

Mining Childhood

Grade 11: Butte Newsboys and the Industrial Workers of the World

Essential Question: How did the IWW influence Butte's youth?

Learning Targets:

1. I can explain the main ideas of the IWW manifesto and identify metaphor as a rhetorical strategy.
2. I can describe the effect of the IWW on some of Butte's youth.

Common Core Connection:

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1](#) Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.3](#) Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.4](#) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7](#) Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Length of Lesson:

One sixty-minute period

Materials Needed:

1. Copy of an early IWW logo – can be found at <http://www.iww.org/history>
2. Copies of three selected paragraphs of the minutes from the first Industrial Workers of the World Founding Convention, 1905 (the first four paragraphs of “Manifesto” beginning with “Social relations and groupings only reflect...” and ending with “impotency of labor as at present organized.”) Reprinted below (page 4. Excerpted from <https://archive.iww.org/about/founding/part1/>)
3. Copies of the photo of newsboys, c. 1890, and photo of the Butte Newsboys Club, c. 1905 (page 5 and 6 of this lesson)
4. Copies of the section on Newsboys from [Mining Childhood pp. 219-227](#)
5. Quote from John Sheehy (p. 222)

Hook:

Project the IWW logo and have students study it for a moment. What do its words suggest? Its symbols? In general, what can they conclude from just the logo?

Activities:

1. Share the learning targets with students. The purpose of sharing learning targets is so students know what you want them to learn and to keep the lesson on track.
2. Part I: IWW - Close reading. Read the three selected paragraphs of the minutes from the first Industrial Workers of the World Founding Convention, 1905 (the first four paragraphs of “Manifesto” beginning with “Social relations and groupings only reflect...” and ending with “impotency of labor as at present organized.”) Have students read these to themselves. They may make notes in the margins, but this is not necessary.
3. Now, discuss the idea of metaphor: how metaphor can help a reader gain a deeper understanding of the writer’s ideas and how metaphor can add literary merit to a piece of writing. Tell students there are three different metaphors in these four paragraphs. The first one is man as machine, and it’s the loosest one. Re-read the first two paragraphs out loud and look for references to machines, especially ones where a man is compared to a machine. Use an overhead projector to underline examples you find while reading. Examine each one closely so that any student who might not understand metaphor will be able to develop this understanding through listening to your explanations.
4. Now read the third paragraph out loud; afterward, ask students if they can figure out the metaphor (it’s workers as slaves). In pairs, they should go back through the paragraph and find references to slavery. As a whole class and using the overhead projector again, underline what they find and discuss each selection. Point out any that they miss.
5. By this time, students should have a grasp of metaphor. Ask them to read the final paragraph and write what they think the metaphor is (it’s a comparison between unionizing and war; in other words, management is the enemy and the workers are soldiers on “our” side), along with as many underlined examples as they can find. Walk around the room while students do this so you can redirect any that can’t figure out the metaphor. ← meets Learning Target 1
6. Afterward, direct a whole-group discussion of what it is the Industrial Workers of the World stand for. What do they want? How will they get it? How can you tell, from this excerpt of the Manifesto? (30 mins.)
7. Part Two: Connection to Butte’s youth. Pass around copies of the two pictures from *Mining Childhood* (pages 220 and 221). Ask students to study them with a partner or in trios. What do they notice? What do the photos have in common? What questions do the photos raise? Discuss these as a whole group. Now, what might these have to do with the IWW?
8. Have students read the selection on Newsboys, from *Mining Childhood*, pp. 219-22. After they read, read the quote from John Sheehy from p. 222 aloud.

Ask students why they think the newsboys' strike was unsuccessful. (20 mins.)

Assessment:

Ask students to explain in writing how what they learned about the IWW helps them understand the newsboys' strike. You might prompt them by asking what the main beliefs of the IWW were and how newsboys resembled miners. (10 mins.) ← meets Learning Target 2

Extension Ideas:

- Conduct an extended unit on unions and unionization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- Teach a lesson on Frank Little, IWW organizer lynched in Butte.
- Provide more information to students on how Butte's youth earned money (see *Mining Childhood*).

Excerpt of the “Manifesto” from the Minutes of the IWW's Founding Convention. FIRST DAY. Tuesday, June 27, 1905. MORNING SESSION. <https://archive.iww.org/about/founding/part1/> MANIFESTO.

Social relations and groupings only reflect mechanical and industrial conditions. The *great facts* of present industry are the displacement of human skill by machines and the increase of capitalist power through concentration in the possession of the tools with which wealth is produced and distributed.

Because of these facts trade divisions among laborers and competition among capitalists are alike disappearing. Class divisions grow ever more fixed and class antagonisms more sharp. Trade lines have been swallowed up in a common servitude of all workers to the machines which they tend. New machines, ever replacing less productive ones, wipe out whole trades and plunge new bodies of workers into the ever-growing army of tradeless, hopeless unemployed. As human beings and human skill are displaced by mechanical progress, the capitalists need use the workers only during that brief period when muscles and nerves respond most intensely. The moment the laborer no longer yields the maximum of profits, he is thrown upon the scrap pile, to starve alongside the discarded machine. A *dead line* has been drawn, and an age-limit established, to cross which, in this world of monopolized opportunities, means condemnation to industrial death.

The worker, wholly separated from the land and the tools, with his skill of craftsmanship rendered useless, is sunk in the uniform mass of wage slaves. He sees his power of resistance broken by craft divisions, perpetuated from out-grown industrial stages. His wages constantly grow less as his hours grow longer and monopolized prices grow higher. Shifted hither and thither by the demands of profit-takers the laborer's home no longer exists. In this helpless condition he is forced to accept whatever humiliating conditions his master may impose. He is submitted to a physical and intellectual examination more searching than was the chattel slave when sold from the auction block. Laborers are no longer classified by differences in trade skill, but the employer assigns them according to the machines to which they are attached. These divisions, far from representing differences in skill or interests among the laborers, are imposed by the employers that workers may be pitted against one another and spurred to greater exertion in the shop, and that all resistance to capitalist tyranny may be weakened by artificial distinctions.

While encouraging these outgrown divisions among the workers the capitalists carefully adjust themselves to the new conditions. They wipe out all differences among themselves and present a united front in their war upon labor. Through employers' associations, they seek to crush, with brutal force, by the injunctions of the judiciary, and the use of military power, all efforts at resistance. Or when the other policy seems more profitable, they conceal their daggers beneath the Civic Federation and hoodwink and betray those whom they would rule and exploit. Both methods depend for success upon the blindness and internal dissensions of the working class. The employers' line of battle and methods of warfare correspond to the solidarity of the mechanical and industrial concentration, while laborers still form their fighting organizations on lines of long-gone trade divisions. The battles of the past emphasize this lesson. The *textile* workers of Lowell, Philadelphia and Fall River; the *butchers* of Chicago, weakened by the disintegrating effects of trade divisions; the *machinists* on the Santa Fe, unsupported by their fellow-workers subject to the same masters; the long-struggling *miners* of Colorado, hampered by lack of unity and solidarity upon the industrial battle-field, all bear witness to the helplessness and impotency of labor as at present organized.



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