy, including how laws are made and applied. This unit helps students understand existing health, safety, and child labor laws that directly affect their lives in the workplace. While the unit explains legal rights and responsibilities, it also encourages students to assess whether existing laws are too restrictive, afford adequate protection, or should be strengthened. The interactive activities included here are designed to show the law at work in actual everyday situations, and thereby bring the law to life.

## Purpose and Teaching Methods

This unit is designed to build skills in basic research, critical thinking, advocacy, debate, and group participation. It also presents specific practical information about laws and public policies that affect teens' jobs and working conditions.

Students will:

- Critically examine young people's working conditions in both modern and historical times.
- Develop and justify model laws to improve teen working conditions.
- Compare and contrast their model laws with existing laws.
- Apply existing laws to case studies depicting "real life" situations that teens may face on the job.
- Research arguments for and against child labor laws, and participate in a debate on this subject.

A major goal of this unit is to help students evaluate various alternative solutions to workplace problems. Students are encouraged to address problems in a way that is effective but also realistic.

Students' major homework assignment for the week is preparation for the debate, which will be held at the final class. Each student will prepare to argue both for and against child labor laws, utilizing background information found through library research and/or other resources.

The unit is designed for senior U.S. Government classes. It fits within the guidelines for Secondary Curriculum: Grade Twelve (Principles of American Democracy) in the *History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools* (1988).

The unit can be used at the beginning of a U.S. Government course, or at any time thereafter. Each lesson builds on the knowledge and skills taught in the previous lessons. Therefore, it is important to present the entire unit in the sequence shown here.

## Contents and Time

This unit takes approximately five hours to complete. It consists of five lessons, each designed to be presented during one 50-minute class session.

Lessons are:

- ✓ **1.** There Ought To Be a Law!
- ✓ **2.** Teen Workers' Rights
- ✓ **3.** Applying the Law
- ✓ **4.** Preparing To Debate
- ✓ **5.** The Debate

## Objectives—Social Science Skills

Students will be able to:

- Analyze and discuss job health and safety problems facing teens, based on information from first-hand accounts, factsheets, and personal experience.
- Develop model laws in response to workplace problems.
- Describe several existing labor laws affecting teen workers, and explain their purpose and limitations.
- Apply existing laws and regulations to “real life” scenarios depicting teens on the job.
- Participate effectively in groups working toward a common goal.
- Resolve and develop arguments on both sides of a public policy issue.
- Debate the pros and cons of protective regulations for teen workers.

## Objectives—Workplace Health and Safety

Students will be able to:

- Identify workplace health and safety problems, both historical and contemporary.
- Explain teen workers' rights under the law—health and safety, work hours, and working conditions.
- Name three agencies that enforce these protections.
- Articulate the purpose of protective regulations and discuss whether they are needed.
- Explore their own attitudes toward safety and labor regulations.

## Materials for the Teacher

The following materials are supplied for the teacher:

- **Lesson Plan and Detailed Teacher's Instructions** for each class session (Lessons 1–5).
- **Overheads** to show the class. (Masters are at the end of the unit, following Lesson 5.)
  - Overhead #1—*Where Do U.S. Teens Work?*
  - Overhead #2—*Thousands of Teens Are Injured on the Job*
  - Overhead #3—*Where Are Teens Injured?*
  - Overhead #4—*How Are Teens Injured?*
  - Overhead #5—*Child Labor Laws*
  - Overhead #6—*Job Health and Safety Laws*
  - Overhead #7—*More Worker Rights*
  - Overhead #8—*Who Enforces the Law in California?*

## Materials for Students

To present this unit, the teacher will need the following materials to distribute to students:

- **Handouts.** Make one copy of each handout for each student. (Masters are at the end of the unit, following Lesson 5.)
  - Handout #1—*There Ought To Be a Law!*
  - Handout #2—*Are You a Working Teen?*
  - Handout #3—*Check Your Understanding*
  - Handout #4—*Debate Worksheet*
  - Handout #5—*Case Studies—Rights on the Job*

## Teacher Preparation

- Read all five lessons and decide how to adapt them to meet the needs of your class.
- Read the “General Unit” curriculum in this binder for additional introductory health and safety activities that you may want to use.
- Obtain an overhead projector to show the transparencies that are included with this unit.
- Obtain a VCR to show the video that is included with this curriculum. (This 12-minute video, *Your Work—Keepin’ It Safe*, was produced by UCLA’s Labor Occupational Safety and Health Program.)
- Make enough copies of all Student Handouts (see section above).

## Tips From Teachers Who Have Used This Unit

- “I started by showing *Shattered Dreams*, a video about international child labor. It grabbed students’ attention, and helped put the issue of working teens in perspective.”

- “My students had never held a debate before, so they needed a lot of help preparing for it. They didn’t all understand what an ‘argument’ was, in the context of a debate, and some didn’t know how to back up what they said.”
- “It’s really important to bring in the historical perspective. Remind students about things they may have studied in history class—why child labor laws were passed, and the role labor unions played. Emphasize that none of these protections came easily. It would be great to work with a U.S. History teacher to help tie it all together.”



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# **LESSON ONE**

**There Ought To Be a Law!**

## Lesson Plan One

Activity	Grouping	Time	Materials
<p><b>A. Introduction to the unit.</b></p> <p>Teacher explains the purpose of this unit, and gives a preview of major activities included.</p>	Class	5 minutes	
<p><b>B. Brainstorm—Unsafe working conditions.</b></p> <p>Class develops a list of unsafe conditions that workers may face.</p>	Class	10 minutes	
<p><b>C. Health and safety issues for working teens.</b></p> <p>Teacher presents national statistics on teen workers and job injuries.</p>	Class	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Overheads #1–4.</li> </ul>
<p><b>D. There ought to be a law!</b></p> <p>Meeting in small groups, students read first-hand accounts depicting teens and unsafe working conditions. Groups identify the hazards in each story, and propose new laws to improve conditions.</p>	Small groups	20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Handout #1.</li> <li>● Butcher paper.</li> <li>● Marking pens.</li> </ul>
<p><b>E. Homework.</b></p> <p>Students answer a set of questions about the factsheet, <i>Are You a Working Teen?</i></p>	Individual	5 minutes <i>(for explanation)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Handouts #2–3.</li> </ul>

**Total Class Time: 50 minutes**



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# DETAILED TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONS

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## A. Introduction to the unit.

(5 minutes)

Explain the purpose of this unit to the class.

Many students probably have jobs already, after school or on weekends. Someday they'll be working full time. It's important to realize that the workplace can be dangerous. Some teens get burns, cuts, and even serious diseases at work.

There are laws designed to protect workers on the job. This unit will discuss where laws come from, why they exist, what they say, and how they work. It will cover two main types of laws:

- **Job health and safety laws** that protect all workers

—and—

- **Child labor laws** that give special protection to young people.

Explain that many laws in our society exist to protect us from danger. But students may not usually think of the law that way. Some laws just seem to be a hassle or a nuisance—or even take away their freedom. On the other hand, most people agree that our food, water, and highways are safer because of the law.

Explain that later this week, there will be a class debate. The class will try to decide whether labor laws designed to protect teens are useful. Should these laws be stricter, or should they be less restrictive? Students will develop “pro” and “con” arguments, and everyone will be assigned to a team to prepare their case for the debate.

## B. Brainstorm—Unsafe working conditions.

(10 minutes)

First ask the class a few background questions on teen work and teen workplace injuries:

- How many of you work?
- What kind of work do you do?

- Do you know anyone who has been hurt on the job?
- If so, what kind of injury?

As students answer the last two questions, list the types of injuries they mention on the board. Save your list for use later in this lesson.

Next, explain that the class will “brainstorm” to develop a list of unsafe or unhealthy conditions that workers may face on the job. Ask the class:

**Can you give some examples of working conditions that might cause someone to get hurt or sick on the job?**

To answer, students should draw on their own work experiences and those of friends, as well as on information from school, outside reading, or TV. Encourage them to think about working conditions in the past as well as the present, and in other countries as well as the U.S. (With some classes, you may want to give some hints.)

As students answer, make a list of the conditions they mention on the board. Your list might include:

- toxic chemicals
- fire hazards
- no emergency exits
- long hours
- late hours
- no breaks
- sharp objects
- unsafe machinery
- heavy lifting
- slippery floors
- no safety training
- no protective clothing
- overcrowding
- young children working

Save your list for use later in this lesson.

### **C. Health and safety issues for working teens.**

(10 minutes)

Use the first four overheads to present key statistical information on where teens work and what kinds of injuries occur. (Overhead masters are provided at the end of this unit, following Lesson 5.)

After showing each overhead, ask the class the related discussion questions. (See section below.) The questions are designed to help students compare the national statistics given in the overheads to their own experiences.

- Overhead # 1, *Where Do U.S. Teens Work?*

*Question:* How many students in this class work in a restaurant? grocery store? office? with children? (Calculate the percentage of the class working in various occupations, and write the results on the board. Then compare the class figures to the national statistics in Overhead #1.)

- Overhead #2, *Thousands of Teens Are Injured on the Job*

*Question:* How many students in the class have *ever* been injured on *any* job? (Calculate the percentage of the class who have been injured on the job, and write the results on the board. If there is time, you may also want to break down the total by age and gender. Then, in a general way, compare these class figures to the national statistics in Overhead #2.)

- Overhead #3, *Where Are Teens Injured?*

*Question:* If you have ever been injured at work, on what kind of job did your injury happen? (Write students' responses on the board, and compare them to the national statistics in Overhead #3.)

- Overhead #4, *How Are Teens Injured?*

*Questions:* The overhead shows that a lot of teens get injured on the job when they work late at night, or work alone. How many students in this class work after 10pm on school nights? How many work alone? (Mention that later in this unit, the class will learn about laws that limit the hours teens can work.)

## **D. There ought to be a law!**

(20 minutes)

In this exercise students will write model laws to improve working conditions for teens.

Give each student a copy of *There Ought To Be a Law!* (Handout #1). Everyone will work as a member of a small group. Ideally, each group should have 4 or 5 students, although this is flexible. Give each group a large piece of paper (butcher paper, etc.) and marking pens.

Handout #1 includes three separate stories, with a set of questions following each one. The stories depict teens working in unsafe

conditions—in both modern and historical times, and in both the U.S. and other countries. Assign each group to read **one** of the stories and answer the questions that follow it. (You may assign the same story to more than one group.)

Before the groups meet, explain that they will have 15–20 minutes to work. Each group will report back at the next class. Remind students to bring Handout #1 to the next class.

Explain that each group should:

- Choose someone to be the facilitator (to lead the discussion).
- Choose someone to be the recorder (to take notes on the discussion).
- Read the group’s assigned story from Handout #1. (This may be done any way the group chooses—one student reading aloud to the group, everyone reading silently, etc.)
- Read and discuss the questions following the story. The questions ask the group to identify the hazardous working conditions shown in the story, and to propose model laws that will improve teen working conditions. The model laws may be based on the working conditions in the story, on students’ own experience, or on the list of unsafe conditions that the class made earlier.
- Agree on **three** laws the group believes will protect teens the most. Use the butcher paper and marking pens to list the three laws, and save the list. Make the print large—it will be shown to the whole class later. Be prepared to justify the three laws at the next class. Groups should turn in their lists to the teacher to keep until the next class.
- **Bear in mind:** It’s not necessary to know what the current law actually says. Groups may propose a law whether or not similar legislation already exists. (At the next class, students will compare their model laws to existing U.S. law.)

## **E. Homework.**

(5 minutes for explanation)

At the end of the class, bring everyone back together to assign tonight’s homework. Pass out the four-page factsheet *Are You a Working Teen?* (Handout #2). Also pass out *Check Your Understanding—Questions on the Factsheet* (Handout #3).

Tell students that the homework is to read the factsheet and answer the questions. (All the answers can be found in the factsheet.)

Also explain that students should keep the factsheet; it supplies background information they can use later. Remind them to bring Handouts #2 and #3 back to the next class.

This homework assignment should take no more than 30 minutes.





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# LESSON TWO

## Teen Workers' Rights

## Lesson Plan Two

Activity	Grouping	Time	Materials
<p><b>A. Video.</b></p> <p>Students watch a video, <i>Your Work—Keepin’ It Safe</i>, and discuss the issues it raises.</p>	Class	20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Video and VCR.</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. “Check Your Understanding” game.</b></p> <p>Students play a game based on the factsheet, <i>Are You a Working Teen?</i></p>	Small groups & class	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Handouts #2–3. (Copies used for homework.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>C. There ought to be a law! (Report back).</b></p> <p>Small groups report on the model laws they developed at the previous class. Students compare these to existing U.S. laws.</p>	Class	15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Handouts #1–2. (Copies used earlier.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>D. Homework.</b></p> <p>Students are given their major week-long homework assignment. They will do research for a debate on whether child labor laws protecting teen workers are useful.</p>	Individual	5 minutes (for explanation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Handout #4.</li> </ul>

**Total Class Time: 50 minutes**



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## DETAILED TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONS

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### A. Video.

(20 minutes)

First, as a “warm-up” discussion, ask the class:

- How many of you have jobs?
- Do you think your job is dangerous?

Let the class spend a few minutes talking about their answers.

Next, as an introduction to the theme of job health and safety, show the video *Your Work—Keepin' It Safe*. (This 12-minute video is included with this curriculum. See page 7 of the **Introduction** at the beginning of the curriculum for more information.)

After the video, hold a brief class discussion of the issues it raises. Ask the class what hazards these teens face on their jobs.

If you are unable to show the video, see the General Unit curriculum for other activities you might use.

Explain to students that this curriculum will focus on workplace health and safety and teen workers' rights.

### B. 'Check Your Understanding' game.

(10 minutes)

Make sure each person has brought copies of the two handouts used for homework—*Are You a Working Teen?* (Handout #2) and *Check Your Understanding* (Handout #3). Ask students what information was new to them, or surprised them. Did the factsheet mention rights or protections that they didn't know they had?

Now have the class play a game to review their homework. Divide the class into several teams, with 4 or 5 students per team. Pose the first question from Handout #3 to one team and give them 15 seconds to come up with an answer. Their team gets 10 points if they give the correct answer. If they don't answer correctly, any other team can volunteer an answer, and gets 10 points if it is correct. You may want to discuss the answer briefly.

Continue in the same way with as many questions as time allows. Rotate questions among the teams so they all have a chance. At the end of the game, the team with the most points wins. You can decide what the prize will be.

The section below provides the correct answers as well as some background information on each question. You may want to introduce some of the background information during the discussion.

## ✓ **Check Your Understanding—Teacher’s Discussion Guide**

### **1. Who is responsible for keeping the workplace safe and healthy?**

Your employer is ultimately responsible for maintaining a safe and healthful work environment. But you also have a responsibility—you should follow all safety rules and instructions, use safety equipment provided by your employer, and keep work areas clean and neat.

### **2. Are teens allowed to drive a motor vehicle on the job?**

For most occupations, California law says that you must be at least 18 years old to drive a motor vehicle on the job. (Teens working in agriculture are allowed to begin driving at age 16.)

### **3. Who pays for your medical care if you get hurt or sick because of your job?**

Every California employer must carry workers’ compensation insurance. This covers medical care if you get hurt or sick on the job (even if it’s your own fault). In many cases, you are also entitled to payments that make up for wages you lost because of the injury. Because you can get these workers’ compensation benefits, you usually are not allowed to sue your employer for a job injury.

### **4. Can 16 year olds work on ladders or scaffolds?**

In California, you can work in some types of construction beginning at age 16. This includes working on a ladder or scaffold. For more dangerous construction work, like roofing or demolition, you must be 18.

**5. Are teens allowed to work with restaurant equipment like slicers or bakery machines?**

In California, you must be at least 18 years old to work with any power machinery like a slicer or bakery machine.

**6. Who is responsible for *supplying* safety equipment and protective clothing?**

Your employer is required to provide any safety equipment you need. Your employer must also give you any necessary protective clothing (like gloves, aprons, or ear plugs). Your employer must train you in how to use this equipment.

**7. Who is responsible for *using* safety equipment and protective clothing?**

It is your responsibility to use the safety equipment and protective clothing you are given, as instructed by your employer.

**8. If you are over 18 years old but still in high school, do you need a work permit?**

No. In California, only students under 18 need to get a work permit before taking a job.

**9. If you graduated from high school but are still under 18, do you need a work permit?**

No. Only *students* under 18 need a work permit.

**10. If you are 15 years old, how late in the evening can you work during the school year?**

California teens who are 14 or 15 are not allowed to work after 7pm during the school year.

**11. What are four things you can do if you need help with a problem at work?**

- Talk to a supervisor about the problem.
- Talk to a parent or teacher.
- Talk to co-workers or friends.
- Call the appropriate government agency.

**12. Who can you call to complain about a health and safety problem at work?**

Cal/OSHA is the California government agency responsible for health and safety in the workplace. There are Cal/OSHA offices throughout the state. Your local office is listed in the “State Government” pages of the phone book under “Industrial Relations Dept., Occupational Safety and Health.” (You may want to bring a phone book to class and show students how to find the listing.)

**13. Can you be fired for reporting a health and safety problem at work?**

No—it’s against the law. Still, some employers may *try* to fire you for this reason. In this case, you can file a complaint with the California Labor Commissioner, and you may be able to get your job back. (You may also get back pay.) See the “State Government” pages of the phone book under “Labor Commissioner.”

**14. Can your employer pay you less than the minimum wage?**

If you’re under 18, your employer can sometimes pay you less than minimum wage for the first 90 days of employment. After the 90 days, you must get at least the minimum wage.

**15. Who can you call if your employer doesn’t pay you the minimum wage or makes you work too many hours?**

The California Labor Commissioner is responsible for wage and hour laws. See the “State Government” pages of the phone book under “Labor Commissioner.” The California minimum wage is \$5.75 an hour as of March, 1998.

**16. Who should you call if you are a victim of sexual harassment or discrimination on the job?**

Call the California Fair Employment and Housing Department. See the “State Government” pages of the phone book under “Fair Employment and Housing Department.”

## C. There ought to be a law! (Report back).

(15 minutes)

During Lesson 1, students met in small groups to develop laws that they felt would protect young workers the most. Now they will present their model laws to the class. Make sure everyone has their copy of *There Ought To Be a Law* (Handout #1), which was used in Lesson 1.

Each small group previously chose a recorder to take notes on their discussion. The recorder may present the group's report, or the group may select someone else (possibly even several people).

Ask each group to report in turn. As each group reports, they should post their three model laws at the front of the class. (They previously wrote these out in large print on butcher paper.) In addition to reading and discussing their model laws, groups should explain **why** they believe each law is needed.

After all the groups have reported, ask the class if they can think of any other laws that are needed, but that no one has mentioned.

### Is There a Law?

Next have students compare the model laws they developed with the actual law in the U.S. Do any of their model laws already exist?

Ask everyone to turn to the factsheet *Are You a Working Teen?* (Handout #2), which they read previously. Ask each group if they can find laws or regulations mentioned in the factsheet that are similar to their model laws.

In cases where students find that a law similar to the model already exists, ask them to compare the model law to the actual one. How are the two the same? How are they different? Does the model law or the actual law give teens better protection? Would either the model law or the actual law cause problems for teens? Discuss the answers that the class gives.

Here's an example:

- **Model law:** If you need gloves to do your job safely, your employer must pay for them.
- **Actual law:** Your employer must provide any protective clothing or equipment you need. (*Are You a Working Teen?*, page 2.)

- **Comparison:** The actual law is stronger—it covers **any** kind of protective gear. (Safety glasses, respirators, etc. as well as gloves.)

If you need more details on the existing law to guide this discussion, sources of background information are listed in the **Resource Section** at the end of the entire curriculum.

## **D. Debate assignment.**

(5 minutes for explanation)

Give each student a copy of the *Debate Worksheet* (Handout #4). Explain that this is a major week-long homework assignment. Later this week, students will conduct a debate on whether child labor laws covering teen workers are useful. Do we need such laws, or not? Do you support such laws, or not? Do teens need this protection, or do the laws just create unnecessary restrictions?

Students' assignment is to read Handout #4 carefully, and to begin preparation for the debate.

Explain that an “argument” is a statement that clearly supports one side or another of a question. Everyone must prepare arguments on both sides of this issue—three “pro” and three “con” arguments. Each student should bring the completed *Debate Worksheet* to the fourth class, where debating teams will be formed and assigned one side or the other.

Explain that “pro” and “con” arguments about protective labor laws may be based on either historical or present-day source material. Very effective arguments on both sides can be developed by comparing the working conditions faced by teens in historical and modern times. What has changed, and what hasn't? What impact has the law had?

Point out that some possible sources of information (both a book and websites) are listed in the *Debate Worksheet*.

Answer any questions that students may have about the assignment.



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# LESSON THREE

**Applying the Law**

## Lesson Plan Three

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Grouping</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Materials</b>
<p><b>A. Teen workers and the law.</b></p> <p>Teacher presents an overview of the major health, safety, and labor laws that protect teen workers.</p>	Class	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Overheads #5–8.</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. Case studies—Rights on the job.</b></p> <p>Meeting in small groups, students read short workplace scenarios and identify violations of applicable laws.</p>	Small groups	15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Handout #2. (<i>Copies used earlier.</i>)</li> <li>● Handout #5.</li> </ul>
<p><b>C. Report back and discussion.</b></p> <p>Small groups report to the class on the violations they found in the case studies. The class discusses the case studies further.</p>	Class	15 minutes	
<p><b>D. Debate reminder.</b></p> <p>Teacher reminds students about the week-long debate research assignment, and answers any questions. Completed worksheet is due at the next class.</p>	Class	5 minutes	
<p><b>E. Homework.</b></p> <p>Students are asked to write a case study of their own, similar to those covered in class today</p>	Individual	5 minutes <i>(for explanation)</i>	

**Total Class Time: 50 minutes**



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## DETAILED TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONS

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### A. Teen workers and the law.

(10 minutes)

Use Overheads #5–8 to summarize the major health, safety, and labor laws that protect workers on the job, including laws that are covered in the factsheet (Handout #2).

#### Especially for Teens

- Overhead #5, *Child Labor Laws*, explains the limits on teens' working hours and the kind of work they can do. As you show this overhead, ask the class how many think it is important to have laws that specifically cover teen workers. Point out that this is one of the issues on the *Debate Worksheet* that they are doing as homework. Tell them to be sure to find facts to support the arguments they make on the worksheet.

#### For All Workers

- Overhead #6, *Job Health and Safety Laws*, covers a few basic legal principles of health and safety—the right to a safe workplace, the right to report unsafe conditions, the right to receive training, and the right to get protective equipment. As you show this overhead, ask the class how many think it is important to have health and safety laws that employers must follow.
- Overhead #7, *More Worker Rights*, give examples of other important labor laws—minimum wage, workers' compensation, the right to organize, and freedom from discrimination.
- Overhead #8, *Who Enforces the Law in California?*, lists some of the government agencies primarily responsible for enforcing the various laws.

Discuss the overheads with the class, and answer any questions. Use the factsheet and the overheads to reinforce each other—point out the similarities.

If you want to discuss legal rights in more detail, sources of background information are listed in the **Resource Section** (at the end of the entire curriculum).

## **B. Case studies—Rights on the job.**

(15 minutes)

Now that students have learned about some of the laws that protect teen workers, they will practice applying these laws to “real life” situations.

Pass out *Case Studies—Rights on the Job* (Handout #5). The handout presents two scenarios depicting teen injuries on the job. Both scenarios are based on actual incidents. In both cases, there are laws and regulations that should have protected the teens involved, and might have prevented the injuries. Each scenario is followed by a set of questions for students to answer.

Explain that students will work in small groups. Each group will read **one** of the case studies and try to answer the questions that follow it. Answering the questions may require information from the factsheet *Are You a Working Teen?* (Handout #2).

Divide the class into several groups, with 4 to 6 students per group. Before breaking up, assign one of the two case studies to each group. Half of the groups should work with Case Study #1, and half with Case Study #2, so there will be an opportunity to see how different groups approach the same case.

Explain that, in each group, someone should read the group’s assigned case study aloud. Then the group should try to answer the set of questions, using both the factsheet and their own knowledge. Ask each group to choose someone as a recorder (to take notes on their answers).

Give the groups 10–15 minutes to work.

## **C. Report back and discussion.**

(15 minutes)

Bring the entire class back together. Ask the recorder (or someone else) from a group that was assigned Case Study #1 to read the case study and questions to the class. Then this person should present the group’s answers to all three questions.

For Question #1, the recorder should list the violations of law that the group found on the chalkboard. For each law listed, the recorder should briefly explain whether this law could have prevented the injury.

For Question #2, the recorder should begin a new list on the chalkboard, showing any additional legal protections the group believes Juan should have.

For Question #3, have the recorder briefly explain what consensus the group reached (if any) on what Juan should have done.

Next, ask the recorders from other groups that were assigned the **same** case to answer the three questions. If their groups identified different legal violations or proposed legal protections, add these to the lists on the board.

After all the groups that were assigned Case Study #1 have reported, briefly discuss everyone's answers to all three questions. Ask others in the class if they agree or disagree with the lists on the board, and why. When you discuss Question #3, you may want to guide the class by asking more specific questions. (See "Case Studies—Teacher's Discussion Guide" below.)

Repeat this process for Case Study #2.

The section below provides background information for the teacher.

## ✓ Case Studies—Teacher's Discussion Guide

### Case Study #1

#### Juan A.

15-year-old Juan A. just started his first real job. He got a work permit to be an office assistant at a construction firm. He hoped they would like him and hire him on a construction crew the next summer. Then he could make a lot more money and get construction skills.

After just two weeks on the job, Juan was offered the chance to go to a construction site. They were short-handed. There was no time for training. But he would not have to do anything that required much skill. In the morning, he would run a few errands, driving between the office and the construction site. In the afternoon he would help a carpenter, handing him tools.

The afternoon was hot. A nearby crew was laying asphalt, and there was a strong odor. As he was climbing a scaffold to hand a heavy power tool to the carpenter, Juan suddenly felt light-headed. The next thing he knew, he was on the ground, after falling over 20 feet.

Juan was rushed to the hospital. His condition was serious—multiple broken bones, and a crushed foot from the power tool he had been holding. The doctors thought they could save his foot.

Juan’s boss visited him in the hospital. He said he would keep Juan on the payroll if he agreed to “keep it quiet” and not report the accident. The boss also offered to pay all the medical bills out of his own pocket if Juan didn’t file for workers’ compensation.

### Questions and Answers

**1. What laws were broken? For each law you mention, explain whether it could have prevented Juan’s injury, and how.**

Violations of the law include:

- **Prohibited duties.** Under California law, a 15-year-old may work in an office, but not on a construction site (or on a scaffold). Notice that Juan’s work permit was only for office work. Also, no one under 18 may drive a motor vehicle on the job, even to run errands.
- **No safety and health training.** Every employer is required to provide safety training, including information on chemical exposures such as the asphalt fumes.
- **Job discrimination.** The boss is threatening to fire Juan for getting hurt, unless he agrees to cover up the accident. It is illegal to discriminate against any worker for having or reporting a job injury.
- **Obstructing workers’ compensation.** The boss is trying to discourage Juan from filing a workers’ compensation claim. But Juan doesn’t yet know how serious his injury is, or what workers’ compensation benefits he might get. He has a right to file for workers’ compensation and still keep his job. If he does file a claim, he may be eligible to have his medical bills paid and get payments to replace any lost wages.

**2. What other legal protections do you think Juan *should* have?**

Here are some examples. The employer could be required to:

- Post notices about age limits on the construction site.

- Notify workers in advance that hazardous asphalt fumes would be produced.
- Stop work in areas near the asphalt operation.

Discuss whether any of these measures are already required by law.

**3. If you were Juan, what would you have done? Would you have agreed to work on the construction crew?**

In the class discussion, try to cover such issues as:

- Are there other ways Juan could get the construction skills he wants?
- Do you think Juan knew about the restrictions on the work he could do?
- Why don't people know about these laws?
- Why aren't these laws better enforced?
- If Juan had known about his right to keep his job, and his right to workers' compensation, do you think he would have agreed to keep the accident quiet anyway? Would he stand up for his rights? Some teens don't. Why not?
- Could Juan sue his employer for this job injury? Why or why not? (Note that the law makes this impossible in most cases because workers' compensation is provided instead, and it is a "no fault" system.)

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**Case Study #2**

**Tanya B.**

17-year-old Tanya B. was working alone at a sandwich shop late on a school night. She had asked if she could leave by 9pm, after a 4-hour shift. But, as usual, there was nobody else the boss trusted to close up. So Tanya stayed even though it was the third night in a row she would have to work past 11pm. She was worried about her grades, because she had not had time to study for two major tests coming up.

However, Tanya didn't make a big deal out of it. She wanted to keep her job and was eager to work at least 40 more hours to complete her "training period." Once she became a regular employee she would earn minimum wage, rather than the lower trainee wage.

At about 11pm, as she was locking up the store, Tanya was robbed at gunpoint. The robber hit her and knocked her down. Then he took several hundred dollars from the cash register. The store had no alarm system. After the robber left, Tanya called a friend to take her to the emergency room. The emergency room notified the police, and Tanya gave the police a statement before going home.

Tanya's supervisor called her the next day to see how she was doing. The supervisor told Tanya that she would do all she could to hold onto Tanya's job while she was out recovering. The supervisor mentioned that Tanya could get in trouble because she had not called 911 right away. Although Tanya didn't know it, there was a company policy that employees should inform the police of robberies immediately. The supervisor also said that an injury like this isn't covered by workers' compensation.

### **Questions and Answers**

**1. What laws were broken? For each law you mention, explain whether it could have prevented Tanya's injury, and how.**

Violations of the law include:

- **Illegal hours of work.** Under California law, a 17-year-old may not work after 10pm on a school night, and may not work more than 4 hours a day (Monday-Thursday) when school is in session.
- **Unsafe workplace.** Employers are required to provide a safe and healthful workplace. They should take proper security measures to avoid workplace violence. These may include security training, alarm systems, safe cash handling procedures, and limits on working alone, especially late at night.
- **No safety training.** Every employer is required to provide safety training. Tanya was not trained in how to handle an emergency.

- **Illegal wage.** In most cases, teen workers must be paid at least the minimum wage, even when new on the job.
- **Job discrimination.** Tanya has the **right** to keep her job. It's not just a matter of the supervisor "doing all she can." It's illegal to discriminate against any worker for having a job injury.
- **Misinformation on workers' compensation.** The supervisor is wrong. Tanya's injury occurred on the job and is covered by workers' compensation. Tanya should be encouraged to file for workers' compensation. If she files a claim, she may be eligible to have her medical bills paid and get payments to replace any lost wages.

## 2. What other legal protections do you think Tanya *should* have?

Here are some examples. The employer could be required to:

- Post wage and hour regulations in the shop.
- Set up a "buddy system" so no one ever works alone in a store at night.
- Limit the amount of cash on hand, and post a sign saying so.

Discuss whether any of these measures are already required by law.

## 3. If you were Tanya, what would you have done? Would you have worked late alone?

In the class discussion, try to cover such issues as:

- Do you think Tanya knew about the hour and age regulations?
- Why don't people know about these laws?
- Why aren't these laws better enforced?
- If Tanya knew about the regulations, do you think she would have agreed to work late anyway? Would she stand up for her rights? Some teens don't. Why not?
- Could Tanya sue her employer for this job injury? Why or why not? (Note that the law makes this impossible in most cases because workers' compensation is provided instead, and it is a "no fault" system.)

## **D. Debate reminder.**

(5 minutes)

Remind students about the week-long debate research assignment, and answer any questions they may have. The completed *Debate Worksheet* (Handout #4) is due at the next class.

## **E. Homework.**

(5 minutes for explanation)

As an additional homework assignment for tonight, ask each student to create a new case study. These should be similar to the Juan A. and Tanya B. scenarios that were discussed in today's class. Each case study should describe a teen job injury, and depict violations of child labor, safety, or other employment laws.

Tell students that these case studies may be based on their own experiences, those of friends, or hypothetical situations. Each case study should be no more than 500 words, and should be accompanied by a list of the legal violations involved.





4

# LESSON FOUR

**Preparing To Debate**

## Lesson Plan Four

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Grouping</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Materials</b>
<p><b>A. Homework review.</b></p> <p>Students present their own case studies to the class.</p>	Class	10 minutes	
<p><b>B. Research assignment review.</b></p> <p>Class discusses results of the research assignment.</p>	Class	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Handout #4. (<i>Copies used for homework.</i>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>C. Preparing to debate.</b></p> <p>Students work in small groups to prepare for the debate.</p>	Small groups	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Handout #4. (<i>Copies used for homework. Also give each team an extra copy.</i>)</li> </ul>

**Total Class Time: 50 minutes**

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## DETAILED TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONS

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### A. Homework review.

(10 minutes)

As homework, each student was assigned to write a case study depicting a teen worker's job injury, similar to the case studies used in class yesterday. Each student's case study was to include violations of health, safety, or other labor laws.

Ask for a volunteer to read his or her case study to the class. Then have the class identify the violations of law involved. Compare the class responses to the volunteer's own list of legal violations. (Creating this list was part of the homework assignment.)

As time permits, call on additional volunteers and repeat the process above. When time is up, ask students to hand in their case studies and lists of legal violations.

### B. Research assignment review.

(10 minutes)

Another assignment due today is the *Debate Worksheet* (Handout #4). Make sure everyone has brought the completed worksheet to class. The purpose of the research assignment was to help students prepare for the debate they will conduct during Lesson 5. Teams of students will argue "pro" and "con" positions on the need for child labor laws.

Hold a short discussion about the research assignment. Get students to begin to talk about the various "pro" and "con" arguments they are developing. (For some arguments on both sides, see "Pro and Con—Teacher's Discussion Guide" in Lesson 5, beginning on page 40.)

Also ask what facts that students learned about child labor were particularly interesting or surprising to them.

### C. Preparing to debate.

(30 minutes)

Tell the class that everyone will now work as a member of a team. Divide the class into several teams with four to five students each. Assign half the teams to develop arguments in support of protective laws, and half to develop arguments against these laws.

Explain that teams will have about 30 minutes to work today. Remind students that in a debate, each team should always consider **both** “pro” and “con” positions. Understanding both sides will prepare a team to argue effectively both for its own position and against its opponent’s position.

Give each team a blank copy of the *Debate Worksheet* (Handout #4). Teams should choose strong arguments on both sides of the issue from the worksheets that individual team members prepared at home. They can use the new copy of the worksheet to summarize the team’s best arguments on both sides.

**Explain that teams should prepare to support their arguments by citing specific facts and information sources.** For each argument they put on the team worksheet, they should list these sources. They should also prepare to give as broad a range of examples as possible (both historical and contemporary).

Now break up into teams. The teacher should check periodically with each team to make sure that the instructions are clear and that they are developing meaningful arguments.



5

# LESSON FIVE

## The Debate

## Lesson Plan Five

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Grouping</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Materials</b>
<p><b>A. Class debate.</b></p> <p>Teams of students debate “pro” and “con” positions on child labor laws for teens. Other students serve as judges.</p>	Class	35 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Handout #4. (<i>Copies completed by small groups during Lesson 4.</i>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. Summing up.</b></p> <p>Students discuss their reactions to the week’s activities, especially the debate. The teacher asks for students’ own point of view—did the debate change their minds?</p>	Class	15 minutes	
<p><b>C. Optional follow-up activities.</b></p> <p>Suggestions are offered for extra class activities if the teacher wishes to schedule additional class sessions.</p>			

**Total Class Time: 50 minutes**

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## DETAILED TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONS

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### A. Class debate.

(35 minutes)

At yesterday's class everyone was assigned to a debate team. Now select two teams to debate. One team will argue for and one will argue against current child labor laws that cover teen workers.

You may choose a few class members to serve as judges. Set up a point system for scoring. For example, points may be given for especially relevant example, etc.

### Facilitating the Debate

Allow both sides a few minutes to review the notes they made yesterday during the preparation session. Each team should have written down its strongest arguments on the *Debate Worksheet* (Handout #4). Ask that each team try to rank its arguments in the order they will present them, with the strongest argument first.

Explain that teams should support their arguments by citing specific information sources they used. Where possible, they should also try to give a broad mix of examples (both historical and contemporary).

Have the team arguing the "pro" position begin the debate. This team should present its strongest argument. Then the "con" team will give a rebuttal. If you wish, you can set time limits for argument and rebuttal (especially if you plan to have more teams debate later).

Next, reverse the process. The "con" team will present its strongest argument and the "pro" team will give a rebuttal.

Proceed in the same way, alternating between the two teams, until each team has presented three arguments and they have been rebutted. (If time permits, and the teams have more arguments, you can continue.)

At the conclusion of the debate, ask the judges for the point score they gave to each of the two teams. Write each judge's score for each team on the chalkboard. Then total the scores for each team to determine the winning side.

Finally, if you wish and if there is time, repeat the debate with another set of two teams.

The section below provides material to help the teacher guide the debate. Some possible “pro” and “con” arguments are suggested.

## ✓ **Pro and Con—Teacher’s Discussion Guide**

### **Possible Arguments in Favor of Current Child Labor Laws**

- **Child labor laws can prevent injury.** Thousands of U.S. teens are injured or killed on the job every year. Many teen job injuries occur in situations that are illegal—teens work long or late hours, or they do prohibited work. If existing laws were enforced better, many injuries wouldn’t happen.
- **Some employers don’t care about safety.** History shows that we can’t depend on the good will of employers to protect young workers. We don’t want to return to the days of unregulated child labor.
- **Child labor laws are based on research and expert knowledge.** We can’t assume that teens or their parents will know what kinds of work are dangerous. Child labor laws reflect the best knowledge of labor and safety professionals.
- **Child labor laws put education first.** Teens’ school work is their real ticket to success in the world. Working long, late hours hurts their chances of doing well in school.
- **Child labor laws should be stronger, not weaker.** Some teen injuries occur in situations that are dangerous, but are still legal under the present law. The law needs to give better protection. For example, research shows that teens are more likely to be injured when they work without adult supervision. Maybe the law should require an adult supervisor to be present.
- **We need strong laws to deal with new realities on the job.** New technologies (like computer keyboards, mice, and grocery scanners) have new health and safety hazards.
- **The work permit system could be effective if enforced.** When teens are required to get a work permit, an adult makes sure that their work is safe and legal, and that it won’t interfere with school.



## Possible Arguments Against Current Child Labor Laws

- **Child labor laws are too complicated.** Employers (especially small employers) find it difficult to understand and follow these laws. For example, they wonder why there should be different rules for 14 and 15-year-olds than for 16 and 17-year-olds.
- **Child labor laws discourage employers from hiring teens.** Some employers feel that the laws are too much trouble. They are afraid they will be cited for some technical violation, when they may not even understand the laws. The result is that they won't hire teens at all.
- **Restrictions on hours don't reflect today's reality.** Many teen jobs are in the food service and retail industries. Today, restaurants and stores are often open around the clock. Employers need people who can work late. Many teens are willing and able to work these hours, but the law prohibits it.
- **There are other health and safety laws.** Child labor laws are extra, unnecessary restrictions. Other laws already require employers to give all workers safety training, supply protective equipment, and keep the workplace safe. These laws cover both adult and teen workers. Teens are responsible and capable—why shouldn't they be subject to the same laws as adults?
- **Parents know best.** A teenager's parents should decide if certain hours or jobs are OK. Parents know their own teenagers well. Teens and their families should make these decisions, not the government.
- **Families need the income.** Why can't teens contribute to the family income by taking a job that the law now prohibits? The extra money may be badly needed.
- **The work permit system is a burden to both employers and teens.** There's too much paperwork involved, and school personnel who give out the permits don't always know what's best for that particular teenager.

## **B. Summing up.**

(15 minutes)

Ask students to share their reactions to the debate project, and to this entire curriculum unit. Answer any questions they may have. Involve the whole class in this discussion. Ask for students' own points of view—did the debate change their minds?

## **C. Optional follow-up activities.**

The teacher may want to continue this unit by scheduling an additional class session. Choose from these suggestions for activities:

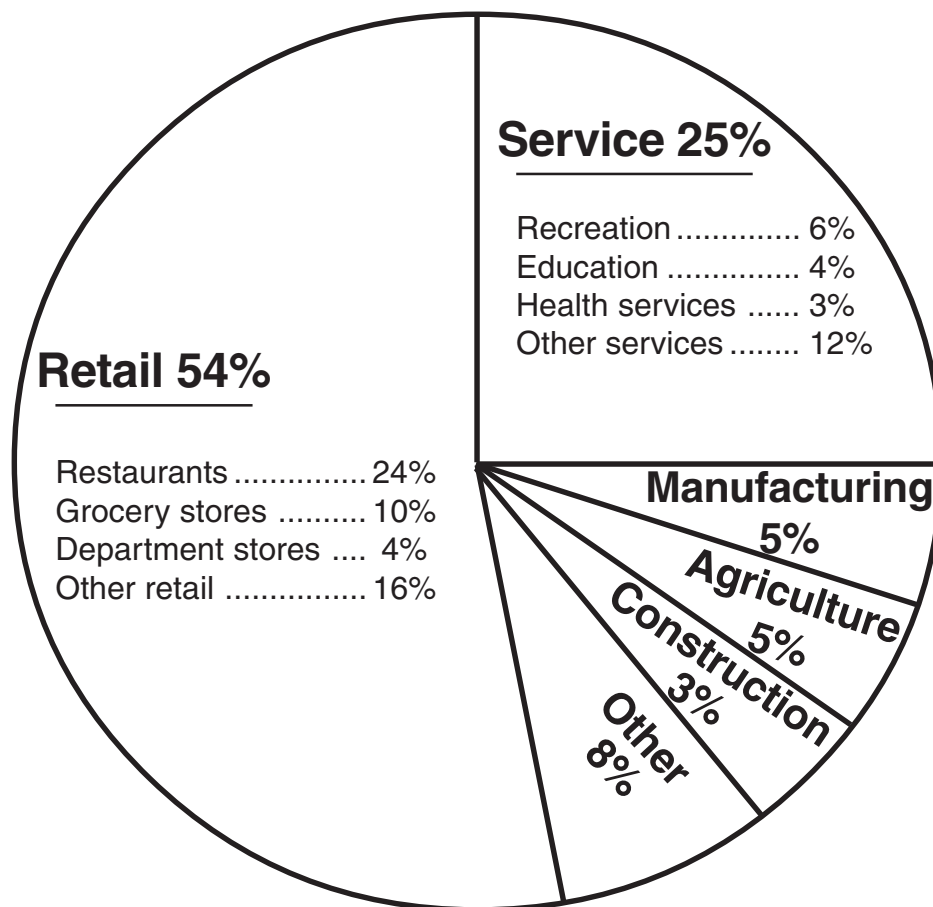
- Obtain and show a video related to worker health and safety or child labor. A number of suitable videos—both documentaries and dramas—are listed in the **Resource Section** at the end of the entire curriculum.
- Invite a guest speaker who has first hand experience with worker health and safety and/or child labor. This might be a Cal/OSHA inspector, a labor law enforcement officer, an employer, or a union representative.
- Ask each student to write an essay of 200–500 words, taking a personal position for or against child labor laws. The student should support his or her position with at least three arguments.

# Overheads



## **Where Do U.S. Teens Work?**

- Most teen jobs are part-time, temporary, and low-paying.
- Many teens work in industries that have high injury rates. Examples: grocery stores, health services, and recreation.
- This chart shows where U.S. teens work:





## **Thousands of Teens Are Injured on the Job**

- Millions of U.S. teens work, and thousands are injured on the job every year.
- About 64,000 U.S. teens (ages 14–17) went to hospital emergency rooms with job injuries in 1992.\*
- Teen job injury rates:
  - are higher for males than for females.
  - are higher for older teens than for younger ones.
- Common teen job injuries include cuts, sprains, strains, burns and fractures.
- About 70 U.S. teens (ages 16–17) died from job injuries every year during the 1980s.\* Leading causes of death were motor vehicles, farm machinery, other machines, electrocution, and homicides.

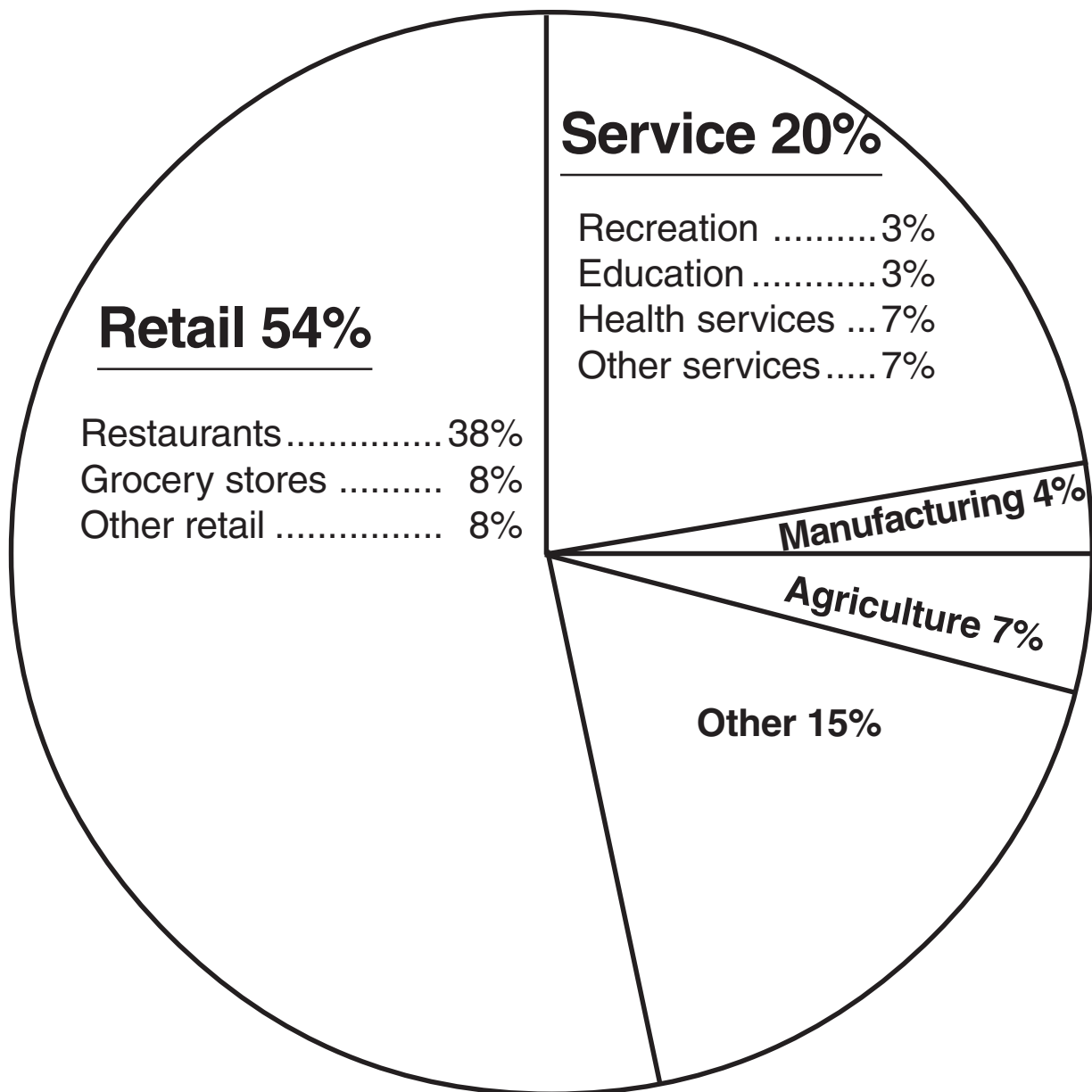
*\* These are the latest figures available.*





# Where Are Teens Injured?

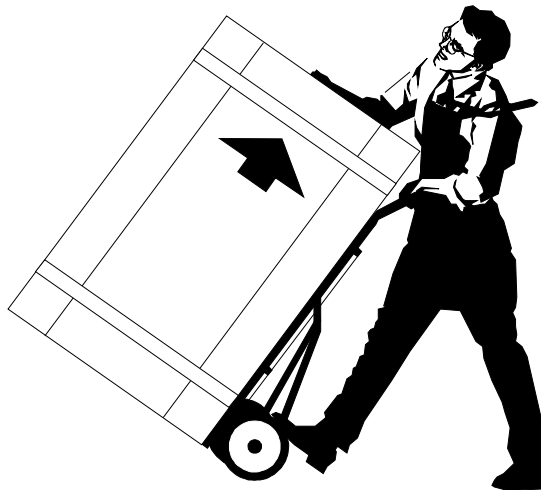
- This chart shows U.S. teen injuries by industry in 1992:





# **How Are Teens Injured?**

- Statistics show that many teen job injuries are caused by:
  - Driving motor vehicles
  - Operating tractors
  - Handling hot liquids and grease
  - Using cutting tools
  - Using non-powered hand tools
  - Lifting heavy objects
  - Working late at night
  - Working alone.
  
- The law prohibits teens from doing some of these tasks (but not all).





# **Child Labor Laws**

California labor laws protect working teens. These laws:

- Set a minimum age for certain work (like construction and manufacturing)
- Prohibit hazardous tasks (like driving and using a meat slicer)
- Limit work during early morning and late night hours
- Set maximum working hours per day and per week.





# **Job Health and Safety Laws**

California law says that every employer must:

- Provide a workplace that is safe and healthful
- Follow all Cal/OSHA health and safety regulations
- Give all workers health and safety training, including information on toxic materials
- Set up a system for workers to report hazards without fear of punishment
- Provide necessary safety equipment (including gloves, respirators, etc.)

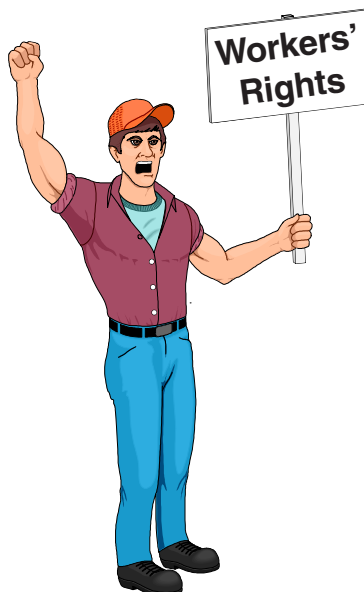




# **More Worker Rights**

In most cases, every worker has a right to:

- Earn at least the minimum wage
- Get medical care and lost wages paid through workers' compensation if injured on the job
- Join or organize a union
- Work without racial or sexual harassment.





# **Who Enforces the Law in California?**

## **Laws**

## **Enforced by:**

- Child labor ..... Labor Commissioner
  
- Job health and safety ..... Cal/OSHA
  
- Minimum wage ..... Labor Commissioner
  
- Workers' compensation ..... Department of  
Industrial Relations,  
Division of Workers'  
Compensation
  
- Union rights ..... Labor Commissioner
  
- Racial or sexual ..... Department of Fair  
discrimination ..... Employment and  
Housing

Many of these laws are found in the California Labor Code  
(available in some public libraries)





**Handouts**



## **There Ought To Be a Law!**

Here are three stories about young people who face health and safety hazards on the job. The stories are about young workers in the past and present-day U.S., as well as in other countries.

Your assignment is to identify the health, safety, and other labor abuses shown in each story, and to propose laws that might prevent them. To help you, each story is followed by a set of questions.

Note that you don't need to know what the law actually says about these issues. Your purpose is to propose laws that you think might solve the problems, regardless of whether these laws actually exist. Your proposed laws may deal with health, safety, working hours, child labor, or other working conditions.

You will work in a small group. Your group will be assigned **one** of the stories. Everyone in your group should read your story (or pick someone to read it aloud). Then discuss the story and try to answer the questions. Feel free to draw on information from other classes or from your own experience.

Your group should work together to come up with your answers. Choose someone in the group to be the "recorder." This person will take notes on your discussion and report your group's answers to the class later. You'll have about 20 minutes.



## **Fast Food**

*At the age of 15, Jennifer Forshee worked in a Burger King in Santa Rosa, California. She tells what happened to her:*

**I** cut the tip of my right finger off. The reason for this was because the machine I was using was broken. I was forced to use my hand instead of the tool that pushed the vegetables down into the food processor. The only training I ever received on this machine was how to turn the machine itself on and how to make the salads look pretty.

I feel that this Burger King was very irresponsible. . . . I was only 15 at the time and I do not feel that I should have been the one to say that I should not have been on this machine.

*Jennifer said that no one—neither her employer nor her school—told her anything about the child labor laws and what her rights were under those laws. She worked 25 to 30 hours a week during the school year, and sometimes 50 hours a week in summertime. She didn't work because her family needed help, but to earn money for a car.*

*—Milton Meltzer, **Cheap Raw Material***

### **Questions**

- 1. What health, safety, and other labor abuses are shown in this story?**
- 2. What laws do you think there should be to prevent these particular abuses?**
- 3. What other laws should there be to protect teens from being injured at work?**

*From your answers to questions #2 and #3, your group should choose three laws to present to the class.*



## **The Mule-Room**

*Al Priddy, a 13-year-old, took a job in a Massachusetts cotton mill in 1895. According to state law, he had to attend school for at least three months each year, but he was allowed to work full time in the mill the rest of the year. Eventually he was assigned to a part of the mill called the “mule-room.” His job was to clean and maintain spinning machines (called mules) that were used to make thread. Here is Al’s story:*

**A**t last the terror of the mill began to blacken my life. The romance, the glamour, and the charm were gone.

Five days of the week, at the outer edge of winter, I never stood out in the daylight. I was a human mole, going to work while the stars were out and returning home under the stars.

I dodged past the mules and the iron posts they met, just in time to avoid being crushed. Alfred Skinner, a close friend of mine, had his body pinned and crushed badly. I also tried to clean the small wheels which ran on tracks while they were in motion, and, in doing so, I had to crawl under the frame and follow the carriage. ... One day the wheel nipped off the end of my little finger, though that was nothing at all in comparison to what occurred to some of my friends. Jimmy Hendricks today is a dwarfed cripple from such an accident. Hern Hanscom has two fingers missing, and Earl Rogers had his back broken horribly.

Yet notices always were posted, the company was never liable, and they said we had no one but ourselves to blame. Yet we could not work there without taking the risk, which shows how much humanity there can be in law.

Legally I worked ten and a half hours, though actually the hours were very much longer. The machinery that I could not clean while in motion, I had to leave until noon or early morning. Then, too, the spinner I worked for paid me to take over some of his work that could be done during the stopping hours. There were generally from three to four days in the week when I worked 13 or more hours a day, in order to catch up.

Five men had the right to boss me—two spinners, the overseer, second hand, and third hand. One of the spinners was a kindly man, very considerate of my strength and time, while the other was the most drunken and violent-tempered man in the room.

## **U.S. Government Handout #1**

### **Page 4**

Day after day I had to face the thousands of bobbins and keep them moving. Thousands of things turning, turning, turning, emptying, emptying, emptying, and requiring quick fingers to keep moving. A fight with a machine is the most cunning torture man can face—when the odds are in favor of the machine. ... A machine never tires, is never hungry, has no heart to make it suffer. It never sleeps, and has no ears to listen to your appeal for mercy.

—Adapted from *Children and Youth in America: A Documentary History*,  
edited by Robert H. Bremner (Harvard University Press).

### **Questions**

- 1. What health, safety, and other labor abuses are shown in this story?**
- 2. What laws do you think there should be to prevent these particular abuses?**
- 3. What other laws should there be to protect teens from being injured at work?**

*From your answers to questions #2 and #3, your group should choose three laws to present to the class.*

## **The Carpet Weavers**

*This newspaper account from 1997 shows that serious child labor abuses still occur in some parts of the world.*

**N**EW DELHI, India (UPI)—The South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude (SACCS), an independent organization, has freed more than 20,000 children from bondage in India in the past decade, according to a leader of the movement.

Most of these children were found to be working in industries considered hazardous, such as stone quarrying and construction, said the chairman of SACCS, Kailash Satyarthi.

In a raid on a carpet-weaving factory in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, SACCS, along with a local magistrate, liberated a group of children between the ages of seven and twelve who were working 16-hour shifts with no wages, Satyarthi said.

“Some of these children who had left their families at the age of four seemed paralyzed by their new found freedom,” he added.

According to SACCS, the children are tempted away from very poor households with promises of wrist watches and radios. Parents who try to get the child back are beaten and chased away. Children are used because they cannot form unions or strike, Satyarthi told UPI.

Nine-year-old Sanjay Choudhry told UPI that he was kept hungry while working to prevent him from falling asleep. “I was not allowed to use the toilet, and the weaving master would beat me if I cried for my mother,” the little boy said. Children working under these conditions often fall prey to lung, throat, and eye infections, Satyarthi said.

The Indian government said earlier this week that total abolition of child labor in the near future was not considered feasible due to existing socioeconomic conditions in the country.

The minister of state for labor, P.A. Sangma, told parliament that the government aimed at a slower progressive elimination of child labor.

The national plan of action includes a greater emphasis on compulsory education for children and focuses on antipoverty and development programs, Sangma added.

## **U.S. Government Handout #1**

### **Page 6**

According to a recent SACCS report, there are about 50 million children employed as laborers in India and an equal number of adults searching for jobs. The United States has put pressure on the Indian government to find a solution to the issue.

Germany, previously India's biggest buyer of carpets, now refuses to buy any woven by children, according to exporters.

—Adapted from *Worker Rights News*

### **Questions**

- 1. What health, safety, and other labor abuses are shown in this story?**
- 2. What laws do you think there should be to prevent these particular abuses?**
- 3. What other laws should there be to protect teens from being injured at work?**

*From your answers to questions #2 and #3, your group should choose three laws to present to the class.*

# Are You a Working Teen?



**Protect Your Health  
Know Your Rights**

Labor Occupational Health Program  
University of California, Berkeley

## U.S. Government Handout #2—Page 2

### Could I Get Hurt or Sick on the Job?

Every year **70 teens die** from work injuries in the United States. Another **64,000 get hurt** badly enough that they go to a hospital emergency room.

Here are the stories of three teens:

- 18-year-old Sylvia caught her hand in an electric cabbage shredder at a fast food restaurant. Her hand is permanently disfigured and she'll never have full use of it again.
- 17-year-old Joe lost his life while working as a construction helper. An electric shock killed him when he climbed a metal ladder to hand an electric drill to another worker.
- 16-year-old Donna was assaulted and robbed at gunpoint at a sandwich shop. She was working alone after 11 p.m.

Why do injuries like these occur? Teens are often injured on the job due to unsafe equipment, stressful conditions, and speed-up. Also they may not receive adequate safety training and supervision. Teens are much more likely to be injured when they work on jobs they are not allowed to do by law.

### What Are My Rights on the Job?

**By law, your employer must provide:**

- A safe and healthful workplace.
- Training about health and safety, including information on chemicals that could be harmful to your health.
- Protective clothing and equipment.
- Payment for medical care if you get hurt or sick because of your job. You may also be entitled to lost wages.
- At least the minimum wage, \$5.75 an hour as of March, 1998. In some cases, employers can pay less than minimum wage during your first three months, if you are under 18. Call toll-free ☎ 1-888-275-9243 for more information.

**You also have a right to:**

- Report safety problems to Cal/OSHA.
- Work without racial or sexual harassment.
- Refuse to work if the job is immediately dangerous to your life or health.
- Join or organize a union.

### What Hazards Should I Watch Out For?

Type of Work	Examples of Hazards
Janitor/Clean-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Toxic chemicals in cleaning products</li><li>• Blood on discarded needles</li></ul>
Food Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Slippery floors</li><li>• Hot cooking equipment</li><li>• Sharp objects</li></ul>
Retail/Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Violent crimes</li><li>• Heavy lifting</li></ul>
Office/Clerical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stress</li><li>• Harassment</li><li>• Poor computer work station design</li></ul>

## U.S. Government Handout #2—Page 3

### Is It OK to Do Any Kind of Work?

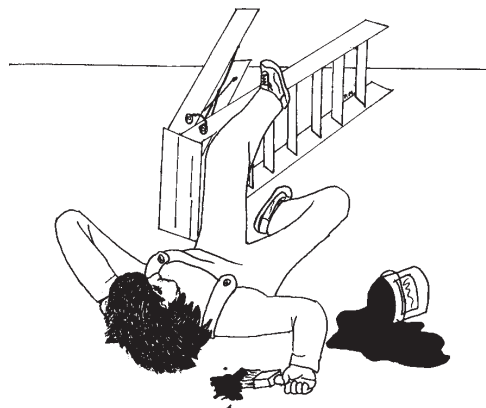
**NO!** There are laws that protect teens from doing dangerous work.

In California no worker under 18 may:

- Drive a motor vehicle or forklift on the job
- Use powered equipment like a circular saw, box crusher, meat slicer, or bakery machine
- Work in wrecking, demolition, excavation, or roofing
- Work in logging or a sawmill
- Handle, serve, or sell alcoholic beverages
- Work where there is exposure to radiation

Also, no one 14 or 15 years old may:

- Do baking or cooking on the job (except at a serving counter)
- Work in dry cleaning or a commercial laundry
- Work on a ladder or scaffold
- Do building, construction, or manufacturing work
- Load or unload a truck, railroad car, or conveyor



### Are There Other Things I Can't Do?

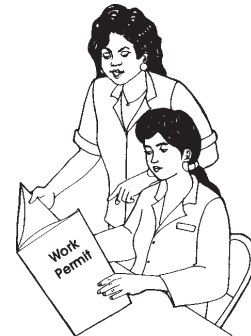
**YES!** There are many other restrictions regarding the type of work you can and cannot do.

If you are **under 14**, there are even stricter laws to protect your health and safety.

Check with your school counselor or job placement coordinator to make sure the job you are doing is allowed.

### Do I Need a Work Permit?

**YES!** If you are under 18 and plan to work, you must get a work permit from your school (unless you have graduated).



### What Are My Safety Responsibilities on the Job?

**To work safely you should:**

- Follow all safety rules and instructions
- Use safety equipment and protective clothing when needed
- Look out for co-workers
- Keep work areas clean and neat
- Know what to do in an emergency
- Report any health and safety hazard to your supervisor

## Should I Be Working This Late or This Long?

Child labor laws protect teens from working too long, too late, or too early.

This table shows the hours teens may work. (There are exceptions for students in work experience programs.)

<b>Work Hours for Teens</b>		
	<b>Ages 14 and 15</b>	<b>Ages 16 and 17</b>
<b>Work Hours</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not before 7 am or after 7 pm during the school year</li> <li>• Not during school hours</li> <li>• 7 am–9 pm during the summer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not before 5 am or after 10 pm on school nights</li> <li>• Not before 5 am or after 12:30 am when there is no school the next day</li> </ul>
<b>Maximum Hours When School Is in Session</b>	18 hours a week, but not over: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 hours a day on school days</li> <li>• 8 hours a day Saturday—Sunday and holidays</li> </ul>	48 hours a week, but not over: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 hours a day Monday–Thursday</li> <li>• 8 hours a day Friday–Sunday and holidays</li> </ul>
<b>Maximum Hours When School Is not in Session</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 hours a week</li> <li>• 8 hours a day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 48 hours a week</li> <li>• 8 hours a day</li> </ul>

## What If I Need Help?

- Talk to your boss about the problem.
- Talk to your parents or teachers.
- For health and safety information and advice, call U.C. Berkeley's Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP).  
☎ (510) 642-5507

- If necessary contact one of these California government agencies: (your local number can be found in the State Government pages.)

➤ **Cal/OSHA** (under Industrial Relations Dept.)—to make a health or safety complaint.

☎ (415) 972-8500

➤ **Labor Standards Enforcement** (under Industrial Relations Dept.) to make a complaint about wages or work hours.

☎ (415) 557-7878

➤ **Fair Employment and Housing**—to make a complaint about sexual harassment or discrimination.

☎ (800) 884-1684

### **You have a right to speak up!**

It is illegal for your employer to fire or punish you for reporting a workplace problem.







# **Check Your Understanding**

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## **Questions on the Factsheet**

- 1.** Who is responsible for keeping the workplace safe and healthy?
  
- 2.** Are teens allowed to drive a motor vehicle on the job?
  
- 3.** Who pays for your medical care if you get hurt or sick because of your job?
  
- 4.** Can 16 year olds work on ladders or scaffolds?
  
- 5.** Are teens allowed to work with restaurant equipment like slicers or bakery machines?
  
- 6.** Who is responsible for *supplying* safety equipment and protective clothing?
  
- 7.** Who is responsible for *using* safety equipment and protective clothing?
  
- 8.** If you are over 18 years old but still in high school, do you need a work permit?



## **U.S. Government Handout #3**

### **Page 2**

- 9.** If you graduated from high school but are still under 18, do you need a work permit?
  
- 10.** If you are 15 years old, how late in the evening can you work during the school year?
  
- 11.** What are four things you can do if you need help with a problem at work?
  
- 12.** Who can you call to complain about a health and safety problem at work?
  
- 13.** Can you be fired for reporting a health and safety problem at work?
  
- 14.** Can your employer pay you less than the minimum wage?
  
- 15.** Who can you call if your employer doesn't pay you the minimum wage or makes you work too many hours?
  
- 16.** Who should you call if you are a victim of sexual harassment or discrimination on the job?

# Debate Worksheet

In class later this week, we'll hold a debate. You will be assigned to a debate team. Your team will be asked to argue one side of the question:

**Are child labor laws for teen workers useful? Do you support such laws, or not? Do teens need this protection, or do the laws just create unnecessary restrictions on them?**

Your homework assignment over the next few days is to prepare for the debate. After you do your own preparation, you'll be assigned to a team and compare notes with other members of your team. The team will choose its best arguments to present at the debate.

You won't know which side of the issue your team will be assigned to argue until the day of the debate. So you will need to prepare arguments on **both** sides.

## Assignment

Develop three arguments in favor of child labor laws for teens, and three arguments against them. Your arguments may be based on either present-day or historical source material. Try to support your arguments by facts. Here are some sources of information:

- Your own personal experience
- Experiences of your friends
- Experience of your parents or other adults
- The library—check out books and articles on child labor
- The Internet—try searching for “child labor”
- Material presented in class.

You may not be able to find material in all these ways, but do the best you can. Keep a record of your sources. You will be asked to cite them at the debate.

List your key arguments in the “pro” and “con” sections provided. Complete **both** sections

## **U.S. Government Handout #4**

### **Page 2**

#### **Resources**

Here are a few examples of sources you may want to use to develop your arguments. Much more material is available in books, newspapers, and on the Internet. Your teacher may be able to suggest other sources.

#### **BOOK**

*Cheap Raw Material: How Our Youngest Workers are Exploited and Abused*, by Milton Meltzer. The voices of young workers tell their own stories. Includes both contemporary and historical accounts. Covers young workers in the United States and internationally. 167 pages, hard cover, Viking/Penguin, 1994.

#### **INTERNET**

Child Labor Coalition

<http://www.essential.org/clc>

Free the Children

<http://www.freethechildren.org>

Institute for Global Communications, Children's Rights Page

<http://www.igc.org/igc/issues/hr/>

National Consumers League

<http://www.natlconsumersleague.org>

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Child Labor Page

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/chlldlab.html>

Nike Boycott Home Page

<http://www.saigon.com/~nike/>

Stop Sweatshops Campaign

<http://www.uniteunion.org>

Triangle Factory Fire Website

<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire>

U.S. Department of Labor Employment Standards Administration, Wage & Hour Division, Youth Page

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/esa/public/youth/index.htm>

# U.S. Government Handout #4

Page 3

## Pro Arguments

Using what you have learned from your information sources, list three arguments or ideas **in favor** of keeping (or strengthening) current child labor laws for teens. Include supporting facts, and your sources of information for each argument.

	ARGUMENT	SUPPORTING INFO AND SOURCE
<b>Example</b>	Child labor laws can prevent injuries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● One of the leading causes of work-related death among teens is driving. (Source: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health statistics.) Even more might be killed or injured if there were fewer restrictions on teens driving on the job.</li><li>● At one time, teens and children were allowed to do any kind of work. Many were hurt or killed. (Source: Handout #1 story, <i>The Mule Room</i>, and history textbooks.) Many fewer teens are injured now that we have protective laws.</li></ul>
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	

*Use opposite side if you need more space.*

**U.S. Government Handout #4**  
**Page 4**

**Pro Arguments** *(continued)*

# U.S. Government Handout #4

## Page 5

### Con Arguments

Using what you have learned from your information sources, list three arguments or ideas **against** current child labor laws for teens. (You can argue either that such laws shouldn't cover teens at all, or that they should be more flexible.) Include supporting facts, and your sources of information for each argument.

	ARGUMENT	SUPPORTING INFO AND SOURCE
<b>Example</b>	Child labor laws discourage employers from hiring teens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● If you're a teen, it's hard to find work. If you can't work late, or can't work with certain equipment, employers think it's too much of a hassle to hire you. (Source: Personal experience and conversations with other teens.)</li><li>● Employer groups say they can't hire teens for some jobs until child labor laws are made more flexible. For example, employers say they need teens to drive, work longer hours, and operate equipment like box crushers. (Source: The National Consumers League Website covers current legislative debates about child labor laws. The address is in the "Resources" section of this handout.)</li></ul>
	<b>1.</b>	
	<b>2.</b>	
	<b>3.</b>	

*Use opposite side if you need more space.*

**U.S. Government Handout #4**  
**Page 6**

**Con Arguments** *(continued)*



## **Case Studies—Rights on the Job**

### **Case Study #1**

#### **Juan A.**

15-year-old Juan A. just started his first real job. He got a work permit to be an office assistant at a construction firm. He hoped they would like him and hire him on a construction crew the next summer. Then he could make a lot more money and get construction skills.

After just two weeks on the job, Juan was offered the chance to go to a construction site. They were short-handed. There was no time for training. But he would not have to do anything that required much skill. In the morning, he would run a few errands, driving between the office and the construction site. In the afternoon he would help a carpenter, handing him tools.

The afternoon was hot. A nearby crew was laying asphalt, and there was a strong odor. As he was climbing a scaffold to hand a heavy power tool to the carpenter, Juan suddenly felt light-headed. The next thing he knew, he was on the ground, after falling over 20 feet.

Juan was rushed to the hospital. His condition was serious—multiple broken bones, and a crushed foot from the power tool he had been holding. The doctors thought they could save his foot.

Juan's boss visited him in the hospital. He said he would keep Juan on the payroll if he agreed to "keep it quiet" and not report the accident. The boss also offered to pay all the medical bills out of his own pocket if Juan didn't file for workers' compensation.

- 1. What laws were broken? For each law you mention, explain whether it could have prevented Juan's injury, and how.**
- 2. What other legal protections do you think Juan *should* have?**
- 3. If you were Juan, what would you have done? Would you have agreed to work on the construction crew?**

## **Case Study #2**

### **Tanya B.**

17-year-old Tanya B. was working alone at a sandwich shop late on a school night. She had asked if she could leave by 9pm, after a 4-hour shift. But, as usual, there was nobody else the boss trusted to close up. So Tanya stayed even though it was the third night in a row she would have to work past 11pm. She was worried about her grades, because she had not had time to study for two major tests coming up.

However, Tanya didn't make a big deal out of it. She wanted to keep her job and was eager to work at least 40 more hours to complete her "training period." Once she became a regular employee she would earn minimum wage, rather than the lower trainee wage.

At about 11pm, as she was locking up the store, Tanya was robbed at gunpoint. The robber hit her and knocked her down. Then he took several hundred dollars from the cash register. The store had no alarm system. After the robber left, Tanya called a friend to take her to the emergency room. The emergency room notified the police, and Tanya gave the police a statement before going home.

Tanya's supervisor called her the next day to see how she was doing. The supervisor told Tanya that she would do all she could to hold onto Tanya's job while she was out recovering. The supervisor mentioned that Tanya could get in trouble because she had not called 911 right away. Although Tanya didn't know it, there was a company policy that employees should inform the police of robberies immediately. The supervisor also said that an injury like this isn't covered by workers' compensation.

- 1. What laws were broken? For each law you mention, explain whether it could have prevented Tanya's injury, and how.**
- 2. What other legal protections do you think Tanya *should* have?**
- 3. If you were Tanya, what would you have done? Would you have worked late alone?**