

Grade Level **3-8**

Class Periods **2**

## Goals/Objectives/Student Outcomes:

Students will:

- Understand the many ways people support themselves and their families.
- Learn about the different tools, utensils, and costumes used by people in their jobs.
- Realize the many different kinds of compensation people receive for different kinds of work.
- Learn about the types of preparation needed to secure jobs and where such preparation can be obtained.
- Understand the roles that age, gender, race, and other biological factors play in securing and keeping employment.

## Materials:

1. Newspaper want ad sections, old and new
2. City directories, old and new
3. Time to look at television programs
4. College and other school catalogs
5. Photographs showing people doing work
6. Magazines, old and new
7. Business advertisements that show products

## Background:

The activities by which people make a living can be divided into several categories, including professions, occupations, jobs, and work. A profession requires relatively specific training over a longer period of time. People may participate in occupations for a long period of time, but occupations generally require "on-the-job" rather than formal training. Jobs may require no training at all, and may last for short periods of time. Work is unpaid effort without which life would be more difficult. Examples of work include mowing lawns, shoveling snow, washing dishes, vacuuming floors, ironing laundry, and other household tasks that must be done but for which we receive no special pay.

Education and training necessary to make a living have changed a great deal. In earlier cultures people learned their skills from their parents or other relatives, or as apprentices to skilled workers. Today fewer people learn how to make a living from older relatives or friends and many professions and occupations require graduation from high school, college, or graduate schools.

Seasonal variations are less as important in industrialized countries than in agricultural societies. Today the daily routine for different sorts of professions, occupations, and jobs are so varied as to defy generalization. We still have to make a living, but we do so in ways that vastly differ from those in previous generations.

## Procedure:

This thematic lesson plan is intended to introduce this particular topic to students. The activities are intended to introduce students to the process of inquiry that can be applied to the study Iowa history. In many cases the same activities can be used to explore the topic in a variety of Iowa history time periods. This lesson plan can also be used in conjunction with other topical areas in this curriculum.

These thematic lesson plans underscore basic skills such as reading, writing, communicating orally, and collecting reference sources. Many of the activities will give students practice in using higher skills as in reading, writing, communicating orally, collecting reference sources and using a library; distinguishing between primary and secondary sources; using charts and timelines; and developing vocabulary. The teacher can introduce higher level skills through these activities such as collecting information from a variety of sources through observation and questioning; compiling, organizing, and evaluating information; comparing and contrasting; drawing conclusions or inferences from evidence; considering alternative conclusions; making generalizations; recognizing points of view; understanding how things happen and how things change; recognizing how values and traditions influence history and the present; grasping the complexities of cause and effect; developing a chronological sense; and understanding events in context.

## Activities:

1. Discuss the definitions of jobs, occupations, professions, and work. What are the similarities and the differences?

2. Portray in two- or three-dimensional form an occupation or profession that you would like to pursue as an adult.
3. List differences between work in each of the four seasons.
4. Write the daily schedule of an adult worker.
5. Review the want ads in a daily newspaper and compare the types of jobs for which there seems to be the most demand.
6. List occupations that were common a hundred years ago but which no longer exist.
7. List occupations that are common today but which did not exist a hundred years ago.
8. Prepare a report on job-related courses that can be taken in the high school in your district and explain how the courses can help a person get or keep a job.
9. Examine issues of old newspapers and city directories to see what occupations and jobs are mentioned.
10. Read historical biographies from your county to see how individuals described their work.
11. What institutions of higher education exist in your state? What professions require a degree from a two-year college; a four-year college; a graduate school?
12. Make a chart of the number of years of training or education needed to gain employment in at least ten selected professions and occupations.
13. Prepare a bulletin board display of illustrations showing a variety of people at work.
14. List the types of jobs that have been associated with physical danger.
15. List occupations that traditionally have been performed by women; by men. Discuss the reasons for these differences based on gender. Have these occupations always been primarily performed by one gender or the other?
16. Compare the products and services that result from a variety of jobs and list them as necessities or as luxuries.
17. Watch a television show that portrays occupation and work situations and write evaluations of whether the portrayals are realistic.
18. Prepare a model fictional resume that would impress a prospective employer.
19. Pair into teams and role play a job interview situation.
20. Find examples of paintings and music that have a work or occupation theme.
21. Prepare a report on geographical variations in occupations and discuss reasons for the differences.

## Assessment of Outcomes:

1. List occupations by which people make a living in your town or county.
2. Draw a chart that shows which occupations in your area are predominantly performed by women, and why; those that are predominantly performed by men, and why.
3. Display models or drawings of tools, utensils, and machines used in occupations that were common a hundred years ago.

4. Prepare sample advertisements to recruit workers for a job and sample advertisements to sell work products.
5. Interview a worker and write a report about the training and skills involved in the job.

## Extensions and Adaptations:

Most of the activities listed under procedures can be easily adapted to meet the learning needs of most students at various ages. Many of the listed activities can be used as art, music, writing, math, or science projects. Be sure to draw on teachers within your school and resource people in your community. The folklore section of this curriculum provides a list of community resource ideas.

## Resources:

Contact the Iowa History Resource Center at the State Historical Society of Iowa for a list of books, videos, organizations and ideas for studying Iowa history. Write to: Education Coordinator, State Historical Society of Iowa, 600 East Locust, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.