

## **Unit: Lowell and the Industrial Revolution**

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**Lesson Topic:** Labor-Mill Life

**Grade Level:** Middle School

**State Standards:**

**Class Time:** 90 minutes

### **Objectives:**

- Students will understand the roles of women in New England textile factories and empathize with the experiences of Lowell's mill girls.
- Students will understand that there early mill works had very little separation between their home and work lives.

### **Prerequisite knowledge/Background Information:**

Students will research the reasons Yankee farm girls came to live in the city and work in the mills, what boardinghouse life and working in the mills were like, and how the girls felt about these experiences. After learning about the mill girls' lives, students will create a 2D replica of either a Lowell boardinghouse or a mill.

Students will already have an understanding of what farm life was like during this time period.

### **Materials:**

- Primary Source Readings
- Research resources - laptop computers, encyclopedias, nonfiction books, history textbook
- Poster board or large sheets of poster paper
- Colored pencils

### **Procedure:**

1. Day 1 - View movie: *Mill Times* by David Macaulay (about 45 minutes)
2. Divide the class in half: boardinghouse and mills. Students may work individually or in groups of up to 3 students.
3. Using various primary source and research materials, students gather information about various aspects of either living in a boardinghouse or working in a mill. Topics might include:

**BOARDINGHOUSE** - Food, Living spaces, Rules, Payment/cost, Leisure time, Keeper's role, Lectures  
**Mill** - Pay, hours worked, responsibilities, injuries, types of jobs, bell system, working conditions, illnesses, reasons for employment

4. Students create a large replica of either a mill or a boardinghouse. Buildings should look authentic, both in design and material. Students may decide to use multiple pieces of poster

board to create a larger building if more space is needed.

5. In each window, bulleted facts about one category of information should be neatly written (or typed and pasted). Students may decide to put shutters over the windows that open to reveal the information. Building should also contain 3 creative, authentic details such as a mill clock, etc.
6. Combine all smaller mill and boardinghouse groups together into one larger one. In a brief presentation, groups teach classmates about what they learned.
7. Follow-up: Class debate: Factory Life vs. Farm Life – Divide class in half, one side pro-factory and the other pro-farm. Students collaborate and prepare information that supports their perspective. During debate, each team must try to convince the teacher (or another group of students) to agree with their point of view.

### **Assessment**

See rubric on the following page:

# **LIFE OF A LOWELL MILL GIRL**

NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>POSSIBLE POINTS</b>	<b>POINTS EARNED</b>
<b>Information –</b> Researched at least seven categories of information Information made sense Contained adequate detail; thorough	<b>65 pts</b>	
<b>Creativity of Building –</b> Looks authentic Colored/constructed neatly Has at least 3 creative details (ex., plants in windows, lampposts, etc.)	<b>20 pts</b>	
<b>Team Dynamics – (individual grade)</b> Team members were cooperative and respectful of each other All team members worked productively and contributed to the project	<b>15 pts</b>	
<b>FINAL GRADE</b>		