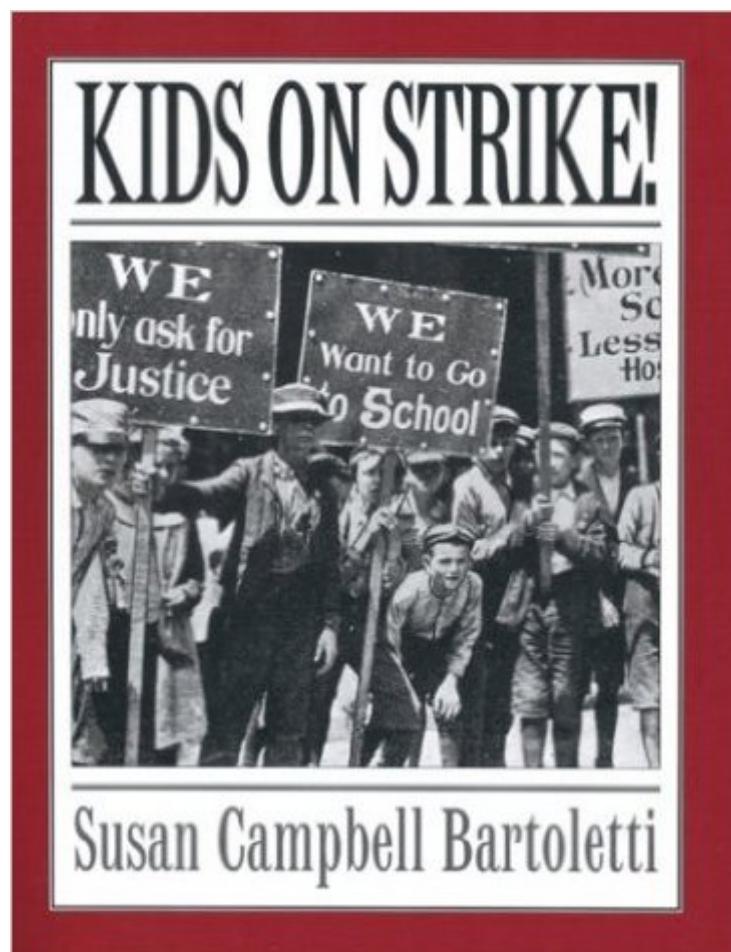


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# Kids On Strike!



## **Synopsis**

By the early 1900s, nearly two million children were working in the United States. From the coal mines of Pennsylvania to the cotton mills of New England, children worked long hours every day under stunningly inhumane conditions. After years and years of oppression, children began to organize and make demands for better wages, fairer housing costs, and safer working environments. Some strikes led by young people were successful; some were not. Some strike stories are shocking, some are heartbreaking, and many are inspiring – but all are a testimony to the strength of mind and spirit of the children who helped build American industry.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (August 25, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0618369236

ISBN-13: 978-0618369232

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 7.2 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #356,082 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #142 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Money & Saving #255 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Cultural Studies > General #266 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1900s

Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

## **Customer Reviews**

Kids on Strike is an excellent introduction to U.S. labor history. The book is well-researched and enhanced by the addition of a chapter-by-chapter bibliography. Bartoletti uses her journalism background to weave an eloquent and powerful narrative. Even adults will learn something new. I, for instance, was completely unaware of how a teen-age girl led a widespread (and successful) rent strike in New York City in 1907. A great addition to school libraries.

This is a book about the travails of boys and girls in the labor force in America. It starts in the 1800's with the early beginnings of the American industrial revolution. We begin this harrowing journey in

Lowell, Massachusetts in the Textile mills. Lowell was the first large-scale industrial center designed for the purpose. I imagine that my hometown of Lawrence, Mass was the next. I know that neither of them was the first textile manufacturing community but they were the first communities "planned" specifically for that purpose. We follow child laborers from the textile mills, to the streets as Messengers, Bootblacks, and Newsies; then as rent strikers and coal miners and breaker boys and into the garment industry and then back to Lawrence and the "Bread and Roses Strike of 1912." We touch on black children picking cotton and hit briefly on the migrant kids in the fields and the orchards. It is pretty rugged stuff but certainly not as rugged as it must have been for those poor children living through this period of American history. Sadly much of this history has been put aside in the United States. It seems that talking about working people and their hardships in America is un-American - even Communist. This book points out the part that children have played in the construction of the middle class in America. It is a very interesting perspective. And it tells a story that can't be denied or trivialized. This stuff all happened and it happened to children. It is a sad story. It is another sad story in a long line of American tragedies. Near the end of this book the author places "A Timeline of Federal Child Labor Laws." This Timeline is also interesting. I will synopsize it here because it makes a huge point that deserves emphasis and repeating: In 1916 and 1919 the first child labor laws were passed and signed into law by Woodrow Wilson. Fourteen is decided upon as the minimum age for a child to work in an industry and not more than eight hours in any one day. Children who work in the street trades or in agriculture are exempted and not protected under this legislation: In 1918 and 1922 these minimal provisions for the protection of children were declared to be unconstitutional. In 1924 an amendment to protect children in the workplace is proposed. It is rejected and not ratified. In 1929 and 1933 children are being used in place of adults in American industries at cheaper wages. The National Child Labor Committee lobbies the government with the suggestion that a minimum working age for children will keep kids in school and make jobs available for adults. The author does not say whether this tactic was successful or not, but I imagine that it was not. In April and May 1933 there was a series of children's strikes in Pennsylvania. (I have no doubt that there were similar strikes elsewhere also.) In May 1933 these striking children win pay increases and minimum wage laws - for children. In 1935 these pay increase and minimum wage laws for children are declared unconstitutional. In 1938 The Fair Labor Standards Act prohibits the employment of children under fourteen and under sixteen while school is in session. This law has other minimum wage provisions and hazardous work considerations. The author does not say that these laws have been declared unconstitutional as of yet - but I have no doubt that someone out there is working on it. You can bet on that. It may

even be that these laws have already been "adjusted." The Supreme Court has a rather interesting history. It supported injustice when it came to slavery; it supported injustice when it came to Native Americans; it supported injustice when it came to children in the labor force; it supported injustice when it came to adults in the work place; it supported injustice in regard to contract rights; it supported injustice in regard to the rights of women; it supported injustice when it came to the rights of states; it supports injustice in its established Military; it supported injustice in establishing the voting franchise - it seems that the only time it supports justice is when it is dealing with an issue that the court of public opinion demands justice. It does seem to me that over the decades it has been more important what the American people think than what the Supreme Court thinks. If the vast majority of the American people think opposite to the Supreme Court you can be sure that the Supreme Court will change its mind. Richard Edward Noble - The Hobo Philosopher - Author of: "America on Strike" A Survey of Labor Strikes in America

My seven-year-old daughter is reading this book now. This morning, she said to me, "Daddy, I'm so glad you got me this book from the library. But there's one thing I don't like: those companies were so mean! And why? Because of money, that's why! But those people aren't any better than other people are. It's just the way the black people used to be treated, it wasn't fair. People should be treated nicely, not just the rich people, that's what I think." So if you want to nurture a sense of social justice (and maybe a little social rebellion) in your child, this seems to be a good book. I can't wait to read it when she's done.

This is a wonderful book! Lots of pictures, that are sometimes heartbreakingly, and a lot of information that you would not learn in school. It's actually meant to be a Young Adult book but it is so well written you won't even notice.

I selected this book as part of a reading unit on youth and the workforce. This book gives great background on the various kid and adult led movements. Very accessible. My social studies team members liked it.

My children had to read this for summer reading. They didn't care for the book itself but we were impressed with the quick shipping

This book had a lot of good info for a high school research paper about the newsies and the strike in

NYC.

Exactly as promised. Thanks!

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