

# Mining - Children in the Mines

## Source Analysis & Decision Making

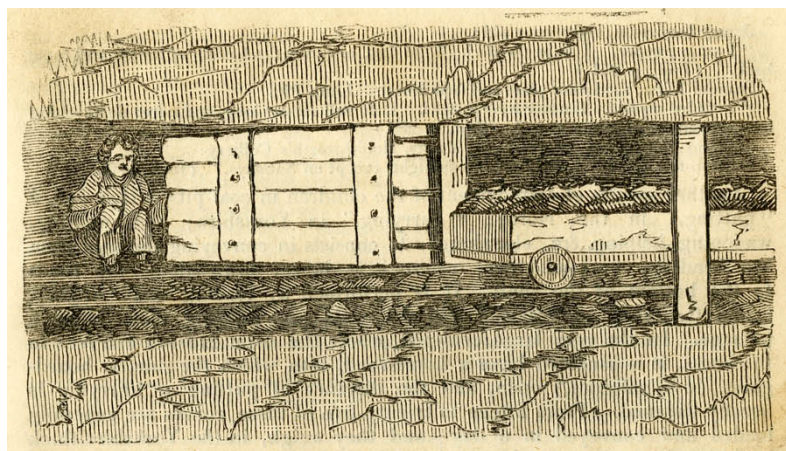
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### Source 1

William Richards, aged twelve, coal-cutter: works with his father. Has been at work ever since he was four years old. Was taken to work by his father, because times were poor, and he was worth an extra tram". A tram or dram is the privilege of a cart of coal, as additional work.

from Mr Franks, report of the Collieries of South Wales, p20

### Source 2



A trapper, their job was to open and close doors to allow coal carts through and air to circulate

### Source 3

*“instances appear, however, by no means rare, where infants of six and even five years of age, are taken to attend the trap-doors, and often at seven or eight to assist an elder child in pushing the wagons. In all instances, the children remain as many hours, and not unfrequently more, in the pits than the adults.”*

*“The reasons for the infliction of this cruel incarceration of very young children may be summed up: –*

*1<sup>st</sup> - In the assertion that unless early inured to the work and its terrors, the child would never make a collier.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> - That the thick coal pits could not possibly be worked with a profit otherwise; as after a certain age, the vertebrae of the back do not so easily conform to the required posture.*

*3<sup>rd</sup> - That their parents cannot afford to keep them idle. It is universally remarked that the parents themselves bring their children at their early age of their own accord, and are frequently checked by benevolent employers.”*

from Mr Franks, report of the Collieries of South Wales, Children in Mines and Collieries, 1839, p21

## Source 4



William Woods, aged fourteen, who was a coal hewer in the east of Scotland:-

*“I have been three years below; I hew the coal and draw it to the pit bottom. Was obliged to go, as father could work no longer; he is upwards of sixty.”*

**from Mr Franks, report of the Collieries of South Wales, Children in Mines and Collieries, 1839, p21**

## Activities

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Having read the sources above carefully:

1. What is the youngest age that a boy would be allowed to work in the mines?
2. What job does a trapper do?
3. Complete the table below using the sources above.

<u>Arguments for young children working in the pits</u>	<u>Arguments against young children working in the pits</u>

4. Add any other arguments you can think of to the table.
5. Shade any arguments that are economic (to do with money) one colour and any that are to do with social (to do with people, rights, etc.) another colour.
6. Should children be allowed to work in the mines? Explain your answer by giving at least three reasons.