THE WAY WE WORKED

A Museum on Main Street exhibition
organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service
Based on an exhibition created by the National Archives
Welcome to Museum on Main Street!

Museum on Main Street (MoMS) is a one-of-a-kind cultural project that serves small town museums and residents of rural America. It is a partnership between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) and state humanities councils nationwide. Museum on Main Street combines the prestige of Smithsonian exhibitions and the program expertise of state humanities councils with the remarkable volunteerism and unique histories of small rural towns. *Museum on Main Street is funded by the United States Congress.*

Educators are invited to use the worksheets and activities included in this manual in order to provide students with the tools needed for a deeper exploration of the history of American work examined in *The Way We Worked*. The materials in this manual have been specifically tailored to encourage student engagement with exhibition content and include both “pre” and “post” visit activities. For those who cannot tour the exhibition in person, these educational components can be used independently to teach students about the history of work in America.
EXHIBITION DESCRIPTION

With their hands and minds hard at work and sweat on their brows, American workers perform a diverse array of jobs to power our society. Whether we work for professional satisfaction and personal growth or to ensure the well-being of ourselves and our families, work is a part of nearly every American’s life. Office workers, factory workers, homemakers, truckers, soldiers and the millions more who keep the nation going through their work make great contributions not only to industry, but also to American culture.

The Way We Worked, adapted from an exhibition developed by the National Archives, explores how work became such a central element in American culture by tracing the many changes that affected the workforce and work environments over the past 150 years. The exhibition draws from the Archives’ rich collections to tell this compelling story.

The exhibition focuses on why we work and the needs that our jobs fulfill. Our work takes place everywhere – on the land, on the streets of our communities, in offices and factories, in our homes, and even in space. An exploration of the tools and technologies that enable and assist workers also reveals how workers sometimes find themselves with better tools, but also with faster, more complex and often more stressful work environments. The diversity of the American workforce is one of its strengths, providing an opportunity to explore how people of all races and ethnicities identify commonalities and work to knock down barriers in the professional world. And, finally, the exhibition shows how we identify with work – as individuals and as communities.

The Way We Worked is curated by Dr. Bruce Bustard, Senior Curator for the National Archives and Records Administration.
Pre-Visit Activity 1: What Does Your Clothing Say About You?

INTRODUCTION

The worksheets and activities included in this manual are meant to be suggestions for incorporating exhibition content into your classroom. We encourage you to customize all components to best suit your needs and the needs of students. We want to hear from you and ask that you take the time to share any feedback by completing a survey on our website or at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MuseumonMainStreetTeachersMaterials

BACKGROUND

Clothes are part of every worker’s toolbox. From hazmat suit to suit-and-tie, work dress is diverse and not always our choice. Whether professional, practical, or protective, work clothes transform us. We dress for success on the job.

Clothes are powerful symbols that tell others where we work and even what we do. The badge of a police officer symbolizes authority, the white coat of a doctor represents years of medical training, and the fast-food restaurant uniform is the company’s public persona.

Imagine yourself in someone else’s shoes, hat, overalls, suit... (excerpted from exhibition)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

In this activity, students will practice persuasion by debating whether your school should have uniforms and campaigning to get their ideal uniform accepted into your school. After completing the first section of the activity, “Let’s think about uniforms” help your students organize a debate by dividing the class by those “in favor of” and those “against” uniforms. Encourage students to prepare talking points to compel others to join them and then moderate a debate between the opposing sides. Next, ask the students to complete the rest of the activity, and invite your principal to participate by asking him or her to read the persuasive paragraphs and give feedback to students.
Pre Activity 1: What Does Your Clothing Say About You?

BACKGROUND

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(excerpted from exhibit)

SCHOOL UNIFORMS

LET’S THINK ABOUT UNIFORMS: Do you wear a uniform to school? Maybe you play a sport that requires a uniform or someone you know wears a uniform to work? Think about who you know that wears a uniform and why they do. Today, 18% of public school students are required to wear uniforms, and that number has been increasing for many years. Think about why more schools are requiring uniforms — does wearing a uniform make you a better student, athlete or worker? Are there ways to “stand out” in a uniform or do all people look the same in them? After considering these facts, decide whether you’re in support of or against uniforms in your school and why, and participate in a classroom debate led by your teacher.

LET’S GET CREATIVE: It is your job to design a uniform for your school. What features should it have? Remember to think about comfort and function! Students are in their uniform for most of the day, and often spend time playing sports outdoors or getting dirty with “hands-on” activities in classes like art or science. Write down a few things you’d make a part of your uniform in the space below, and draw a picture of your new uniform on the attached page.

LET’S GAIN SUPPORT: Now that you’ve created your ideal uniform, create a campaign to convince your principal and other students to adopt it. Think about why you included each part of your uniform. Do you think your classmates would like wearing your uniform? Write a persuasive paragraph (about 5-8 sentences) below your drawing to convince your principal and friends of why your school should wear these uniforms.
Pre-Visit Activity 1: *What Does Your Clothing Say About You?*

**CREATE YOUR UNIFORM!**

It is your job to design a uniform for your school. What features should it have? Remember to think about comfort and function! Students are in their uniform for most of the day, and often spend time playing sports outdoors or getting dirty with “hands-on” activities in classes like art or science. Draw a picture of your new uniform below:

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**GAIN SUPPORT:**

Write a persuasive paragraph (about 5-8 sentences) below to convince your principal and friends of why your school should wear these uniforms.

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Pre-Visit Activity 2: Documenting America

INTRODUCTION

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BACKGROUND

Why are these photographs in the National Archives?

Most of the images in this exhibition were taken by photographers working in Federal agencies. When the photos are no longer considered necessary, they are sent to the National Archives.

Federal entities commissioned these photos for many reasons, including: documenting progress on large-scale public projects such as courthouses, dams, bridges, and post office buildings; recording military operations and personnel or documenting civilian workers on the home front during wartime; capturing everyday conditions in cities, towns, and everywhere in between.

The photographic holdings in the National Archives are immense and continually growing. In the Washington, D.C., area alone, 11 million photos are in the still picture stacks, almost 23 million aerial and satellite photos are among cartographic records, and thousands of photos are interfiled with written records. Archivists care for millions of photographic records in the Archives’ Presidential libraries and thousands more in regional facilities. (excerpted from exhibition)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

In this activity, students are asked to pretend that they are a government agent on a mission to preserve the story of your town for the National Archives. By considering their surroundings through the perspective of documentation and preservation of history, students will understand primary sources and the National Archives’ collections. Students are asked to photograph your community and bring in their 10 most important photos, explaining why they believe each should be added to the collections of the National Archives. After your students present, lead a class discussion to select the 10 most important images. We invite you to create an exhibit of those images on our website, http://www.StoriesFromMainStreet.org. Stories From Main Street is an initiative from Museum on Main Street that provides a place to create a permanent home for important stories, images, oral histories, and videos that document life in small and rural communities.
Pre-Visit Activity 2: Documenting America

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VOCABULARY

Commission- to order to be made (e.g. commissioned a portrait)

Primary Source- A primary source is a document, speech, or other sort of evidence written, created or otherwise produced during the time under study. Primary sources offer an inside view of a particular event.

DOCUMENT YOUR COMMUNITY

Pretend you are a government agent on a mission to document work in your town. You’ve been assigned to take photos of the workers in your town to show people what life is like in your community. Imagine your collection of photos will be added to the collections of the National Archives- fifty years from now, researchers will use your photos as primary sources in studying your town’s work history. Think about some of the things or people that you would photograph. How do these things or people relate to you? What types of workers do you commonly see in your town? Why should your pictures be in the Archives? Remember, workers can be anyone from teachers and firefighters to construction workers and business people.

With a parent or guardian, think about the questions above and explore your town, taking photos of workers you see. When you’re finished, choose the 10 most important photos you took, and write a paragraph to argue why those images are important and should be sent to the Archives. Present your images to the class, and explain why you believe each should be added to the National Archives’ collections. After everyone has presented, discuss all of the images as a class, and choose the 10 most important images your class took of your town.
Pre-Visit Activity 3: Public Servants

INTRODUCTION

The worksheets and activities included in this manual are meant to be suggestions for incorporating exhibition content into your classroom. We encourage you to customize all components to best suit your needs and the needs of students, including by expanding the activity and allowing students to choose anyone or any business in the community who they believe is not recognized for their positive impact.

We want to hear from you and ask that you take the time to share any feedback by completing a survey on our website or at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MuseumonMainStreetTeachersMaterials

BACKGROUND

Imagine even one day without teachers, postal carriers, firefighters, policemen, bus drivers, or trash collectors. As our towns and cities grew, so too did the need for these public servants. Although often uncelebrated or unseen, they are essential to our modern lives. These workers keep our communities and conveniences running around the clock. (excerpted from exhibition)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

In this activity, students are asked to consider the role of local public servants while learning how to collect oral histories. Through conducting research and interviews, students will gain a deeper respect for your local public servants, and feel more connected to the community. We encourage you to invite these public servants to your classroom on presentation day, to allow them to hear what the students have learned, as well as to share more about their work.

To get started, discuss how to collect an oral history with your students. We suggest using the Smithsonian Folklife and Oral History Interviewing Guide (link found on page 7). Separate your class into groups of 3-5 students. Help each group select one type of job to research: postal carrier, public works employee, firefighter, judge, mayor, city council staff, or sanitation worker. Ask them to consider what it really means to do that work. Students should research the history of their assigned job in your community, and interview someone who does that work. It may be helpful for you to make the initial contact with someone in each type of job for students to find interviewees. Otherwise, ask students to find someone with that job by asking if friends and family know anyone, or by making contact on their own. Lastly, select a format for final presentations and share the following pages with your students.
Background

Imagine even one day without teachers, postal carriers, firefighters, policemen, bus drivers, or trash collectors. As our towns and cities grew, so too did the need for these public servants. Although often uncelebrated or unseen, they are essential to our modern lives. These workers keep our communities and conveniences running around the clock. (excerpted from exhibition)

Getting Started

In this activity, you will work with classmates to learn about your local public servants and how to collect oral histories. Your teacher will divide you into groups and help your group select a job to research. The guidelines and questions below should help you consider the history of the job, what being that type of worker means, why that person does the work they do, and how they feel about it. When finished with research and interviews, your team will present what you’ve learned about your chosen profession to the class.

Before you interview your “worker”, spend time researching the history of that job. You should be able to find information on the origin of the job, changes in day-to-day work as technology has entered the workplace, how to dress on the job and why, who traditionally did this work, and how long this job has existed in your community. See if you can find a job application or requirements for the job you’re researching. How might you become qualified for this job?

Use the information you gathered in the research phase to guide your interview. As a team, create your own interview questions and include your discoveries in your final presentation. You’ll find that your interviewee will really appreciate your familiarity with their work. Remember to thank your interviewee for speaking with you, as well as for their contribution to your community.
Pre-Visit Activity 3: Public Servants

Interview:

Before getting started, you may want to choose one team member to be the “scribe” and decide who will be asking questions. Will the entire team ask questions or just one team member? Decide all of this in advance. Also, if you find that you come up with new questions during your interview, go ahead and ask them, just be sure to write the questions down or use audio or video to save them for your records.

Sample Interview Questions:

Remember, these are meant only to be a guide, be sure to include your own questions too!

1. How long have you been working as a ______? Tell us how you got into this line of work.
2. How has your day-to-day work changed since you first started?
3. What do you think about your job? Describe some qualities that you think are necessary to do this job.
4. Does your work feel like more than a job? Is it more of a way of life?
5. How do you feel that you’re making a difference in your community?
6. Describe a time when you felt particularly appreciated by your community?
7. What aspect of your work are you most proud of?
8. What is the biggest challenge in your work?
9. If you could change anything about your job, what would it be?
10. What did you want to be when you grew up?
11. Do you have any favorite stories from your work life? What are they?
12. Do you plan on retiring? Why or why not?
INTRODUCTION

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BACKGROUND

Some communities become famous for their local industries. These businesses are a source of pride, often linked to local heritage and tradition. Their workers become a kind of hometown hero. Towns celebrate their sweat and skill with festivals, concerts, parades, sports teams, and even the city nickname.

Workplaces create community, too. Co-workers draw strength from one another in both good and stressful times. Friendships extend to the ballpark for softball games, bowling alley, or union hall where their families meet. (excerpted from exhibition)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

In this activity, students are given a chance to consider your community’s unique history. By focusing research on a specific business, students will come to understand the impact, history and changes in this business over time. When finished, students will present their findings to the class, and argue whether the business researched remains a resource to the community.

To get started, create a list of businesses in the community that the students will work from. Include a range of businesses - some that have opened in the last 2 years, 30 years, or even 100 years or more so that the final presentations capture the variety of businesses as well as their different imprints on the community. After compiling the list, separate your class into “research teams” of 3-5 students and assign or allow teams to choose a business to research. Finally, determine the format in which students should present their research, establish a project timeline and distribute the following two pages to the class.
Post-Visit Activity 1: Local Businesses: Mini Research Project

BACKGROUND

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Workplaces create community, too. Co-workers draw strength from one another in both good and stressful times. Friendships extend to the ballpark for softball games, bowling alley, or union hall where their families meet. (excerpted from exhibition)

GETTING STARTED

In this activity, you will work with classmates to consider your community’s unique history. By focusing research on a specific business, you will learn about the impact, history and changes in this business over time. Finally, your team will present your findings to the class, and argue whether the business you’ve researched is still a resource to the community.

Your teacher will divide your class into “research teams” and assist each team in selecting a local business to research. Next, your teacher will assign a project timeline and describe the format for final presentation. You will need to illustrate the impact of this business on your community and argue whether it’s still a resource. Start your investigation by talking to staff, researching online or in your library, and talking to community members. As a team, build on the following questions and customize your research and presentation accordingly. Consider what your class should know about this business that may not be specifically required in the assignment. If possible, incorporate any visual elements or artifacts you may have found into your presentation. Show your class how the business has changed or stayed the same over time, and argue whether it has adapted to the changing needs of your community.
Post-Visit Activity 1: Local Businesses: Mini Research Project

DESCRIPTION & ORGANIZATION

Conduct some research on the history of this business. When was it formed and by whom? Was it formed as a family business? If so, is it still? Why or why not? Why does it exist in your community? Was it the first business of its kind in your community? How has day-to-day work changed since they first opened? Find out whether technology has affected work, (number of employees, hours worked, economic impact in your community.)

HISTORY & CHANGE

Identify the current owner of the company, as well as how many people they employ. Find out whether this business a family business. Where is this business located and how long has it been there? Has this business moved? If so, why? Why is this business or industry important to your community? Try to talk to some employees about their work life. Why do they work at this company? Was it by choice or necessity? How do they feel about working there? Do they feel that this business is a part of your town’s identity? Why? Could utilization of technology make it more of a resource to the community?

MATERIALS

Try to find photos and artifacts from the history of this business. Investigate whether your local library has news stories about this business. Ask the owner or staff members if there are photos from the grand opening or other special events. Some staff members may even have kept business cards, stationary, timecards or other work related items. Ask permission to photograph these items for use as part of your presentation.

PRESENTATION

It’s time to create your presentation! Remember to stay within the format required by your teacher, and make sure to answer as many as possible.

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BACKGROUND

Imagine this: It is 1912. You are 11 years old. Your father works in a shoe factory, and your mother sews shirts at home. What is your job?

Children traditionally helped with chores in the home or on the family farm. But in the 1800s, many American children also worked in factories, mines, and mills.

Employers liked to hire children because they could pay them low wages. Small fingers could reach into looms when fibers were stuck. Small bodies could squeeze into tight spaces in mines. Many jobs were dangerous, but many families needed the money desperately.

Minimum age rules for child workers were finally set by the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938. (excerpted from exhibition)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Lewis Hine was a photographer and sociologist whose photos of child workers helped to change cultural perspectives on child labor. Hired as a photographer for the National Child Labor Committee, Hine documented child labor across the U.S. Through his work, Hine advocated for workers’ rights, and aided in the establishment of protective labor laws in the United States. The photos and captions in this activity are examples of Hine’s work.

In this activity, students learn about the Fair Labor Standards Act through looking at images of child workers taken by Lewis Hine. Students will look at the images and connect to the children in Hine’s images by reflecting on their own experiences. Lead a discussion with your students about why Hine took these photos, their own reflections, and what the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) achieved. (See the resource page for more information on the FLSA)
Post-Visit Activity 2: Child Labor

BACKGROUND

Imagine this: It is 1912. You are 11 years old. Your father works in a shoe factory, and your mother sews shirts at home. What is your job?

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Minimum age rules for child workers were finally set by the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938.

(excerpted from exhibition)

VOCABULARY

Labor- to exert one’s powers of body or mind especially with painful or strenuous effort : WORK
Activist- taking action to achieve an end, esp a political or social one
Advocate- one that pleads the cause of another
Fair Labor Standards Act- an act of Congress in 1938 establishing minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and youth employment standards affecting employees in the private sector and in Federal, State, and local governments
Sociology- the science of society, social institutions, and social relationships; specifically : the systematic study of the development, structure, interaction, and collective behavior of organized groups of human beings

DIRECTIONS

Lewis Hine was a photographer and sociologist whose photos of child workers helped to change cultural perspectives on child labor. Through his work, Hine advocated for workers’ rights, and aided in the establishment of protective labor laws in the United States. The photos and captions in this activity are examples of Hine’s work.

In this activity, you’ll learn about the Fair Labor Standards Act. Look at images of child workers taken by Lewis Hine and complete the reflections on the following pages. When you’re finished, your teacher will lead a discussion about why Hine took these photos, your responses to the images, and what the Fair Labor Standards Act achieved.

Young loom workers at Bibb Mill No. 1 in Macon, Georgia, by Lewis W. Hine, January 1909. National Archives, Records of the Children’s Bureau
REFLECTING

Lewis Hine photographed children at work around the country for the National Child Labor Committee. Children’s advocates used Hine’s photographs to end dangerous and abusive child labor practices. (excerpted from exhibition)

Study Lewis Hine’s work and think about your own life and what the Fair Labor Standards Act means for you.

1. Have you ever had a job or had chores around your home? How was that work similar or different from the work in these pictures?

2. Why do you think these photos influenced laws protecting child workers? Give examples.

3. Many of the children in these photos didn’t attend school because their families relied on them to work. As a student, do you think that it’s important children have a chance to go to school? Why or why not?

4. Take a moment to consider the photographer. Lewis Hine was truly an activist, using his skill as a photographer to provoke change. Think of your own life and community, what might you do to encourage change? Who or what in your town can you think of that might need an advocate? Take Action. Talk to your class or a parent about how to be an activist in your community.
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BACKGROUND

Nothing affected the way we work like technology. Until the early 1800s, most jobs involved manual labor and animal power, but new inventions helped ignite an industrial revolution. How we worked changed forever.

Mills and factories sprang up, towns were born, and innovations helped farmers produce more. Cottage industries gave way to city and factory jobs. Workers banded together in unions to protect their rights and lives amid the industrial rush.

Technology continues to change how we work. How will it change our future? (excerpted from exhibition)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

In this activity, students will work in groups of two (or more) to complete the attached worksheet. Students will need access to the internet or a library. When they’ve finished, work with your class to create a chart to record the jobs in your community that have changed, are new, or no longer exist. As a class, look at your completed chart and have a discussion about the students’ findings on how technology has impacted the American workplace. What do your students think the future might look like? How will technology affect their future work?
Post-Visit Activity 3: *How has Technology Affected Your Community?*

**BACKGROUND**

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Technology continues to change how we work. How will it change our future?
*(excerpted from exhibition)*

**GETTING STARTED**

Technology has transformed the American workplace. Since the 1800s, the composition of our workforce and the way in which we work has changed completely. Jobs that existed at your town’s founding may no longer exist, and jobs that community members do today, may not have existed 5 years ago. Work with a classmate to complete the attached worksheet. For some answers, you may want to reflect on what you saw in the exhibit to find the answers.

When you’re finished, your teacher will collect answers from your entire class and compile a chart of responses. When looking at the final chart, think about and share with your class the ways in which you think technology has impacted the American workplace.
REFLECTING ON THE EXHIBIT AND YOUR TOWN

Work with your partner to reflect on what you saw in the exhibit, and discuss what you each discovered. Use this new knowledge of American work history to think about your own community. List two jobs that may have existed in your town at founding in the space below.

Do those jobs still exist in your community? How might technology have played a role in their existence? Write down a few hypotheses of how technology has affected those jobs.

What other jobs can you think of that technology has affected? Use the space below to list two jobs that existed 50 years ago that no longer exist, two jobs that exist today that didn’t exist 50 years ago, and two that still exist but have changed.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Technology impacts our lives in innumerable ways, but we often take them for granted. Consider this: before 1970 there was no such thing as email, DVD, the personal computer, or the “modern” fax machine. Think about the huge impact each has had on the workplace. Work with your classmate to investigate how technology has changed work in your town- start with the list of jobs you created above, and research how each has changed with technology. Write your findings on the back of this sheet.

Of all the advancements in technology that we take for granted, the lightbulb might have the most impact. Take a moment to consider how much the lightbulb has impacted your own life—there’s probably a lightbulb on in the room you’re in right now. Thomas Edison did not invent the incandescent bulb until 1879. Work with your partner to create a list of 10 jobs that have been dramatically impacted by or could not exist without artificial light.

1. 6.
2. 7.
3. 8.
4. 9.
5. 10.
Sample Chart:

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<th>Traditional Jobs that Still Exist</th>
<th>New Jobs</th>
<th>Old Jobs</th>
<th>Ways Technology has impacted jobs in your community</th>
<th>Jobs impacted by Artificial Light</th>
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

RELATED CONTENT

http://www.MuseumOnMainStreet.org
http://www.StoriesFromMainStreet.org/
http://www.Archives.gov/exhibits/twww/
http://www.digitalvaults.org/

FURTHER READING


COMMON CORE STATE STANDARD ALIGNMENT

The worksheets and activities in this educator’s manual achieve several Common Core State Standards. Below is a list of the most commonly achieved standards in this manual:

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<thead>
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<th>SL.3.1</th>
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<th>SL.5.1</th>
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