

**INFORMATION SOURCES**

**Fact sheet: Wages through the ages: a brief history of pay**

[worksite.actu.org.au/wages-ages-brief-history-pay/](https://worksite.actu.org.au/wages-ages-brief-history-pay/)

**Fact sheet: The Harvester judgement and Australia's minimum wage**

[worksite.actu.org.au/the-harvester-judgement-and-australias-minimum-wage/](https://worksite.actu.org.au/the-harvester-judgement-and-australias-minimum-wage/)

**Fact sheet: Eight hour day: work, rest and play**

[worksite.actu.org.au/eight-hour-day-work-rest-play/](https://worksite.actu.org.au/eight-hour-day-work-rest-play/)

**Fact sheet: Union achievements**

[worksite.actu.org.au/union-achievements/](https://worksite.actu.org.au/union-achievements/)

**ACTIVITY 1: HISTORY OF WAGES IN AUSTRALIA QUIZ**

- Using [Worksite](https://worksite.actu.org.au/) as your information source, how many hours and days per week did most Australians work in the 1800s?
  - Eight hours a day, three days a week
  - 14 hours a day, 6 days a week
  - 10 hours a day, 5 days per week
- According to the webpage, [Wages through the ages: a brief history of pay](https://worksite.actu.org.au/wages-ages-brief-history-pay/), which of the following conditions were Australian workers entitled to in the 1800s?
  - Sick leave
  - Holiday pay
  - A minimum wage
  - None of the above
- Looking at the webpage, [Eight hour day: work, rest and play](https://worksite.actu.org.au/eight-hour-day-work-rest-play/) in what year did workers win the right to an eight hour day?
  - 1800
  - 1856
  - 1891
- Looking at these webpage's, [Wages through the ages: a brief history of pay](https://worksite.actu.org.au/wages-ages-brief-history-pay/) and [Eight hour day: Work rest and play](https://worksite.actu.org.au/eight-hour-day-work-rest-play/), which group of workers stopped work in Melbourne to march in support of an eight hour day? Why did they ask for an eight-hour day? What did they achieve? Write a short paragraph outlining what happened.

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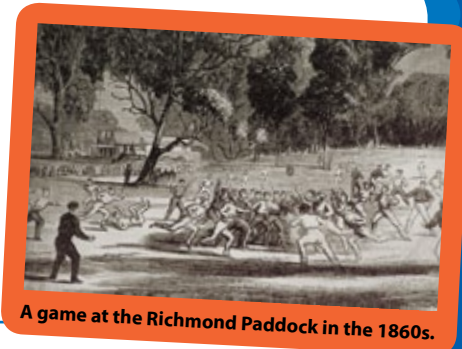
- Today, what is the standard working week in hours for a full-time employee?

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**ACTIVITY 2: DIARY OF A WORKER IN THE 1850s**

Imagine that you are an Australian worker in the 1850s who has just won the eight-hour day. You now have more free time to yourself – what will you do with it? Write a diary entry describing your first Saturday afternoon off – did you decide to spend the time learning about something that interests you? Or perhaps playing a match of a new sport called Australian Rules Football?



A game at the Richmond Paddock in the 1860s.

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**ACTIVITY 3: AUSTRALIA'S MINIMUM WAGE AND THE HARVESTER JUDGEMENT**

By 1856 Australian workers had won the right to an eight-hour day, however they still did not have the right to a minimum wage. This meant an employer could pay the workers a weekly wage that may not be enough for them to provide shelter to their families and buy food and clothing. In Melbourne in 1907 a court judge decided that this was not fair and decided to do something about it.

Read the webpage [The Harvester Judgement and Australia's minimum wage](#) and complete the following activities:

1. In 1907 a court judge decided that an employee's wages should be based on what was fair and reasonable rather than what the employer was offering?

True or False

2. Why did the judge choose The Sunshine Harvester Company to use as the test case for Australia's minimum wage?



A Sunshine Harvester

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3. List three of the trade unions that employees at The Sunshine Harvester Company were members of?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. The judge set the Australian minimum wage at 2 pounds, 2 shillings per week in 1907 – the amount an average worker needed to pay for food, shelter and clothing. How much is current Australian minimum wage per week? Do you think this is a fair amount?

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We welcome comments and suggestions from students and teachers about Worksite. Contact us at [worksite@actu.org.au](mailto:worksite@actu.org.au)