OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

LOCATION

Building(s): Middle Schools
Classes/Grade Level(s): ELA; 6th grade +

ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author: *Kids on Strike!* / Susan Campbell Bartoletti

Genre: Juvenile Non-Fiction (U.S. History / Labor Movements)

Lexile Reading Level: 990L

Total number of pages: 208 pages

Book Summary (abbreviated, bulleted list or link to a book summary)	**Potentially Objectionable Content (list all categories and at least one example, referenced with a page or chapter number)**
• A nonfiction account of child labor in the United States during the late 1800s and early 1900s, focusing on the young workers who organized and participated in strikes for better working conditions. • Covers several major historical strikes involving children—coal breakers, textile workers, newsboys, and mill girls—showing how kids challenged unsafe workplaces, unfair wages, and long working hours. • Highlights notable events such as the 1903 "March of the Mill Children" led by Mother Jones and the 1899	**Harsh Working Conditions / Injury:** • Descriptions of dangerous factory and mine environments where children were injured or exposed to unsafe equipment and dust (early chapters on coal breakers and textile mills). **Historical Violence / Conflict:** • Some references to clashes between striking workers and company owners, including police involvement or threats during labor disputes.



Newsboys Strike in New York City. • Includes personal stories, photographs, newspaper excerpts, and firsthand accounts that bring the experiences of working children to life. • Shows how youth activism helped spark changes in labor laws and contributed to the national movement for workers' rights. • Encourages students to consider themes of justice, courage, activism, and the power of collective action.	**Child Exploitation:** • Child labor is inherently upsetting; the book details long hours, low pay, and neglect from employers. **Poverty / Family Hardship:** • Accounts of children working to support their families in extremely difficult financial conditions. **Intense Emotional Content:** • Scenes of hunger, exhaustion, unfair punishment, or fears expressed by young workers may be emotionally challenging for some readers.

Book Reviews (1-2 link(s)) *Note: teacher is not responsible for broken links*

- **Kirkus Review:** Praises Bartoletti's vivid storytelling and use of primary sources to illuminate the history of child labor.
  https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/susan-campbell-bartoletti/kids-on-strike/
- **School Library Journal Review:** "An engaging and eye-opening look at the bravery and resilience of young workers in America's past."
  https://www.slj.com/review/kids-on-strike

ABOUT THE CLASS

Rationale for the Literature Selection (in addition to standards): (To be completed by the teacher or team)



This text introduces students to an important historical era through compelling firsthand accounts of children their age. It supports instruction in analyzing informational texts, understanding historical context, and exploring themes of activism and human rights. Students can draw connections between past and present issues related to labor, fairness, and civic responsibility. The narrative and visual elements make complex history accessible to 6th-grade readers.

The Ohio Department of Education ELA Standards (list priority standards *only and* abbreviations of the main ideas of the priority standards) Link to Ohio's ELA Standards

RI.6.1 – Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.6.2 – Determine a central idea of a text and explain how it is conveyed through key details; provide a summary distinct from personal opinions.

RI.6.3 – Analyze how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a nonfiction text.

W.6.7 – Conduct short research projects using multiple sources to explore historical or social topics.

W.6.9 – Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

L.6.4 – Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words using context clues, word parts, and reference materials.

ALTERNATIVE TEXTS

What alternative texts would allow students to meet the same objectives? (1-2 texts, title/author; Note: these texts must also have lit. reviews forms associated with their selection)

1. *Free Lunch* — Rex Ogle

Memoir • Poverty • Child hardship & family labor pressure

- Though not about industrial-era labor, it is a **real nonfiction account of a child navigating economic exploitation and survival**.
- Strong thematic connection to **economic injustice affecting kids**, similar in spirit to *Kids on Strike!*.

2. *Fast Food Nation* — Eric Schlosser

Nonfiction • Labor conditions • Worker exploitation (modern)

- Investigates the **modern food industry and labor exploitation**, especially of vulnerable and low-wage workers.
- While not about children specifically, it shares a focus on **unsafe conditions, unfair wages, and systemic labor abuse**.
- A strong pair with *Kids on Strike!* for studying **labor history vs. modern labor issues**.

SIGNATURES (embedded jpegs of authentic signatures are fine OR download/print form and obtain traditional signatures)

Teacher: _____ Date:_11/25/25

ELA Department Chair: _____ Date:_____

Building Principal: _____ Date: 11/25/25

District Curriculum Administrator: _____ Date: 11/26/25