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All work and no play: A boy stitches soccer balls in Pakistan.

GOAL: ENDING CHILD LABOR

The campaign to stop the mistreatment of kids turns up the heat and gets results

Carefully guiding a needle that's longer than his tiny fingers, a young boy stitches together the leather pieces of a soccer ball. He sits crouched in the corner of a hot, airless shed for 12 hours. For his long day's work, he will earn 60 cents.

The boy is one of more than 200 million children who work at hard, sometimes dangerous jobs all over the world. Child labor exists in two-thirds of the world's nations. From Indonesia to Guatemala, poor children as young as 6 are sent off to work. Often they are mistreated and punished for not working hard enough. Sometimes they are sold as slaves.

In Pakistan, where 80% of the world's soccer balls are made, the situation is especially bad. There are 11 million to 12 million working children in that Asian country. At least half of them will die of starvation or disease before they reach their 12th birthday.

But a campaign to stop child-labor abuse has paid off. FIFA, the soccer world's governing organization, announced that, from now on, its seal of approval will guarantee the balls are made under proper working conditions. FIFA's decision, says U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, "is a major step in eliminating child labor from the soccer-ball industry."

KIDS HELPING KIDS

Reich thanked the public for FIFA's decision. "You turned up the heat, and you got results," he said in a speech to the Child Labor Coalition, an organization that is trying to end the abuse of young workers. Reich also congratulated Craig Kielburger, 13, of Canada.

Craig has traveled the world fighting for kids' rights. "I don't play a lot of soccer," says Craig, "but I have many

friends who do. This change is important to them. It is just the beginning. But a strong beginning."

Craig believes kids can make a difference. He has this advice for them: "Write letters to companies and government officials. Put pressure on leaders to make changes and to stop the misuse of children."

A U.S. PROBLEM TOO

The mistreatment of child workers is not just a foreign problem. Since colonial times, the U.S. has counted on children to lend a helping hand in its fields and factories. In the 1800s, children as young as 7 worked in textile mills for 12 hours a day.

In 1938 a federal law was passed that set child-labor guidelines, limiting work hours for kids and requiring safe conditions. But the law is sometimes ignored. For instance, close to 1 million kids in the U.S. work for farmers. From sunup to sundown, they harvest and haul. Other kids work near dangerous machinery or in other hazardous conditions.

One solution to the child-labor problem in poor countries is education. "The future of these countries," says Secretary Reich, "depends on a work force that is educated. We are prepared to help build schools."

Education is helping to make the world a brighter place for 12-year-old Aghan of India. When he was 9, Aghan was kidnapped from his home and sold to a carpet maker. Aghan's boss was very cruel. "I was always crying for my mother," he recalls. Aghan's dream was to learn to write so that he could send letters to his parents. Aghan was rescued from the factory by a group that opposes child labor. Now he is living in a shelter in New Delhi and is hard at work—learning to write.

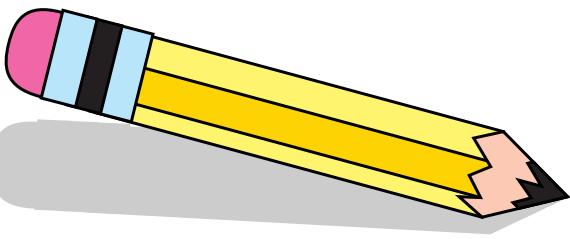
Reader's Response

- 1** Did the article help you understand what life for a child laborer is like? How?

- 2** Was the campaign to stop child-labor abuse effective? Why do you think as you do?

- 3** Did the article convince you that child labor is a problem that needs to be solved? Why or why not?

- 4** How would you go about trying to end child labor in the world?

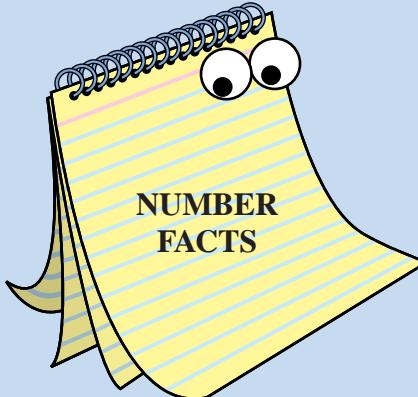


Writer's Response

- 1** What do you think the author's purpose was in writing this article?

- 2** Why do you think the author used direct quotations from Craig Kielburger and Aghan instead of just summarizing what each said?

- 3** Why did the author include information about child labor in the United States? How were you, the author's audience, affected by the information?



The author of the article clearly felt strongly about the topic of child labor. The author wanted the reader to know how serious it is and wanted to persuade the reader that something needs to be done.

This type of writing is called a persuasive article. The author's purpose is to persuade the reader that

action is needed. One way an author can persuade is by offering the reader number facts, called statistics. Using numbers can sometimes help a reader understand just how serious a problem is. For example, the author points out that 11 million to 12 million children are working in Pakistan. That's a lot of children. However, the next number fact is even more startling—at least half of them (that's five to six million children) will die before they are twelve. The use of specific numbers helps the reader understand how serious the problem is. Saying that many children work in Pakistan and many of them will die is not as effective as giving numbers.

Since the author is trying to persuade the reader that something needs to be done and that the reader can do something to help, including number facts can help convince and motivate the reader to take further action.

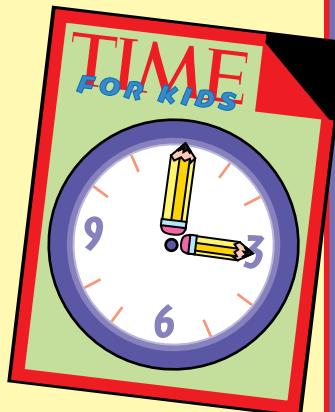
W R I T E T I M E

Follow Craig Kielburger's advice. Write a letter to a company or to a government official. Convince them to work to end the misuse of children. Use some information from the article, and be sure to include number facts.

Create a persuasive poster about ending child labor. Try to include a number fact from the article on your poster.

A public service announcement is a short persuasive ad for television or radio that encourages people to do something. Write a script for a public service announcement about ending child labor. Videotape it and show it to your class.

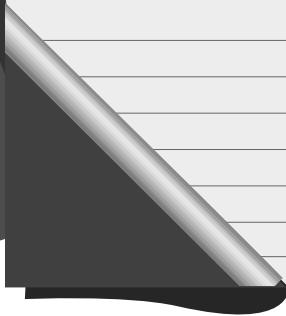
Make a list of some of the reactions and feelings you had as you read about child labor. Write a short paragraph describing your feelings and reactions. Tell whether you want to help end child labor and what you think you could do.



Persuasive

A nonfiction reading & writing program

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Identifying Voice

Use the following graphic organizer to analyze the author's voice. You may also use this graphic organizer to analyze your own writing.

Remember, voice is the way the author talks about a subject, revealing the author's personality as well as his or her beliefs and feelings about the subject.

Topic: _____

Audience: _____

Purpose: _____

Words to Describe the Author's Voice	Examples from the Text