

The World of Work

Suggested Props

Chef's hat, briefcase, policeman's badge, stethoscope, carpenter's tools, textbooks, money, paycheck, typewriter

Facts to Share

1. In the mid-1800s, more than one-third of the U.S. factory labor force was made up of children. These children often worked 72 hours each week and earned as little as 11 cents per day. By 1900, 1.7 million children in the United States between 10 and 15 years of age were employed, most in mines and textile factories.
2. As part of his New Deal legislation, President Franklin Roosevelt proposed the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938. This set an initial minimum wage of 25 cents per hour, with gradual mandated increases to 40 cents per hour. It also set the maximum work week at 40 hours, with time-and-a half for overtime work. Once this legislation went into effect, more than 750,000 workers received an immediate increase in pay and more than a million others now had more time to spend with their families.
3. Prior to his career as an entertainer, Bob Hope was a boxer in Ohio. He fought under the name of Packy East.
4. Writer Ernest Hemingway began his career working with the Red Cross Ambulance Corps during World War I.
5. When he was 19 years old, Malcom X worked as a shoe shiner in New York City. He once shined the shoes of Duke Ellington.
6. President Lyndon Johnson worked as a school teacher in Texas before getting into politics.

Trivia

1. What was Eleanor Roosevelt's position following her years as First Lady? Answer: She was appointed to the U.S. delegation to the United Nations.
2. Describe a carhop's job. Answer: To deliver food and beverage to customers sitting in cars at fast food restaurants. Sometimes, carhops wore roller skates.
3. Shirley Chisholm worked as a nursery school teacher before her election to what government position? Answer: U.S. Congresswoman. She was the first African-American woman to serve in the House and ran for President during the 1960s.
4. Fill in the blank. The Peter Principle states that, "Every employee tends to rise to his highest level of ____." Answer: Incompetence
5. What did President Jimmy Carter grow on his farm in Plains, Georgia? Answer: Peanuts
6. What was Eubie Blake's occupation? Answer: Pianist and composer of ragtime, jazz, and popular music

7. Prior to becoming a national leader in the Civil Rights movement, what was Martin Luther King Jr's job? Answer: Baptist minister
8. What was the occupation of Sandra Day O'Connor? Answer: First female Supreme Court Justice, appointed in 1981
9. When World War II ended, General Dwight Eisenhower became president of which New York University? Answer: Columbia
10. After astronaut John Glenn left his position with NASA, to what government position was he elected? Answer: U.S. Senator from Ohio in 1974
11. What was Henry Kissinger's occupation? Answer: U.S. Secretary of State and National Security Advisor in the Nixon and Ford administrations
12. Before he became famous, this singer drove a truck for the Crown Electric Company in Memphis, Tennessee. Early hit songs included "Blue Suede Shoes" and "Jailhouse Rock." What was his name? Answer: Elvis Presley
13. Describe the job of a cowpuncher. Answer: Someone who herds and brands cattle on a ranch
14. Before becoming a Civil Rights leader, what was Rosa Park's occupation? Answer: Seamstress
15. Which band leader composed songs such as "Sophisticated Lady," "Satin Doll," and "It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing"? Answer: Duke Ellington
16. This U.S. President once worked as a time-keeper on the Santa Fe Railroad. As president, he made the decision to drop the atomic bomb during World War II. Who was he? Answer: Harry S Truman
17. What was the occupation of Vince Lombardi? Answer: Head football coach of the Green Bay Packers for eight years
18. What was the occupation of Frank Lloyd Wright? Answer: Architect
19. After leaving his job with NASA, this famous astronaut became a professor at the University of Cincinnati. He is best known for being the first man to walk on the surface of the moon. What is his name? Answer: Neil Armstrong
20. Describe the job of a Hot Walker. Answer: This person walks a race horse around after a race, prior to returning the horse to his stall.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you recall your first job? What did you do? How old were you?
2. What was your primary occupation in your career? How did you choose this line of work? Did you enjoy your job?
3. If you could have chosen another line of work, what would your occupation have been? Why?
4. Which is more important, enjoying your profession or earning a lot of money?
5. At what age should teenagers begin working? Do you think it is important for teenagers to work outside the home?