

Beginning-Level Activity

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- identify types of work by examining a nineteenth-century drawing and two twentieth-century photographs;
- conduct an interview with a family member about a hard day's work;
- create an original drawing about work;
- write a short news article about a worker.

Materials

- Reproduction of *Farm Workers, South of Tracy, California* by Dorothea Lange
- Reproduction of *Man with a Hoe* by Jean-François Millet
- Reproduction of *Sadie Pfeiffer, Spinner in Cotton Mill, North Carolina* by Lewis Wickes Hine
- Background Information and Questions for Teaching about the works of art
- Student Handout: *Comparing Workers*
- Student Handout: *A Hard Day's Work*
- Student Handout: *Drawing a Hard Day's Work* (printed on blue or brown paper)
- Student Handout: *Template for "The Workers' Chronicle"* (printed on gray paper)
- Pencils
- Paper
- Black charcoal pencils
- White charcoal pencils
- Tissue paper or blending **stumps**

Lesson Steps

1. Display a reproduction of *Farm Workers, South of Tracy California* and allow students time to look at the work of art. Begin discussing the photograph by asking students to share what they notice, especially about the people. Invite students to mimic the poses and ask students how they would feel if they were holding baskets full of fruits or vegetables. What do student think the workers were doing before the photograph was taken? What do students notice about the **background**? Distribute the *Comparing Workers* handout and instruct students to complete the left-hand column. (For younger grades, lead a class discussion about the photograph using the questions on the hand-out.) Emphasize the importance of looking at the image for clues to the answers.

2. Display a reproduction of *Man with a Hoe*. First allow students time to look closely at the image. Begin discussing the drawing by asking students to describe what they notice, especially about the man. What do they think he was doing before? What do they notice about the background? After discussing the drawing, instruct students to complete the middle column of the *Comparing Workers* handout. (For younger grades, lead a class discussion about the drawing using the questions on the handout.) Remind students to look at the image for clues to the answers. After students complete the middle column, discuss the similarities and differences between Lange's photograph and Millet's drawing.
3. Point out that both the photograph and the drawing tell a story about workers during their work-day. Tell students that they will next look at another image of a worker. Display a reproduction of *Sadie Pfeiffer, Spinner in Cotton Mill, North Carolina*. Give students time to look quietly at the image. Ask students to share what they notice about these workers. What do they notice about the background? After discussing the drawing, instruct students to complete the right-hand column of the *Comparing Workers* handout. (For younger grades, lead a class discussion about the photograph using the questions on the handout.) After students complete the handout, ask them how Sadie is different from the other workers they have discussed.
4. If students have not yet mentioned Sadie's age in your discussion, ask them to guess how old she is. Point out that she is younger than the workers depicted in the other artworks. When this photograph was taken, Sadie was perhaps no more than twelve years of age, she was only forty-eight inches tall, and she had been working in the factory for six months. She lived during a time when many children had to go to work instead of school to help their families. Point out that many children have jobs today too, but now the United States has **laws** in place so that kids can go to school and don't have to work all day. Ask students if they have ever had a job (i.e., babysitting, working in a family business, selling lemonade). If so, how long would they work? At the time when the photograph of Sadie was taken, many children had to work fifteen or sixteen hours a day. Tell students to imagine what it might feel like to be this young worker.
5. Distribute the *A Hard Day's Work* and *Drawing a Hard Day's Work* handouts. Tell students that they will have the weekend to complete the *A Hard Day's Work* handout by interviewing one adult family member about a time when he or she had a really hard job. Inform students that they will use the *Drawing a Hard Day's Work* handout to create a drawing based on what they learned in the interview.
6. After the assignments are completed, tell students that they are going to play a guessing game. Have students pass their drawings to a partner but without the interview answers. Students should guess what type of job their partners drew by looking closely at the details included in the drawing. After each partner makes a guess, instruct students to think back to the interview. Are there any other details they would like to add to the drawing to tell the story in greater detail? Tell students that the artist who drew *Man with a Hoe* made changes to his original drawing for about two years until he completed a painted version. (You may wish to show students the painting *Man with a Hoe* [see Related Works of Art].)



7. For older grades, distribute the *Template for "The Workers' Chronicle"* handout, tissues or blending stumps, and black charcoal pencils. Have students create a second version of their drawing in the blank box on the handout. Instruct students to depict the setting or worker in greater detail. Have students use some rolled tissue around their index finger to blend or stump the pencil marks to create a softer effect, as in *Man with a Hoe*. When they are finished using black charcoal pencil, pass out white pencils. Instruct students to use the white pencil to highlight areas that are important to the story.
8. Next, ask students to write a headline, caption, and short news article for their class newspaper, *The Workers' Chronicle*. The news article should be one to three paragraphs, depending on your students' grade level.
9. Photocopy all the drawings and assemble the pages in *The Workers' Chronicle*. Share the class book with students' parents on parent's night and return the original drawings to students.

Assessment

Assess whether students can identify types of work by examining a nineteenth-century drawing and two twentieth-century photographs. Also assess whether students completed all handouts. Finally, assess students' ability to create an original drawing about work.

Extension

Compare and contrast *Sadie Pfeiffer, Spinner in Cotton Mill, North Carolina* with another photograph by Lewis Wickes Hines, *Cotton-Mill Worker, North Carolina*.