

Name _____

Date _____



Labor Day

"American Workers, We See Them"

This factory life is not easy,
Working 12 hours a day, six days weekly.
I clock in at five, then I'm done around seven,
And sometimes I think I'd earn more money begging.
You wouldn't believe how little I'm paid,
Two dollars a week, that's 30 cents a day.
And my boss might make me stay late,
Or reduce my wages, but not the length of my day.
And the work is dangerous, using heavy machinery,
People getting hurt or killed happens too frequently.
And if there's an accident and I need a doctor,
Who will pay my medical bills when I barely have a dollar?
I'd better not get hurt, but I'd better work quick,
Or the factory owner might hit me with his stick.
I forgot to say I'm Susan, and I'm 16 today,
This isn't how I hoped that I would spend my birthday.
I work long hours, and I work hard,
And I used to feel lucky that I get to have a job.
But I've been talking with my friends, and it seems to us,
There's a lot that's unfair that we want to discuss.
And people are gathering in groups called unions,
It's starting to feel like the start of a movement.
Because this factory life is not easy,
Working 12 hours a day, six days weekly.

The nation pays tribute on Labor Day

To the creators of so much of the nation's strength,
Prosperity, wellbeing and freedom,
American workers, we see them
(2x)

Across the US, working conditions were poor,
This sparked a movement to fight for more.
Better pay and better treatment,
And the right to have a workday that was decent.
In New York City, the Central Labor Union
Aimed to help all men and all women
By working to improve their working condition,
Provide a better system for earning a living.
The first Labor Day was planned in 1882
By the Central Labor Union, or the CLU.
Very few workers joined in at first,
Because they were scared about missing work.
But by the end of the day,
10,000 people marched in the parade.
The holiday caught on as years passed by,
And by 1885 it was celebrated far and wide.
Unionized people kept gathering like brothers,
Because they knew there was strength in numbers.
They used strikes to demand change,
Saying we won't work until you do what we say.
Some of these strikes turned violent,
In Pullman, Illinois, workers started a riot.
The army was sent in to break that strike,
But the workers proved that they were willing to fight for what's right.
And for US President Grover Cleveland,
This was the reason, meant to appease them.
He made it official, a day to remember,

We celebrate every first Monday in September.

The nation pays tribute on Labor Day

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Prosperity, wellbeing and freedom,

American workers, we see them

(2x)