

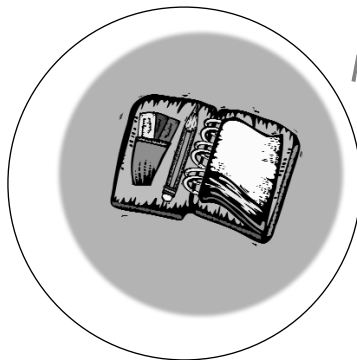
# Compréhension de texte

## RÉSUMÉ



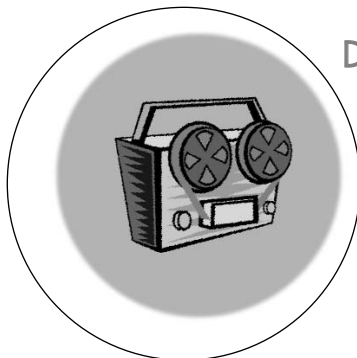
Il s'agit d'une compréhension de texte à partir d'un texte en anglais sur le travail des enfants. Un questionnaire vous est proposé.

## MATÉRIEL NÉCESSAIRE



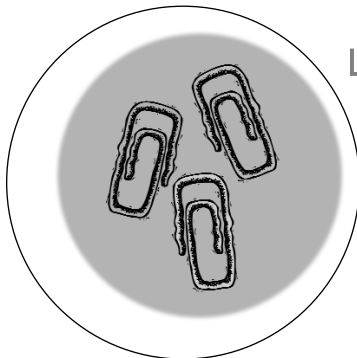
- Texte
- Questionnaire

## DÉROULEMENT



1. L'élève lit le texte attentivement.
2. L'élève répond aux questions.
3. Une discussion en anglais suivra la compréhension de texte, permettant aux élèves de partager leurs opinions et réactions par rapport au contenu du texte.

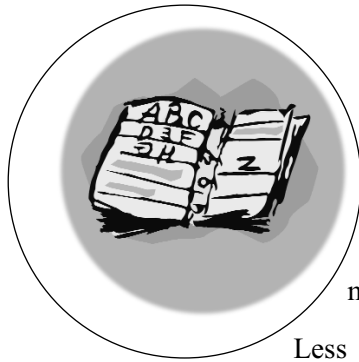
## LIENS AVEC LE PROGRAMME DE FORMATION



**Domaines généraux de formation :** environnement et consommation; médias, vivre ensemble et citoyenneté.

**Compétences transversales :** exploiter l'information ; résoudre des problèmes ; exercer son jugement.

# Compréhension de texte



## Child Labour and the Rights of Youth

Adapted from Stop Sweatshops: An Education-Action Kit

Taken from Maquila Solidarity Network

[www.maquilasolidarity.org](http://www.maquilasolidarity.org)

Many of us remember media reports of young children sewing Nike soccer balls in Pakistani sweatshops for six cents an hour. The national and international media coverage of Nike's use of child labour focused world attention on sweatshop abuses in the garment and sportswear industries.

Less well-known are the stories of teenage girls, often single mothers, sewing clothes in maquiladora factories in Central America and Mexico for major North American retailers like Wal-Mart, Gap and Northern Reflections.

It's true that some of these teenagers (12 and 13 year olds) are working illegally. But others (15 or 16 year olds) are often legal employees, pressured to work excessively long and illegal hours that prevent them from finishing high school.

Whether the underage workers or legal employees, these young people suffer the same treatment at the hands of their employers: 12 to 18 hours work days, often without overtime pay; verbal, physical and sometimes sexual abuse; low wages and unhealthy working conditions.

### Why do companies employ children and young people?

Garment manufacturers in Central America's free trade zones, Mexico's maquiladora factories and Asia's export processing zones; claim they prefer to hire young girls and women because they have nimble fingers. Workers suspect that children and young people are hired because they are less likely to complain about illegal and unjust conditions. And more importantly, they are less likely to organize into unions.

In fact, child labour is often directly linked to the low wages paid to adult workers, restrictions on the right to organize, and the lack of affordable childcare. In Bangladesh, many child labourers in the garment industry are the children of women working in the same factories. If women workers received a living wage and/or their employer provided daycare; their children would not have to work.

In the jeans manufacturing center of Tehuacan, Mexico, child labour co-exists with full employment. The reasons: wages are kept artificially low to attract foreign investment, and independent unions are not tolerated.

In order to meet their family's basic needs, working parents are forced to send their underage children to work in the maquilas. They cannot afford to send them to school. And by illegally employing workers, employers in Tehuacan are able to avoid paying into the government's social security (health care) program.

## Compréhension de texte (suite)



### Sarah's Story

Sarah, is a community leader in one of the shanty communities on the outskirts of Tehuacan, Mexico. Although Sarah would have preferred that her children went to school, the low wages paid to adult members of her family forced her to encourage her underage children to seek work in the maquilas.

*You see lots of young people working in the maquilas around here. Stand outside of the factories in the city center, even at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, and you can see really young children heading home.*

*Last year the government passed a law, which all the maquila owners supported, to push kids off the street. The result was that they weren't able to make money washing car windows or selling things anymore. Of course that pushed more of them to the maquilas looking for work.*

*The kids that have it the worse are those without identity papers. They end up in the clandestine factories, where they get paid even less and treated worse than others.*

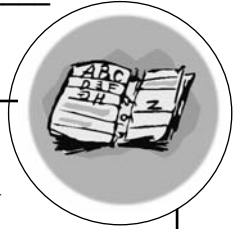
*Children around here have to work. They don't have any option, and neither do their families. Look at us. Three of my children are working in the maquilas. They all started when they were 13 and 14. We couldn't have made it with out them. It costs so much for food that we needed all four incomes just to survive, just to have the basics, beans and rice and maybe chicken and meat once every two weeks. Doctors, medicine, and education- everything cost more then we can afford.*

*Now that there are only two kids at home, I hope things can be different. I hope these two children can stay at school, and finish grade six. The older ones are helping out.*

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Group : \_\_\_\_\_

## Child Labour and the Rights of Youth

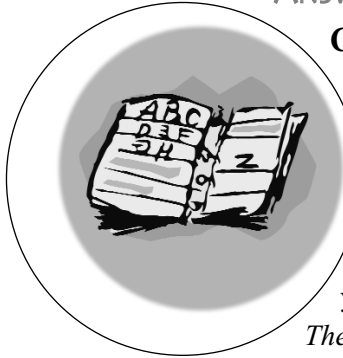


1. The media focus on sweatshop abuses had the effect of uncovering another disturbing reality. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What's the most apparent negative consequence of working in maquiladora for 15 or 16 year olds?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What are the working conditions in maquiladora for underage workers and young legal employees?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. a) How do garment manufacturers and maquiladora factories owners justify their use of children and young people? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
b) Do workers think the same thing? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. In accordance with the text, what would be the best solution for eliminating child labour?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Why do working parents send their children to work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What does the expression "heading home" mean? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Why do maquila owners support the government law that kids must be pushed off the street?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. According to Sarah's story, which category of children endured the worst conditions?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. a) How many of Sarah's children are working and at what age did they start working?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
b) Why does Sarah send them to work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Compréhension de texte (suite)

## ANSWERS

### Child Labour and the Rights of Youth



1. The media focus on sweatshop abuses had the effect of uncovering another disturbing reality. What is it?  
*The stories of teenage girls, often single mothers, sewing clothes in maquiladora factories in Central and Mexico for major North American retailers.*
2. What's the most apparent negative consequence of working in maquiladora for 15 or 16 year olds?  
*They are pressured to work excessively long hours that prevent them from finishing high school.*
3. What are the working conditions in maquiladora for underage workers and young legal employees?  
*12 to 18 hour work days, often without overtime pay; verbal, physical, and sometimes sexual abuse; low wages and unhealthy working conditions.*
4. a) How do garment manufacturers and maquiladora factories owners justify their use of children and young people?  
*They say they are hiring them because of their nimble fingers.*  
b) Do workers think the same thing?  
*No, they suspect that children and young women are hired because they are less likely to complain about illegal and unjust conditions. They are also less likely to organize into unions.*
5. In accordance with the text, what would be the best solution for eliminating child labour?  
*The employer should provide a living wage to women workers and/or daycare for their children.*
6. Why do working parents send their children to work?  
*Because the wages are so low that parents can't meet their family's basic needs and can't afford to send their children to school. They are forced to send their underage children to work in the maquilas.*
7. What does the expression "heading home" mean?  
*Returning home*
8. Why do maquila owners support the government law that kids must be pushed off the street?  
*Because this law has the effect of forcing kids to look for work in the maquiladoras.*
9. According to Sarah's story, which category of children endured the worst conditions?  
*Kids without identity papers. They end up in the clandestine factories where they get paid even less and treated worse.*
10. a) How many of Sarah's children are working and at what age did they start working?  
*Three of her children are working and they all began when they were 13 and 14 years old.*  
b) Why does Sarah send them to work?  
*She said that it cost so much for food, doctors, medicine and education that they needed all four incomes just to survive, just to have the basics: beans, rice and maybe chicken or meat once every two weeks.*