

Reading Andrew Curry's "Why We Work"

Andrew Curry's "Why We Work" (pp. **23-27**) is a good essay to look at before we start doing more 'research' because in this 'journalistic' article he uses different sources to build his argument about work in the U. S. economy. While not 'cited' like in a formal essay, he uses the same techniques of 'quotes' and 'quote sandwiches' to present evidence to back up his argument. As we turn our focus to Queens history (where work is one of the topics you will be able to explore), this essay provides some good ideas about ways to make connections between different periods and 'think historically.'

● In groups of 3:

- First, spend 10 – 12 minutes reading the essay.
- Now, look at the beginning of the essay (p. **23**) for the thesis of this essay.

1) **What is Curry's opening argument about work in the U.S. today?** State the argument using a correct quote that introduces the thesis, quotes it with a citation. Then put it in a complete 'quote sandwich' by explaining it in your own words.

- In this article, Curry uses a good deal of historical information (and quotes from historians and social scientists) to build his case. Quickly skim the 'evidence' paragraphs on pp. **24-25** (top).

2) As a team, try to gather one fact about the way Americans worked in 3 of the periods that are covered in the essay. (Together, we will make a 'portrait' of 'Work in America' for all the periods):

- The Pre-Industrial Age, early 1800s (p. **24**)
- The Industrial Revolution (p. **24**) (late 19th century to early 20th century)

- The 1930s (p. **25** , bottom)
- The 1940s and WWII (p. **26**)
- The 1950s (p. **26**)
- The 1970s (p. **26**)
- Today! (p. **27**)

**Try to choose one fact for 2 periods (paragraphs) that surprised you. (There are many unexpected ideas in this article).

Period:

Fact about work / Surprising idea

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- Now look over the end of the article (p. **27**).

3) Challenge Question: What is the ‘paradox’ of the article in the relationship between home vs. work life today? (What does Curry suggest about the home vs. worklife relationship in pre-industrial America vs. now? **Has it come ‘full circle’?** **Why or why not?**

(~30 minutes)

● **Reporting Out** – Choose a reporter who will be able to give your group’s answers to the questions above.