

Decide Eliza Paige's Future

12.01.14

Introduction	Students use the web-based <i>Bringing History Home - Decide Eliza Paige's Future</i> to learn about the lives of mill workers in the early Industrial city of Lowell.
Target Grade Level	Grades 4-8
Time	One 45-minute period
Lesson Preparation	Photocopy "The World of Eliza Paige" reading for homework. Arrange time in the computer lab Photocopy: Choices Tracking Sheet (several sheets for each team)
Prior Knowledge Required	Students should have a basic understanding of the Industrial Revolution and "Mill Girls."
Background Information	See attached: <i>The World of Eliza Paige</i>
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boardinghouse: Four story brick building with a kitchen, dining room, and bedrooms built by the mills to house their workers; run by a boardinghouse keeper. • Brown Lung Disease: a disease caused by inhaling cotton dust which made it difficult to breathe • Domestic Servant: a person who is employed to do household work (maid) • Keeper (or Boardinghouse Keeper): Someone hired by the mills to run a boardinghouse and take care of the workers • Legislature: a group of elected officials who make laws • Petition: document signed by many people urging a government official to take action on a problem • Protest: an objection, disapproval or opposition • Wage: pay
Anticipated Student Preconceptions/ Misconceptions	Students may mistakenly believe that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mill owners and overseers treated all mill workers horribly and there were no benefits of coming to Lowell.
Frameworks	<p>Common Core State Standards</p> <p><u>Grade 4: Writing Standards</u></p> <p>1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose. b. Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details. c. Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., <i>for instance, in</i>

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	<p><i>order to, in addition).</i></p> <p>d. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.</p> <p><u>Grade 8: Reading Standards for Literature</u> 3. Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.</p> <p><u>Grades 3-8: Speaking and Listening Standards:</u> 1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade topics and text, building on others’ ideas and expressing own clearly.</p> <p><u>Grades 6-12: Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies</u> 4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p>
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Guiding Question	What were some of the choices faced by the workers who came to work in Lowell’s mills?
Objectives	<p>After completing this activity students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe at least two different choices a mill worker might have faced. • List one cost and one benefit for the workers of the Industrial Revolution
Activity	<p>Introduction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The day before you intend to teach the lesson, assign “The World of Eliza Paige” essay as homework reading. 2. Conduct a class discussion based on homework reading: Ask students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why would someone want to come to Lowell to work? (<i>money, social opportunities, independence etc.</i>) • What were conditions like in the mills? (<i>hot, humid, dangerous machines, cotton dust, long days etc.</i>) <p>Web-based Activity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Students work in pairs or groups of three. Each group should have several copies of the Choices Tracking Sheet. 4. Direct students to: http://www.uml.edu/tsongas/bringing-history-home 5. Students make choices for Eliza Paige and her life in Lowell. Encourage them to read the “Advice” links offered at the bottom of each page before making decisions. 6. As students move through the game, they keep track of their choices on the Choices Tracking Sheet.

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	<p>Tracking Sheet Example:</p> <p>► Choice: <u>Stay at Boardinghouse</u> OR <u>Move</u></p> <p>What do you choose? <u>Stay at Boardinghouse</u></p> <p>What happened to Eliza because of this choice?</p> <p><u>Eliza has to adjust to her new living arrangements by making new friends and gets a lecture from the overseer.</u></p> <p>7. Students should play the game several times, keeping track of their choices each time, to learn the costs and benefits of different choices.</p>
Assessment	<p>Have each team choose one decision. Then answer the following questions in a short essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the decision you had to make?• What were the two different choices?• What were the costs and benefits of each choice?• How did your group weigh the costs and benefits to reach a decision?• If you were a mill worker in Lowell faced with that choice-what would you have decided? Why? <p>See attached rubric.</p>
Differentiation Suggestions	See below
Adapting the Activity for Other Grades	For younger students (grade 4-5), ELL or students with different learning styles, read "The World of Eliza Paige" as a class to help students understand the difficult words/concepts.
Bibliography	Grade 4-5 <i>The Bobbin Girl</i> , Emily Arnold McCulley Grade 5-8 <i>Lyddie</i> , Katherine Patterson

Rubric for Decide Eliza Paige's Future

	1	2	3
Costs and benefits are clearly explained	Only the costs <u>or</u> benefits are explained	Both costs and benefits are attempted but one or both are not clear	Costs and benefits are clearly described
Group work	One group member made the decision for the group	Group could not explain why one choice was decided on over another	Group worked together to make a decision
Spelling and Grammar	Several spelling or grammar mistakes	1-3 spelling or grammar mistakes	No spelling or grammar mistakes

The World of Eliza Paige

The Industrial Revolution, when products were made on a large scale by machines, began in New England in the early 1800s. In Lowell, factories used the power of the Merrimack River to run the new machines that made cloth. Machines require people to work them and the mills needed a lot of workers. Early mill owners chose mostly young women from New England farms to run the machines.

Why come to Lowell?



Entrance to Merrimack Mills, Lowell

Many young women came to Lowell for a chance to earn a good wage and find opportunities they did not have on farms. Women did not have many job options in the early 1800s; they could be schoolteachers, or someone's domestic servant (housemaid). In the mills of Lowell women were weavers, spinners, and drawing in girls. The mills paid cash that women could send home, save, or spend as they wished.

To keep workers safe and make sure they followed all of the company rules, the mills built boardinghouses where workers lived. Each boardinghouse had a keeper to take care of the workers. The boardinghouse keeper cooked, cleaned, and washed their work clothes. She made sure that they were in bed by 10:00pm and behaved properly in the city. In the boardinghouse, the workers got food and half of a bed (they shared their bed with another girl), and paid about \$1.25 a week out of their salaries of \$2.00-\$4.00 a week.

Coming to Lowell also meant social opportunities not found in small New England villages. There were a lot of fun and interesting things to do in the city with the money earned in the mills. Lectures and concerts were always full of young mill workers. Friends visited each other in the evenings or joined together for shopping, picnics and sleigh rides.

Mill Work

The worker spent most of her time in the mill. The machines were loud and dangerous, and the workers stood all day, making sure they ran properly. Steam heat filled the rooms year round to keep the air hot and humid. Workers could not open the windows because the cool, dry air broke the threads on the machines. The workday was usually between 13 and 14 hours long, six days a week —every day but Sunday. Cotton dust filled the air covering every surface. At the end of

the day, the fine white dust covered the clothing and hair of the workers, slowly settling in their lungs. Some workers got a disease called “brown lung disease,” which made breathing difficult. Some were so sick they had to go home to their farms and families. Some continued to work through the coughing spells because they needed the money.

While many thought that Lowell offered a good working wage and were thankful for their jobs, some working women thought that the mills took advantage of them. Over time, mill owners made workers run more machines, and the machines gradually moved faster and faster. Only brief breaks for meals interrupted the seemingly endless workday.



Bobbin Girl, Winslow Homer

The Workers' Response

In the early 1840s, some mill workers in Lowell began to protest their working conditions. They joined with mill workers in other parts of New England to fight for better working conditions. One of their highest priorities was to shorten the workday. They sent petitions to the Massachusetts State Legislature asking for a ten-hour workday in all the factories in the state. While hundreds of mill workers signed the petitions, many more did not. Some felt woman should not take part in any form of politics, while others were afraid their boss would fire them for signing the petition. Some workers did not want a shorter workday because it meant that they would make less money.

Whatever the workers thought of the petition for a ten-hour day, there was one thing that they probably all agreed on; working in the factories allowed women opportunities that they had never had before. Some showed their new independence by speaking out for workers' rights, some by learning new skills, and all by making their own wage and gaining independence.

Round of Play (1st, 2nd, etc):

Deciding Eliza Page's Future Choices Tracking Sheet

► Choice: _____ OR _____

What do you choose? _____

What happened to Eliza because of this choice?



► Choice: _____ OR _____

What do you choose? _____

What happened to Eliza as a result of this choice?



► Choice: _____ OR _____

What do you choose? _____

What happened to Eliza because of this choice?



► Choice: _____ OR _____

What do you choose? _____

What happened to Eliza? _____
