

# Teacher Guide to Student Worksheet 6 – Chores and Daily Work in the Home

## Introduction:

Living in a coal patch was hard work for everyone. The miner worked hard in the mine or the coke yard and also at home. The wives started their days early with fixing lunch buckets and then worked laboriously doing the housework, sewing, cooking, gardening and child raising. Children also were expected to work. Until the child labor laws were enforced, many children went to work in the mines in order to help the family income. Boys and girls had many chores they had to do around the house and in the garden. Miners often had large families of 8 to 10 children and the older children would help take care of younger children, too.

1. Read the Introduction above.
2. Read stories from the residents of the coal patch.
3. View the pictures provided.

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**NOTE:** The oral histories in Set 1 and Set 2 are different, so the student answers will contain some of the possible answers listed below, but not all of them.

Answer the following questions:

1. Describe what a typical workday in a coal patch was like.

Work days started very early in the morning. The men took their packed lunch buckets off to work at the mine. The women had many household chores to do – baking bread, preparing meals, cleaning the house and laundry. The children also helped with the daily chores, carrying coal or water, helping with the ironing and washing, and watching younger children.

2. Describe some of the chores that had to be done in the coal patch. As it relates to:

- a) Food/meal preparation  
The men's lunch buckets had to be made each morning, baking bread, killing and plucking chickens, canning.
- b) Taking care of the house  
Washing floors, making blankets, beating rugs, emptying chamber pots.
- c) Washing clothes

A lot of time was spent cleaning clothes to get the coal dust out. Women did all of the washing by hand and then hung the clothes up to dry.

3. Describe how the miners bathed after their workday before company bathhouses were built.

They heated water on the stove and filled up a large tub in the kitchen with the water. The miners would wash parts of himself at a time, and then someone else would wash his back. This was done every day as soon as the miner came home.

**On the back of this sheet:**

**Look over the previous questions, introduction and stories and create a 2 to 3 sentence summary statement to explain to the class about the chores and daily work in a coal patch.**

**Choose two pictures to put on the class display to represent some of the chores and daily work in a coal patch.**

**The mining families worked very hard. The miners worked long days in the mines. The wives also worked hard keeping the houses clean, washing the clothes, preparing and cooking food. There were so many chores that children often stopped going to school in order to help out at home or to go and work in the mine.**