

Labor rights and trade unions in the past and present

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THEME

Teaching and learning about labor rights and the labor movement in the past and present based on the following categories: historical events and processes, ideologies and theories, people, laws, reports and conventions, milestones and organizations, examples of labor rights violations, symbols and posters.

CONTEXT

Labor rights belong to fundamental human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to work, as well as the rights to fair and equal pay, rest and working time limits. Although workers' rights are protected by laws and international organizations, workers' rights around the world are violated every day.

This lesson plan gives students/participants the opportunity to, by studying the historical development of the labor movement, see the far-reaching impact of the actions of workers and the labor movement on the protection of labor rights for future generations. In the same way, the lesson plan teaches about the mechanisms and strategies of the struggle for workers' rights throughout history, thus encouraging students/participants to apply them in the protection of workers' rights when they get a job.

GOALS

- Students/participants will acquire knowledge about the history of labor rights, labor and trade union movements and context in the past and present, and reflect on their significance for the future
- Students/participants will develop the ability to observe and recognize problems and issues related to the creation and protection of labor rights
- Students/participants will consider the ways (strategies and tactics) that unions use to protect workers' rights
- Students/participants will get to know important people, organizations and historical processes that influenced the historical development of labor rights and the labor movement and learn about their roles in them

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students/participants will be able to:

- recognize and identify the causes, reasons and consequences of historical events and processes which played a key role in the development of labor rights
- identify the motives of persons and organizations whose activities have influenced the improvement or protection of workers' rights

- identify similarities and differences in the problems of violation of labor rights in the past and present
- describe similarities and differences in the demands of workers in the past and in the present
- compose a short text about events, people, ideas, laws, organizations, milestones and examples of violations of labor rights in the local environment
- define the term union and list the labor rights they fought for

METHODOLOGY

- Oral presentation
- Text analysis and written work
- Group work
- Individual work

MATERIAL AND EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- timeline cards (printed)
- papers with the names of card categories (they can also be projected using a projector)
- cards (text/image) analysis question (printed)
- computer and projector
- internet access

Overview of activities (process)

Duration: 90 minutes

Before the class - instructions for teachers/educators

Before the lesson, the teacher/educator categorizes the topics of the printed cards. In this lesson plan, the topics of the printed cards are categorized into seven groups (historical events and processes, ideologies and theories, people, laws, reports and conventions, milestones and organizations, examples of violations of workers' rights, symbols of the labor movement and the poster "We Can Do It"), but, depending on the number of students/participants you are working with, you can also adapt these categories or select only some of the listed ones. Also, in case you have several class periods available, you can ask the students/participants to study all the printed timeline cards and suggest ways to categorize them by topic.

The questions for analyzing the text and images on the printed cards that the teacher/educators will distribute to the students/participants can be found in Appendix 1. The questions for analyzing the text and images on the printed cards are prepared by the teacher/educator before the start of the class - they can be written on paper, printed or projected using a projector.

Introduction: 10 minutes

The teacher/educator presents the topic of the lesson plan and explains the methodology. Then, the teacher/educator encourages the students/participants to answer the questions: What labor rights do you know? If you are familiar with historical figures who fought for workers' rights, can you remember their names? What labor rights are guaranteed today by the laws of your country?

Main part: 35 minutes

The teacher/educator divides the students/participants into smaller groups. Each group gets a set of categorized printed cards and questions for analyzing the text and images on the cards. He/she/they informs the students/participants about the time they will have to answer the assigned questions and that, once they have answered them, they will present their answers and research results to the rest of the class.

Presenting: 20 minutes

After the students/participants have answered the questions for analysis, one student/participant from each group presents the answers and results to the other students/participants in the class and answers the students'/participants' questions.

Duration depends on the number of the groups (20 minutes for smaller classes or groups).

Educational video: 15 minutes

After the presentation of student/participant answers and research results, the teacher/educator announces that they will watch a short educational video "What have trade unions done for us?", but before watching, the teacher/educator and students/participants jointly define the term trade union.

Link to the educational video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CX88bf9Bvi8&t=22s> ("Što su sindikati učinili za nas") Duration of the video is 3:06 minutes

After watching the educational video, the teacher/educator assigns the students/participants the task of creating a list of labor rights that unions have fought for. Next, the teacher/educator will ask the students/participants to do a short research on when in the past unions have fought for the rights listed above.

Conclusion: 7 minutes

Students/participants compare the results of their notes and research results. The teacher/educator assigns homework to the students/participants and explains how to do it well.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OPTIONS

If you had decided to have the students/participants categorize the printed timeline cards themselves, you can evaluate the criteria they have chosen and how successfully they have sorted them. Furthermore, you can evaluate the quality of students'/participants' answers to the set questions for the analysis of the text and images of the printed cards, as well as the presentation of their answers and the ability to answer additional student/participant questions.

HOMEWORK IDEAS

The teacher/educator can assign the following tasks for homework:

1. Students/participants create one (or more) card for the timeline - to complement the category they covered in class.
2. Students/participants conduct an interview with an active member of a trade union or with a trade union representative, about their activities, obligations and duties in the union.
3. Students/participants research the list of registered unions in the country they live in, choose one union per sector, and investigate when the union was founded (how long it has been active) and what mechanisms and strategies the selected union uses to protect or develop workers' rights.

ONLINE ADAPTATION

If you are going to apply this lesson in an online environment, you can use digital platforms like Teams or Google Classroom. These platforms allow students/participants to be divided into groups. You can give the names of the categories for the printed cards to the students/participants orally or write a specific category to each group of students/participants in a "chat". You can give questions for the analysis of the text and images of the printed cards to the students/participants in the same way. Students/participants can present their answers by "raising their hands", i.e. through a video camera or in writing. Both platforms support sending a video link to students/participants. Students/participants can create their own homework timelines using the digital tools Tiki-Toki (<https://www.tiki-toki.com/>) or Sutori (<https://www.sutori.com/en/>).

APPENDIX NO. 1. - QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING TEXT AND IMAGES OF PRINTED CARDS (BY CATEGORY)

Category 1. Historical events and processes (Industrial Revolution, Working and living conditions in the age of industrialization, Labor and trade union movement, Bloody Sunday, Jasmine Revolution)

1. Describe the causes and consequences of the described events.
2. List the demands of the workers who participated in the mentioned historical events and processes.
3. Describe the similarities and differences in the demands of workers in the past and today. What labor rights have been realized in the present, thanks to the labor movement of the past?
4. Research and describe one example of a historical event or process related to labor rights or a movement that took place in your country or region.

Category 2. Ideologies and theories (Laissez-faire theory, Workers' self-management, ideologies of the Soviet Union)

1. List the main features and determinants of the above-mentioned ideologies and theories.
2. Connect the mentioned ideologies and theories with their founders.
3. Who was influenced by these theories and in what way (did they have a positive or negative impact on workers' rights)?
4. Investigate whether the mentioned ideologies and theories are present in the today's world and where?

Category 3. Individuals and organizations (Marx and Engels, Mother Jones, Martin Luther King Jr., Esther Eggertsen, Iqbal Masih, Dolores Huerta)

1. Identify and explain the motives of the mentioned persons and organizations in the context of the struggle for labor rights.
2. Place the mentioned persons and organizations in time.
3. List the ways in which these persons and organizations fought for workers' rights and what were their achievements.
4. Research and describe the actions of a person or organization that has had a positive impact on labor rights in the context of your country or region.

Category 4. Laws, reports and conventions (German Social Reforms, International Standards then (ILS), Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Maternity Protection Convention, Eight-Hour Working Day, Child Labor Report, Uber)

1. Identify the persons or institutions responsible for passing laws that improved labor rights.
2. Compare the consequences that these laws had at the time of their adoption and today;
3. Interpret the report of the International Labor Organization from 2017 and argue the claim: Child labor is now legally prohibited.
4. Research information about movements, associations and political parties that advocate for the protection of labor rights in the country where you live.

Category 5. Milestones and organizations (May Day, Equal Pay Day, International Labor Organization (ILO)

1. Identify the causes that led to turning points in the historical development of labor rights. What influenced some events in the history of the labor movement to be commemorated every year?
2. What problems or issues do the above milestones and organizations try to point out today?
3. Research if there are any other milestones or organizations within the labor rights movement.
4. Describe how International Labor Day is celebrated in the community where you live.

Category 6. Examples of labor rights violations (Smartphone Industry, Fashion Industry, Covid-19, World Cup in Qatar, Bombshell)

1. List what types of labor rights were violated in the given examples and what consequences their violation caused.
2. Did workers' organizations react to the violation of workers' rights in the above examples?
3. List and describe the similarities and differences in the violation of labor rights in the past and present.
4. Research whether there are cases of labor rights violations in your country.

Category 7. Symbols posters (Red umbrella, Eight hour workday, "We can do it")

1. Who or what do the displayed symbols and poster refer to?
2. When were they first used and why?
3. Whose rights do the posters and symbols address?
4. Research and describe more examples of symbols and posters related to the protection of labor rights in the past or present.



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