

Title	Learning Through Places Mill Town: Taftville
Introduction	Studying the lives of mill workers in Taftville affords children the opportunity to question the roles that labor plays in our personal and public lives. Life in a mill town like Taftville represented a sharp contrast to life in a traditional small farming town. People now worked in profoundly different ways, at different paces, and in different locations than they had only a few decades earlier.
Lesson Objective	By researching the lives of Taftville’s mill workers and child laborers in other cities, students will determine if it is better for children to work or attend school in order to prepare for adulthood.
Grade Level	3 - 6
Introductory Discussion Questions	<p>Q. What is a mill town? A. A town that grew up around a mill. Mill towns were often owned by a single company. That company would build, own, and manage housing, stores, schools, parks, libraries, social halls, banks, and utilities. For more than 100 years, these industries thrived, and many communities were established by industrialists. How is that different from our town today? How might it affect you if your employer owned your house? Your school?</p> <p>Q. How could you make things in a factory without electricity? A. In the 19th century before electricity was invented, manufacturers needed swift moving streams and rivers to generate the power to run the machinery that produced textiles or metal goods. They looked for sites that had rivers, creeks, or streams that could be dammed to create mill ponds. A mill pond was like a reservoir. It ensured that there was always enough water to create power. Raceways were built to channel the water and force it through large water wheels or turbines that turned the belts and pulleys that ran the machinery. Eastern Connecticut became associated with textile production. Wool, cotton, and silk yarn, thread, and fabric were produced in central/eastern Connecticut. Precision manufacturing of metal products, from guns to buttons, were produced in central/western Connecticut. To entice workers, mill owners provided employee housing, recreation halls, libraries, and company stores.</p> <p>Q. If you were a manufacturer and wanted to start a brand-new town, where would the best place be to build it?</p> <p>Q. Why would you choose that place? A. Scenery, weather, close to other things like stores, good land, water</p> <p>Q. What kind of buildings would you need? A. A factory, homes for the workers, stores for the workers to buy food and other things they needed, churches, schools</p> <p>Q. What other types of places would you need? A. Parks, sidewalks, streets</p>

	<p>Q. What kind of workers would you need? A. Many factories hired both children and adults. Sometimes whole families worked in the mills.</p> <p>Article on Child Labor in CT https://www.ctexplored.org/child-labor/</p> <p>Q. What do you think would happen to that town if the factory closed? What might be able to use a large empty factory building? A. Many of these mill (factory) buildings became empty when manufacturing moved out of Connecticut where they could find cheaper labor. Mill buildings across the state are being adapted for new uses, including apartments, condominiums, artist studios, offices, yoga studios, and breweries.</p>
<p>Lesson Activity/ Procedure</p>	<p>Note: This is one lesson taken from “Are children better prepared for adulthood by working or going to school?” a larger lesson plan on WhereILiveCT.org at https://whereilivect.org/are-children-better-prepared-for-adulthood-by-working-or-going-to-school/.</p> <p>1. Begin by exploring Taftville in the student essay, “Mill Town: Taftville in Norwich” available here: https://whereilivect.org/learning-through-places-taftville-in-norwich/</p> <p>What do you see in the photograph? Where was this village built? Why do you think it was built near the water? Where is the largest building? What do you think it was built for? Is it used for the same things it was built for?</p> <p>2. Explain to the class the children in the 1800s would work in the mills. How would they feel if they worked rather than went to school?</p> <p>3. Print out the pictures of child labor.</p> <p>4. Cut them up, and mount each picture on a piece of chart paper.</p> <p>5. Distribute the chart papers throughout the classroom on tables or hard floor.</p> <p>6. Give each student a different colored marker, pencil, or crayon.</p> <p>7. Have the kids investigate each picture and silently annotate around the picture with questions, observations, connections, inferences that the pictures elicit.</p>

	<p>8. Have the students rotate to another picture where the kids can build upon the previous comments.</p> <p>9. The teacher will have his or her own color and travel with the students to push their thinking.</p> <p>10. Hang all posters. The students are to perform a gallery walk to take in the other pictures and see what was added to the original. At this time, they fill in a chart with headings of "Wow!," "I never knew," "I'm still wondering."</p> <p>11. Students are to conclude the lesson by answering the question:</p> <p>Would you want your child to learn 'on the job'?</p> <p>They submit their answer by filling in one of the two following prompts and putting their letter in the Bossperson's mailbox. The teacher will tally the letters.</p> <p>Dear Bossperson,</p> <p>Please consider admittance of my child _____ for employment at the Taftville Mill. It is my greatest hope that at Taftville my child will gain.....</p> <p>Dear Bossperson,</p> <p>I am writing to request the immediate withdrawal of my child _____ from the Taftville Mill. I had hoped s/he would have gained _____ but now I realize the truth. Unfortunately, my child has experienced nothing but: _____.</p>
<p>Lesson Resources</p>	<p>The illustrated children's book <i>Mill</i> by David Macaulay (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1989) explains how New England mills were planned, constructed, and operated.</p> <p>The Taftville/Ponemah Mill Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, U.S. Dept of the Interior.</p> <p>Nomination, National Register of Historic Places, Bruce Clouette, Ph.D., listed 1978.</p> <p>Library of Congress, photos from 1958, exterior and interior</p> <p>Photos of Ponemah Mill converted to apartments</p> <p>Adaptive Reuse of Ponemah Mills in Progress</p> <p>Primary source magazine article on mills and waterpower</p>

	<p>https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Popular_Science_Monthly/Volume_52/April_1898/The_Electric_Transmission_of_Water_Power</p> <p>This lesson plan about Ivoryton was created prior to the new state frameworks and is for older students but it provides some additional background information.</p> <p>Mills, factories, and company towns across the state</p> <p>http://www.norwichhistoricalsociety.org/about/</p> <p>Connecticut Explored</p> <p>Life in a Mill Town</p> <p>Cheney Company Housing Auction of 1937</p> <p>Site Lines: Making Places</p> <p>See the last section of this story for a short discussion about adapting Cheney Silk Mills in Manchester to apartments:</p> <p>https://www.ctexplored.org/connecticut-architecture-explored/</p> <p>Connecticut History.org</p> <p>https://connecticuthistory.org/an-orderly-decent-government-significant-events-developments-1866-1887/</p> <p>Norwich's Volcanic Past</p> <p>Norwich Pottery Makers</p> <p>Source: John D. Nolan, <i>History of Taftville, Connecticut</i></p>
<p>On Your Own Enrichment</p>	<p>A few of these activities are adapted from <i>10 Ways to Get Kids Excited About Preservation</i> by Emily Potter, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2013.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore Your Family History. Ask your parents where they grew up, went to school, or got married. Where did your family come from originally? Why did they move here? Look at old photographs for clues about where your family lived in the past. 2. What types of jobs do your family members have? Make a list of all the jobs you discover in your family stories. Did any of them work in a mill or factory? What did they make in the factory? Does anyone in your family work in a factory now? 3. Find out about factories in your town. Look at this infographic <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many factory jobs does Connecticut have today? 2. How many manufacturing companies are there? 4. Use Google to find if there are factories in your town. Choose one. What does it make? What kind of building is it in? Does it look like Ponemah Mills? Is it in the center of town or in a

	<p>separate area that has other industrial buildings? Are there houses for its workers nearby?</p> <p>5. Is there a mill building like Ponemah Mills in your town? What is it being used for now? Is it still a factory? Is it empty? Has it been recycled for a new use?</p> <p>6. What would you do with an empty mill building? What would you use it for? What would it look like? Make a poster and make a speech to your class. Pretend that your class is the city or town council for your town. See if you can convince them to approve your project.</p>
Word Wall	Factory, mill, industry, industrial
State Standards Alignment	<p>HISTORY Change, Continuity, and Context HIST 3.4, 3.5. Supporting question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did industries such as whaling, manufacturing, and technology create Connecticut's history and contribute to America's story? <p>Causation and Argumentation HIST 3.11 Supporting question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have science, technology, and innovation affected the development of towns and cities in Connecticut (aerospace, insurance, manufacturing, etc.)? <p>GEOGRAPHY Human Population: Spatial Patterns and Movement GEO 3.7, 3.8, 3.9 Supporting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who controls the use of land and resources? • How are rivers and resources in Connecticut used to develop communities and economic systems? • What attracts a person to a town or city today? How is that different from what may have attracted them there in the 1800s?