A Shorter Workweek: Labor Reforms and the Haymarket Riot

Basic Information

Grade Level: 9–12
Subject Area: Visual Arts, Social Studies, U.S. History
Time Required: 3 or 4 sessions
Student Skills Developed: Making inferences and drawing conclusions, comparison and contrast, narrative writing, researching, interpreting written information

Artworks

Newark Museum Collection
William James Glackens (1870–1938)
At the Beach, ca. 1918
oil on canvas, 25 ¼ x 30 in.
Gift of Mrs. Felix Fuld, 1925 25.1167

National Endowment for the Humanities, *Picturing America Collection*
Thomas Eakins (1844–1916)
John Biglin in a Single Scull, ca. 1873
watercolor on off-white wove paper,
19 5/16 x 24 7/8{use case fractions} in. (49.2 x 63.2 cm.)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Introduction

In 1918, William Glackens painted a crowded beach scene. How did all those Americans find time to play at the beach? Or watch boat races like those that Thomas Eakins painted in 1873? In 1870, most Americans worked more than sixty hours a week, but by 1919 the workweek had shrunk to about fifty hours. This shorter workweek had not come easily. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, reformers urged employers to improve working conditions. Strikes and labor rallies, like the 1886 Chicago Haymarket Square Riot, sometimes turned violent as workers demanded an eight-hour workday. By 1918, workers had gained an extra day of leisure to enjoy the beach or boat races or some other new pastime.

In this lesson, students view Thomas Eakins's 1873 painting of *John Biglin in a Single Scull* and William Glackens's 1918 *At the Beach*. Students read and write about the PBS Livelyhood article "How The Weekend Was Won." After researching the Haymarket Square Riot, they write and illustrate an imagined diary entry by a worker who was present at the 1886 riot. Worksheets are included to help students analyze the art, understand the article about the history of the eight-hour workday, and research and write about the Haymarket Riot.

Guiding Questions

+ Why did American workers have more leisure time in the early twentieth century than in previous decades?

+ How did artists depict late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American leisure activities?

Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

+ Analyze, describe, and compare William Glackens's oil painting *At the Beach* and Thomas Eakins's watercolor painting *John Biglin in a Single Scull*.

+ Describe several leisure activities of middle-class Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

+ Explain how and why the number of hours American employees worked per week declined during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

+ Describe the 1886 Haymarket Square Rally and Riot.

Background Information for the Teacher

More Leisure Time

As the nineteenth century ended and the twentieth began, United States workers had more leisure time than in previous decades. Industrial employers began reducing the number of hours employees worked per day and giving employees a half-day off on Saturdays. In 1850, manufacturing employees worked more than sixty hours a week. By the 1920s, that amount had dropped to forty-eight, and dropped further to about forty hours per week in 1950. (Sources vary on these statistics.) Gradually, large numbers of workers gained more time for leisure activities. At the turn of the nineteenth century, employers began offering workers vacation time, but usually without pay. As cities became more crowded, however, and manufacturing jobs more monotonous, workers wanted time away from the city and their jobs. Progressive activists considered leisure time to be beneficial to workers' health.

Learn more at:
How the Weekend Was Won, History Lesson, Livelyhood, PBS
http://www.pbs.org/livelyhood/workday/weekend/intro.html

and

Hours of Work in U.S. History, Economic History Association
http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/whaples.work.hours.us

New Leisure Activities

When electric lights began illuminating streets and buildings, activities at night became safer. With more free time, people across the country began to enjoy new kinds of amusement. They flocked to the recently invented motion pictures.

Traditional parades and fairs remained popular. More free time and mass transit allowed people to frequent beaches, amusement parks, and resorts outside cities. Railroads carried vacationers to recently established national parks, where they camped or stayed in resort hotels.

Following the Civil War, sports became popular as people became aware of the health benefits of exercise. Athletic clubs, YMCAs, and public playing fields, courts, and gymnasiums provided opportunities for both working and wealthy men to participate in sports. Men and women enjoyed walking, bicycling, roller skating, ice skating, swimming, rowing, and canoeing. By 1900, some schools allowed women to play basketball and engage in gymnastics. Americans enjoyed playing and watching such team sports as football, basketball, and baseball. Spectator sports, like boxing, horse racing, and boat racing, became enormously popular. Professional rowers John Biglin and his brother were superstars of their day. Eakins painted John Biglin when Biglin came to Philadelphia to compete in a championship race on the Schuylkill River.

Learn more at:
America at Leisure
American Memory, Library of Congress
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awlhtml/awlleis.html

and

Picturing America Teachers Resource Book, 11a—Thomas Eakins, *John Biglin in a Single Scull*
http://picturingamerica.neh.gov/educators.php.

Labor

America's Gilded Age and Progressive Era were times of economic uncertainty for workers. Industries grew rapidly, and new workers from Europe crowded into the United States looking for jobs. As a result of the 1893 depression, plants closed, and labor disputes flared as workers sought safer working conditions and more reasonable working hours. Workers formed labor unions like the American Federation of Labor. These groups organized strikes and rallies to force managers to accept their demands. Sometimes, these strikes and rallies became violent, as police and strikebreakers were called in to end them. Chicago's 1886 Haymarket Square Rally turned into a riot. President Theodore Roosevelt introduced reforms to major industries and supported workers' rights. When Woodrow Wilson was president, laws were passed creating eight-hour workdays for railroad workers and curtailing child labor.

Learn more at:
America at Work, 1894–1915
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awlhtml/awlwork.html

The Artists
Although Thomas Eakins was twenty-six years older than William Glackens, they shared similar backgrounds. Both were born and raised in Philadelphia, attended the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and studied art in Paris. After Eakins returned to the United States he never traveled to Europe again, but Glackens continued to take frequent trips to Europe. Both artists went against the prevailing art styles of their day by painting scenes from everyday life.

Thomas Eakins (1844–1916)
Eakins was intent on painting realism with exacting, scientific studies of both perspectives and anatomy. As both an enthusiastic rower and a spectator of rowing competitions, he created nearly thirty pictures of rowers. In addition to studying art at the Pennsylvania Academy, Eakins studied anatomy at Jefferson Medical College to help him draw anatomically correct figures. Throughout his life, he painted his subjects as they actually appeared, rather than how they would like to be seen.

Learn more at:
Picturing America Teachers Resource Book, 11a—Thomas Eakins, *John Biglin in a Single Scull*
http://picturingamerica.neh.gov/educators.php

and

Picturing America on Screen—Thomas Eakins
http://www.thirteen.org/picturing-america/thomas-eakins-john-biglin-in-a-single-scull/#.UmviEJHqTRo
and
American Masters: Thomas Eakins
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/thomas-eakins/about-thomas-eakins/581/

William Glackens (1870–1938)
After studying at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Glackens traveled to Paris and the Netherlands. On his return to the United States, he worked as a magazine illustrator in New York. In this capacity, he sailed to Cuba with the U.S. Army in 1898. By 1904, he was devoting himself to his painting. He was part of the Ashcan School and of a group of realist artists known as The Eight, who drew their subject matter from urban life. Initially, he painted his urban realism in muted tones similar to those of Robert Henri, his friend and teacher. In 1908, following another European trip, Glackens's paintings of everyday life became more like the French Impressionists, with brighter colors and quick brushstrokes that resembled Renoir's.

Glackens attended high school with art collector Albert C. Barnes. In 1912, Barnes sent Glackens to France to purchase works by such artists as Renoir, Matisse, and Cézanne for his collection. The following year, Glackens became chairman of the committee to select American art for the important Armory Show, which played a pivotal role in introducing contemporary European art to Americans.

Learn more at:
William Glackens Biography
The Phillips Collection
http://www.phillipscollection.org/research/american_art/bios/glackens-bio.htm

Preparing to Teach This Lesson

+ Review the lesson plan and the websites used throughout.
+ Locate and bookmark suggested materials and websites.
+ Download and print out documents you will use, and duplicate copies as necessary for student viewing.
+ Students can access the primary source materials and some of the activity materials via the EDSITEment LaunchPad.

Lesson Plan Activities

1. Look and Think Worksheet—Glackens and Eakins
2. Read and Write—“How the Weekend Was Won”
3. Research and Narrate the Haymarket Riot
4. Analyze the impact of objects and how they were made

Lesson Activity 1

Look and Think Activity: Compare Two Artworks

Each student should have a good view of Glackens's *At the Beach* and Eakins's *John Biglin in a Single Scull,* either on a computer, a projection, or as printed color copies. Before discussing these paintings, have students study them silently and write their answers on *Worksheet 1 Look and Think*. Use the worksheet questions and students' answers as a framework for class discussion about the artworks.

After analyzing *At the Beach*, have students observe *John Biglin in a Single Scull* via a short video produced by the Picturing America Organization.

Show students the video about Thomas Eakins on Picturing America on Screen—Thomas Eakins
http://www.thirteen.org/picturing-america/thomas-eakins-john-biglin-in-a-single-scull/#.UmviEJHqTRo

Compare/Contrast Eakins and Glackens

+ What was Glackens most interested in showing in his painting?
A happy scene of ordinary people enjoying a beautiful beach day. Anatomy or exact realism was not his priority.

+ What was Eakins most interested in showing in his painting?
He was consumed with depicting exact realistic anatomy and perspective. He was also interested in rowing techniques. He placed the oar where the professional rower would get the most speed when he dipped it into the water.

+ How are the subjects in both Eakins's and Glackens's paintings alike?
Both feature a man near or in water engaged in sports or leisure activities. Both scenes are in bright sunlight.

+ Tell students about leisure activities that Americans were participating in and watching at the turn of the nineteenth century.

+ Why were so many people able to enjoy the sunshine at the beach or watch Biglin row?

In the next part of the lesson, students will learn how labor laws changed at the turn of the nineteenth century, allowing workers to spend fewer hours at work and more time for leisure activities.

AT THE BEACH
LOOK AND THINK

Name: _____ Date: _____

Spend a few minutes looking at William Glackens's *At the Beach.* Then answer the questions below.

Observe and Infer

1. What seems to be going on in this painting?

2. What is the location?

3. What are the people wearing? Find three very different types of clothes.
   1)
   2)
   3)

4. What do the clothes tell you about when this scene took place?

5. What is the weather like? What clues tell you about the weather?

6. List two things other than the people who are in this painting.

Analysis

7. What is the mood of this scene? How did Glackens suggest this mood?

8. When you glance at this painting, what do you see first? How does Glackens direct your attention to this?

9. Why are so many people at the beach on this day? Why do they have the time to be there?

NEWARK MUSEUM
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Lesson Activity 2

How the Weekend Was Won!

Have students read the document included below about the labor reform movements and the Haymarket Riots.

Questions to Pose to the Class After Reading:

+ If we assume that, traditionally, American Sundays were reserved for worship, and if an 1890s worker worked six days a week, how many hours did the person work each day?

+ If he usually worked during daylight hours, when did he begin work each day and when did he go home?

+ How many hours did he have for sleeping?

+ When did he have enough time to go to the beach?

READING DOCUMENT
HOW THE WEEKEND WAS WON

Did you know? In 1890, when the government first tracked workers' hours, the average workweek was one hundred hours for full-time manufacturing employees and one hundred two hours for full-time building tradesmen.

The Roots of the Eight-Hour-Day Movement

Around the turn of the twentieth century, a popular movement for the eight-hour day in the U.S. rippled from coast to coast. At least fifty years earlier, working Americans were pushing for a ten-hour day standard. But by the 1880s, many Americans called for an even shorter workday of eight hours.

Groups of laborers across the country, from cobblers and garment cutters to machinists and carpenters, began organizing Knights of Labor assemblies, which called for better working conditions. At this time, there were lingering signs of a general depression in the U.S., caused in part by the stock market crash of 1873, when more than five thousand businesses bottomed out. Unemployment and declining wages triggered a growing resistance among laborers, according to Jeremy Brecher, author of *Strike!* Many believed that shortening the workday to eight hours would reduce unemployment by spreading the available work among more people.

In 1886, the Knights of Labor had more than seven hundred thousand members. That year, there was also an explosion of strikes nationwide, and trade unionists took up shorter working hours as yet another demand. Out of both of these growing movements grew interest in a national general strike for the eight-hour day.

May Day Strike and Mayhem

"Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, and eight hours for what you will."—A slogan of the Eight-Hour-Day movement.

May 1, 1886, was the date that unions and other worker organizations set for a national general strike. A number of eight-hour strikes broke out ahead of time, with almost a quarter of a million people participating nationwide. The heart and strength of the turn-of-the-century Eight-Hour movement was in Chicago, where thousands had already won reduced hours. On May 1, ten thousand people struck in

Chicago in a peaceful action. But tensions between law enforcement and the demonstrators escalated as the strikes continued into the following days. At one May 3 action, where unionists attacked men who had crossed the picket line in a local labor dispute, police opened fire, killing four demonstrators. Outrage over the killings forced about a thousand people to take to the streets that night. That demonstration, remembered as the Haymarket Square Rally, also ended in bloodshed.

Haymarket Square Rally

Just as the last speaker of the Haymarket Rally concluded his speech, a dynamite bomb exploded among nearby police ranks, killing one officer. Almost immediately, the police force began firing at the crowd. One demonstrator died and many others were wounded. Eight rioters were arrested for the bombing and tried in an atmosphere of hysteria. Four men were hanged, though there was virtually no evidence connecting them to the bombing.

Sources:

Brecher, J. *Strike!* South End Press Classics, 1997.
Whaples, R. "Winning the Eight-Hour Day, 1909–1919." *The Journal of Economic History*, vol. L, no. 2, June 1990.
Foner, P. *May Day: A Short History of the International Workers' Holiday*. International Publishers, 1986.
By Kelly Whalen

Lesson Activity 3

Creating a Narrative

After reading about the Haymarket Square Rally of May 4 1886, and completing independent research on the event, students will create a diary entry and illustration from the perspective of an attendee of the rally.

They will create a diary that includes the following:

1. Who will you be, a man or a woman? How old are you?
2. What kind of work do you do? Is your work dangerous?
3. How many hours a week do you work? How many hours do you wish you worked?
4. How much do you sleep? Are you tired or hungry?
5. What did you do on your day off? When was that?
6. Why did you go to the rally?
7. Who went with you to the rally?
8. What did you hope would happen at the rally?
9. What happened at the rally? What did you hear, smell, see, and feel?
10. How close were you to the speakers? The policemen? The bomb?
11. Do you know anyone who got hurt or killed?
12. Why do you think the riot broke out?
13. What did you do after the rally? Where did you go?
14. What do you think will happen after this? Do you think anything will change?

To guide students in their research, the following are provided:

+ Reasons for the strikes and rally:
  For Eight Hours—Chicago Laboring Men Emphasize Their Desire for Short Day, *St. Paul Daily Globe.* (St. Paul, Minn.), May 1, 1886. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn90059522/1886-05-01/ed-1/seq-1/

+ Report of the rally and riot: Blood and the Bomb (Haymarket Affair)
  Fort Worth Daily Gazette., May 5, 1886, Image 1, Chronicling America
  http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86064205/1886-05-05/ed-1/seq-1/#words=BOMB+BLOOD

+ The Haymarket Affair—American Memory
  http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award98/ichihtml/

+ *The Story of the Haymarket Affair,* by William J. Adelman
Illinois Labor History Society, http://www.illinoislaborhistory.org/the-story-of-the-haymarket-affair.html

Lesson Activity 4

Three-Dimensional Newark Museum Image
Show students a three-dimensional image from the Newark Museum teaching collection. These objects contributed to the idea of leisure time, however were made my someone working overtime.

Newark Museum Three-Dimensional Teaching Objects:
Women's Hat
Women's Shoes
Candle Mold

Ask students:

+ What is this object
+ Who would have used it?
+ How would it be used?
+ How was it made, and by whom?
+ How would this profession be altered by imposing an eight-hour workday?
+ How would lesiure time be altered if this object was not made?

Extending the Lesson

+ Students may research a favorite American leisure activity from the end of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century. This could be a sport like bicycle riding, swimming, skating, baseball, basketball, or football. They may draw, paint, or make a collage about this activity. Printouts from newspaper illustrations found in Chronicling America can be included in their artwork. Students should write a description of their completed artwork, including the name of the activity depicted and a description of the clothing or equipment used in this activity. How is this activity different today? Tell them to explain why middle-class Americans at this time in history had the time and money to participate in this activity.

+ Have students look at the Newark Museum's three-dimesional image of a women's hat from 1920. Have students describe the typical day for the woman who wore this hat. What did she do during her free time? What she a factory worker or did she stay at home? What did she do in her leisure time?

Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

Resources

Selected NEH EDSITEment Websites

Picturing America
http://picturingamerica.neh.gov

Picturing America Teachers Resource Book, 11a—Thomas Eakins, *John Biglin in a Single Scull*
http://picturingamerica.neh.gov/educators.php

Picturing America on Screen—Thomas Eakins
http://www.thirteen.org/picturing-america/thomas-eakins-john-biglin-in-a-single-scull/#.UmviEJHqTRo

Picturing America Feature Page
Eakins's Vision of American Recreation—"In the Good Old Summer Time"
with links to Eakins Worksheet and Eakins Interactive
http://edsitement.neh.gov/eakins-vision-american-recreation-good-old-summer-time

Picturing America Resources
Student Resource
Repetition in the Visual Arts: Line Drawing of Eakins

William Glackens Biography
The Phillips Collection
http://www.phillipscollection.org/research/american_art/bios/glackens-bio.htm

Library of Congress—Chronicling America
For Eight Hours, Chicago Laboring Men Emphasize Their Desire for Short Day, *St. Paul Daily Globe.* (St. Paul, Minn.), May 1, 1886. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress
http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn90059522/1886-05-01/ed-1/seq-1/

Blood and the Bomb (Haymarket Affair), *Fort Worth Daily Gazette*, May 5, 1886, Image 1, Chronicling America
http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86064205/1886-05-05/ed-1/seq-1/#words=BOMB+BLOOD

Library of Congress: American Memory
America at Leisure
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awlhtml/awlleis.html

America at Work
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awlhtml/awlwork.html

PBS—American Masters
Thomas Eakins Biography
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/thomas-eakins/about-thomas-eakins/581/

Homer and Eakins: American Painters in the Late 1800s
National Gallery of Art
http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/global-site-search-page.html?searchterm=Biglin%2BBrothers&searchpath=%2Fcontent%2Fngaweb%2Fnotfound&pageNumber=1

The Champion Single Sculls (Max Schmitt in a Single Scull), 1871, Thomas Eakins, oil on canvas
Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/34.92

Entry to the Real: The Rowing Pictures
http://xroads.virginia.edu/%7EHyper/INCORP/eakins/rowing.html

Selected EDSITEment Lesson Plans

Everything in its right place: An Introduction to Composition in Painting
Lesson 1: Shaping the View: Composition Basics
Lesson 2: Shaping the View: Symmetry and Balance

Lesson 3: Repeat After Me: Repetition in the Visual Arts
Lesson 4: Follow the Leader: Line in the Visual Arts

EDSITEment Page
Eakins's Vision of American Recreation—"In the Good Old Summer Time"

EDSITEment's *John Biglin and the Single Scull* interactive
http://interactives.mped.org/view_interactive.aspx?id=811&title=

Other Useful Websites

Hours of Work in U.S. History
Economic History Association
http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/whaples.work.hours.us

The Story of the Haymarket Affair, by William J. Adelman
Illinois Labor History Society
http://www.illinoislaborhistory.org/the-story-of-the-haymarket-affair.html

How The Weekend Was Won
PBS—Livelyhood
http://www.pbs.org/livelyhood/workday/weekend/8hourday.html

The Story of the Haymarket Affair, by William J. Adelman
Illinois Labor History Society
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Standards Alignment

NAES–VisArts–5–8, 4 Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

NAES–VisArts–5–8, 6 Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

Common Core ELA Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

Visual Arts Standards
Grades 9–12 Content Standard 4 Understanding the visual arts in relation to history

and cultures
Grades 9–12 Content Standard 6 Making connections visual arts and disciplines

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William James Glackens

(1870–1938)
At the Beach, ca. 1918
oil on canvas 25 1/4{case fraction} x 30 in.

Thomas Eakins

(1844–1916)
John Biglin in a Single Scull, ca. 1873
watercolor on off-white wove paper,
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