



**0. Child Labor - Story Preface**

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Photograph of a young girl working in Ait-Ben-Haddou, Morocco taken by Zouavman Le Zouave on January 21, 2010. Image online courtesy Wikimedia Commons. License:CC BY-SA 3.0

*It is common in this district [South Staffordshire] for Children to begin work in the [coal] pits when they are seven years of age, very common when they are between seven and eight, and general when they are nine.*

(From "First Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Children,"  
quoted in Parliamentary Papers, Volume 15, at page 9.)

When Europeans first came to America, their social values actually *required* children to work. In 1641, when the Pilgrims were urged to grow hemp as a raw material for winter clothing, the Massachusetts Bay court ordered "all hands" to be employed in "the working of hemp and flaxe and other needful things for clothing." The meaning of "all hands" specifically included children.

The Colonies also adopted "poor laws" similar to those in Europe. Working-class children, as young as three, could become apprentices.

By the turn of the last century, American children regularly worked in mines, fields, mills, canneries and other such places. The census of 1900 reported that 2 million children were employed throughout the country. For comparison purposes, that is roughly half the number of slaves reported in the 1860 census.

This is a pictorial story of those working children.

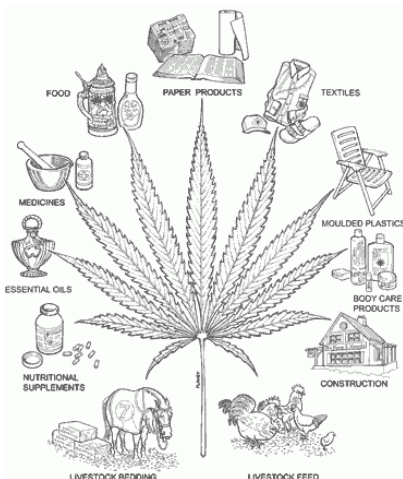
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Child-Labor>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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**Media Stream**



**The Hemp Plant and Its Uses**

Image online, courtesy Purdue University.

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## Child Labor

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