



NEW BEDFORD FISHING HERITAGE CENTER

Discussion Prompts- Labor Unrest

Activity Overview: Students will explore and respond to primary source material and oral history excerpts related to labor unrest and the New Bedford fishermen's strike of 1985-1986.

Grades: This activity was created for students in middle or high school and should be adjusted accordingly.

Background Information:

For more information on the 1985-1986 New Bedford fishermen's strike, [click here](#).

Activity Directions:

Give students the opportunity to look through the "Labor Unrest" section of the [Changing Way of Life Digital Exhibit](#). The following discussion prompts will provide guidance and talking points to discuss this content with students:

- As a city representative how would you have handled being asked to speak in front of the striking fishermen? Explain.
- Industrial sized companies have been known to grow their companies by enforcing heavy labor practices on their workers with oftentimes little compensation. These types of work environments are what inspired the strikes in the 60s-80s which resulted in union creations. Given the lack of unions in the fishing industry today, how do you think the fishing industry workers are protected from these unfair working conditions? Do you think they are protected from unfair working conditions? What are some modern day practices that could lessen the risks, the stress, and create a more supported work environment for each role in the fishing industry?
- After exploring the primary sources found within Labor Unrest, explain how the New Bedford labor movement compared to [insert labor movement being studied here].
- Extension activities: Have students compare and contrast the reasons why and ways in which fisherman and fish cutters made their voices heard when they were being treated unfairly in the 1980s and 2020s using articles and audio clips from the [Labor Unrest](#) section of the digital exhibit as well as [The Standard Times](#) + [The Public's Radio](#)

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