

Handout 1 - Teenager Timeline

- Until the later part of the 19th century, children usually began work, on their family farms, in factories or even as miners, as soon as they were physically capable. Once the child hit puberty, s/he was considered an adult. In the mid-19th century millions of children under 15 worked 50-70 hour weeks.
- **1852** - Massachusetts becomes the first state to mandate basic education for all people (Mississippi becomes the final state to agree to compulsory education in 1917)
- **1900** - Only 28 states have laws regulating aspects of child labor



Teenage mill worker, 1911

- **1910-1940** - The U.S. is a leader of the “High School Movement,” developing a system of secondary education available to all citizens.
 - **1910**: **19%** of 15-17-year old population in high school
 - **1940**: **73%** of 15-17-year old population in high school
- **1920s** - The terms “youth” and “adolescence” begin to appear as sociological categories to describe a period of life between “childhood” and “adulthood”

Teenager Timeline (*continued*)



Boston teens, 1940s

- **1938** - Congress passes the *Fair Labor Standards Act*, mandating that “youths” under the age of 16 may only work outside of school hours
- **1940s** - *Life* and other lifestyle magazines begin to use the term “teen-age”

- **1956** - The *Wall Street Journal* estimates that teenagers spend between \$7 and \$9 billion annually
- **Late 1950s - Early 1960s** - The rise of “Teen Idol” entertainers, who were mostly white, male singers performing a “safe,” TV-friendly version of Rock and Roll
- **February 9, 1964** - The Beatles make their American debut on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in front of an estimated 73 million viewers, more than a third of the American population at the time



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