

1 **Massachusetts Investigation into Labor Conditions (excerpted)**
 2 *Excerpted from Massachusetts House Document, no. 50,*
 3 *March of 1845*

4
 5 ...On the 13th of February, the Committee held a session to hear the
 6 petitioners from the city of Lowell. Six of the female and three of the male
 7 **petitioners** were present, and gave their testimony.

8
 9 ...Miss Sarah G. Bagley said she had worked in the Lowell Mills eight years
 10 and a half, six years and a half on the Hamilton Corporation, and two years on
 11 the Middlesex. She is a weaver, and works by the piece. She worked in the
 12 mills three years before her health began to fail. She is a native of New
 13 Hampshire, and went home six weeks during the summer. Last year she was
 14 out of the mill a third of the time. She thinks the health of the operatives is
 15 not so good as the health of females who do housework or millinery business.
 16 The chief evil, so far as health is concerned is the shortness of time allowed
 17 for meals. The next evil is the length of time employed not giving them time
 18 to cultivate their minds. She spoke of the high moral and intellectual
 19 character of the girls. That many were engaged as teachers in the Sunday
 20 schools. That many attended the lectures of the Lowell Institute; and she
 21 thought, if more time was allowed, that more lectures would be given and
 22 more girls attend. She thought that the girls generally were favorable to the
 23 ten hour system. She had presented a petition, same as the one before the
 24 Committee, to 132 girls, most of whom said that they would prefer to work
 25 but ten hours. In a pecuniary point of view, it would be better, as their health
 26 would be improved. They would have more time for sewing. Their
 27 intellectual, moral and religious habits would also be benefited by the change.
 28 Miss Bagley said, in addition to her labor in the mills, she had kept evening
 29 school during the winter months, for four years, and thought that this extra
 30 labor must have injured her health.

31 ...
 32 There are four days in the year, which are observed as holidays, and on which
 33 the mills are never put in motion. These are Fast Day, Fourth of July,
 34 Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. These make one more day than is
 35 usually devoted to pastime in any other place in New England. The following
 36 table shows the average hours of work per day, throughout the year, in the
 37 Lowell Mills:

	Hours	Minutes		Hours	Minutes
January	11	24	July	12	45
February	12		August	12	45
March	11	52	September	12	23
April	13	31	October	12	10
May	12	45	November	11	56
June	12	45	December	11	24

hat maker

grow

monetary

to refrain from eating

40 **A Description of Factory Life by an Associationist in 1846**
41 **(excerpted)**

42 ... We have lately visited the cities of Lowell and Manchester, and have had an
43 opportunity of examining the factory system more closely than before. We had
44 distrusted the accounts, which we had heard from persons engaged in the Labor
45 Reform, now beginning to agitate New England; we could scarcely credit the
46 statements made in relation to the exhausting nature of the labor in the mills, and
47 to the manner in which the young women, the operatives, lived in their
48 boarding-houses, six sleeping in a room, poorly ventilated.

49
50 We went through many of the mills, talked particularly to a large number of the
51 operative, and ate at their boarding-houses, on purpose to ascertain by personal
52 inspection the facts of the case. We assure our reader that very little information
53 is possessed, and no correct judgments formed, by the public at large, of our
54 factory system, which is the first germ of the Industrial or Commercial
55 Feudalism, that is to spread over our land. ...

56
57 The operatives work thirteen hours a day in the summertime, and from daylight
58 to dark in the winter. At half past four in the morning the factory bell rings, and
59 at five the girls must be in the mills. A clerk, placed as a watch, observes those
60 who are a few minutes behind the time, and effectual means are taken to
61 stimulate punctuality. This is the morning commencement of the industrial
62 discipline (should we not rather say industrial tyranny?) which is established in
63 these Associations of this moral and Christian community. At seven the girls
64 are allowed thirty minutes for breakfast, and at noon thirty minutes more for
65 dinner, except during the first quarter of the year, when the time is extended to
66 forty-five minutes. But within this time they must hurry to their boarding-
67 houses and return to the factory, and that through the hot sun, or the rain and
68 cold. A meal eaten under such circumstances must be quite unfavorable to
69 digestion and health, as any medical man will inform us. At seven o'clock in the
70 evening the factory bells sounds the close of the day's work.

71
72 Thus thirteen hours per day of close attention and monotonous labor are exacted
73 from the young women in these manufactories... So fatigued we should say,
74 exhausted and worn out but we wish to speak of the system in the simplest
75 language are numbers of the girls, that they go to bed soon after their evening
76 meal? And endeavor by a comparatively long sleep to **resuscitate** their
77 weakened frames for the toils of the coming day.

78 ...

leader within a labor
union

understand

social hierarchy with
factory workers at the
bottom

harsh or unjust power

Teacher's Guide

Name of Text: **Massachusetts Investigation into Labor Conditions and A Description of Factory Life by an Associationist in 1846**

Question Composers: Marcella Howden and Beth Swanberg

Standards: Nevada Social Studies: H3.[6-8].5, H3.[6-8].8 CCSS: R.H.1,R.H.2, R.H.6, R.H.7,R.H.10, W.H.1, W.H.4, W.H.9, S.L.1, S.L.3, S.L.6

Text Dependent Questions	Teacher Notes and Possible Textual Evidence for Student Answers
1. When were the two documents published? What do we know about the documents from lines 2 and 40?	The first in March of 1845 (line 3) and the second 1846 (line 40). The first document was excerpted from Massachusetts House Document, no. 50 and the second from an associationist.
2. A petitioner is a person seeking formal change through the political system. Who are the petitioners in this document?	This question establishes who is giving testimony in this document. <i>The petitioners are six females and three males who worked in the Lowell Mills (line 6)</i> <i>One of these is Sarah Bagley (line 9)</i>
3. According to Sarah Bagley what are the problems with working in the Lowell Mills?	This question establishes issues faced by workers in the mills. <i>Lines 14-18 Women in mills work harder than house workers and hat makers. Shortness of times of meals. No time to cultivate their minds.</i>
4. What does Bagley and the 132 girls want? How does she justify her request?	These questions examine the purpose of Bagley's testimony and her reasoning. <i>Lines 22-25 10 hour work day.</i> <i>Lines 25-27 To improve their health, more time for sewing, to improve intellectual, moral, and religious habits. It could benefit the company financially.</i>

Text Dependent Questions

Teacher Notes and Possible Textual Evidence
for Student Answers

<p>5. Based on lines 40 to 48, from A Description of Factory Life, what do we know about the author and how do they view the previous accounts of conditions in the mills?</p>	<p>This question makes students realize that this document is questioning what had been said about mill life. <i>Lines 46-48 They distrusted the accounts, they could not credit statements made about mill life...</i></p>
<p>6. What does the author mean by the factory system is the “first germ” of the Industrial or Commercial Feudalism? (Line 54) What evidence does he use to support his claim that they factory system is the “first germ.”</p>	<p>This question makes students understand this metaphor and its connotation. <i>First germ is meant to mean the beginning, but in a bad way like a germ begins an illness.</i> <i>Work 13 hours/day (Line 57); 5 AM in the mill (line 58); punished (line 61); only allowed 30 minutes for breakfast and dinner (lines 64 to 66); Line 69 to 70, they finish the day at 7:00.</i></p>
<p>7. What are the working hours stated in A Description of Factory Life (document 2)? How does this compare with the table of average working hours in the first document?</p>	<p>This question has students compare information written in chart form and make determinations about accuracy. <i>Lines 60-61. 13 hour day in summer and daylight to dark in the winter.</i> <i>Students should discuss what daylight to dark means in different seasons. The amount of average hours actually worked. Discrepancies between the two documents.</i></p>
<p>8. The author makes the claim that we should endeavor to resuscitate their “weakened frames.” What does it mean to resuscitate? Why evidence does he share to make the case that the factory women need to be resuscitated?</p>	<p>Resuscitate means to be revived. The women are working 13 hours a day (line 72); monotonous labor (line 72); fatigued (line 73); exhausted and worn out (line 74);</p>

Writing Prompt:

Both documents are describing the unsatisfactory conditions of Lowell Mills. Compare how the petitioner and an associationist makes the case for change. What words and evidence do they use to persuade their audiences? How do their words convey a different tone to the reader?

Evidence would include the following:

Sarah Bagley	associationist
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health began to fail (line 11)• Short time to eat meal (line 17)• No time to cultivate minds (line 18)• More lectures (line 20)• Work ten hour work day (line 24 and 25)• More time for sewing (line 26)• Intellectual, moral and religious habits will be benefited (line 27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exhausting nature of labor (line 46)• Six sleeping in a room, poorly ventilated (line 48)• First germ of industrial or commercial feudalism (line 54)• Work 13 hours day from daylight to dark (line 58)• Effectual means taken to stimulate punctuality (line 61)• Allowed 30 mins for breakfast and 30 mins for dinner (lines 63-66)• Hot sun, rain and cold (lines 67-68)• Unfavorable to digestion and health (line 69)• Fatigued, exhausted and worn out (lines 73-74)• Need sleep to resuscitate their weakened frames (line 77)

The associationist is more forceful in the language choice while Sarah's is more submissive and less confrontational.