

Child Labour

You are going to read four texts about child labour all over the world. Read the texts and then do the comprehension and vocabulary studies.

Text 1

She was thirteen, she said, when she was hired for the first time. It was May. She left the house with her sister and her mother at two in the morning and walked to Finntown, stopping at another sister's house for tea on the way. They walked in their bare feet with their boots over their shoulders. At Finntown station they put on their boots and caught the train to Strabane at eight in the morning. There were thirty of them.

The farmer would go through the long list of things he wanted the girl to do: could she milk, wash, cook, *churn? And the mother would answer yes whether she could or not: the money was needed at home.

They were paid £5 or £6 at the end of six months.

Colm Toibin

* make butter

1. When do you think the events that the writer describes took place?

2. What country do you think this happened in?

3. Do you think the girl's mother was cruel?

4. Is child labour common nowadays? In which countries does it happen?

Text 2

Two years ago at the age of seven, Anwar started weaving carpets in a village in Pakistan's province of Sindh. He was given some food, little free time, and no medical assistance. He was told repeatedly that he could not stop working until he earned enough money to pay an alleged family debt. He was never told who in his family had borrowed money nor how much he had borrowed. Any time he made an error with his work, he was fined and the debt increased. Once when his work was considered to be too slow, he was beaten with a stick. Once after a particularly painful beating, he tried to run away, only to be apprehended by the local police who forcibly returned him to the carpet looms.

Human Rights Watch www.hrw.org/children/labor.

1. Do you find this account shocking? Explain how you feel.

2. Why do you think this happens in some countries?

3. What should world governments do to stop child labour?

Vocabulary Check

Find words in text 2 that have a similar meaning.

making cloth or fabric

a section of a country

help

again and again

something claimed but not
proved

money owed

mistake

Punished by being made to pay
a sum of money

especially

stopped/arrested

by force

machine for making
cloth or carpet

Text 3

Fill in the gaps in the following text with a word from the list.

militias

denies

punish

exploited

underage

recruited

captured

effort

slavery

Some children have been _____ in military raids on their villages and taken into household _____ by their captors. Dinka and Nuba children have predominated among those seized and _____ in this way. The government _____ the existence of the problem and has made no _____ to stop the practice or to _____ those who treat Sudanese children as slaves. In addition, _____ boys are forcibly _____ into the army or government-sponsored _____.

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Discussion

- What effect does this type of exploitation have on children?
- What ways do you think it might affect their adulthood?

