Labor Day

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1. When is Labor Day celebrated in the United States and Canada?

○ a.) First Monday of September

○ b.) First Monday of October

○ c.) Last Monday of August

2. Where was the first American Labor Day celebrated?

○ a.) Chicago

○ b.) New York City

○ c.) Toronto

3. What year was the first American Labor Day celebrated?

○ a.) 1880

○ b.) 1882

○ c.) 1894

4. What was one reason workers gathered on Labor Day?

○ a.) To demand fair wages

○ b.) To celebrate Christmas

○ c.) To go on vacation

5. What dangerous jobs did children do during the Industrial Revolution?

○ a.) Teaching

○ b.) Working in coal mines

○ c.) Playing sports

6. What event in 1886 led to violence between workers and police?

○ a.) The Great Depression

○ b.) The Haymarket Square Riot

○ c.) The signing of Labor Day

7. Who signed the law making Labor Day a federal holiday in America?

○ a.) Franklin D. Roosevelt

○ b.) Grover Cleveland

○ c.) Theodore Roosevelt

8. In what year did Canada create its Labor Day?

○ a.) 1890

○ b.) 1894

○ c.) 1900

9. What law did Franklin D. Roosevelt sign in 1938?

○ a.) A law for a six-day work week

○ b.) A law for an eight-hour work day

○ c.) A law for child labor

10. What is important to remember about children on Labor Day?

○ a.) They always have a day off

○ b.) They used to work every day

○ c.) They celebrate with picnics

Transcript

How's this for a strange idea: a day off from work in honor of work itself? Actually, that is what Labor Day, celebrated in the United States and Canada on the first Monday of every September, is all about. The first American Labor Day was celebrated in New York City on September 5th, 1882, as thousands of workers and their families came to Union Square for a day in the park. It was not a national holiday but had been organized by a union to honor workers and their hard efforts with a rare day of rest, halfway between July 4th and Thanksgiving. There were picnics and a parade, but there were also protests. The workers had gathered, not just to rest and celebrate, but to demand fair wages, the end of child labor, and the right to organize into unions. During the period known as The Industrial Revolution, many jobs were difficult, dirty and dangerous. People worked for twelve hours, six days a week, without fringe benefits, such as vacations, health care and pensions, and if you were young, chances are you were doing manual labor instead of your ABCs and fractions. Children as young as ten worked in some of the most hazardous places, like coal mines or factories filled with boiling vats or dangerous machines. Trying to win better pay, shorter hours and safer conditions workers had begun to form labor unions in America and Canada, but the companies they worked for often fought hard to keep unions out and to supress strikes. At times, this led to violent battles between workers and business owners with the owners often backed up by the police, or even the military. In the following years, the idea of Labor Day caught on in America with official celebrations reaching 30 states. But then came the violent Haymarket Square Riot of 1886, which led to the deaths of several policemen and workers in Chicago and the execution of four union leaders. After that, many labor and political groups around the world had begun to mark Haymarket Square on May 1st, which became known as International Workers' Day. In 1894, President Grover Cleveland signed the law making Labor Day a federal holiday in America, only days after he had sent 12,000 soldiers to end a violent railroad strike that resulted in the death of several people. The original September date was kept, partly to avoid the more radical associations of May 1st. Canada also created its Labor Day in 1894. But, in spite of this new holiday, it would be a long time before the changes that workers wanted became a reality. In 1938, during the Great Depression that left millions without jobs, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a law calling for an eight-hour work day, a five-day work week, and an end to child labor, some of the first federal protections for American workers. As America and Canada celebrate Labor Day, most of the two countries' children enjoy a day off from school. But it is important to

remember that there was a time that everyday was a labor day for children in America and Canada, and unfortunately, the same fact remains true for millions of children around the world today.