What's a day in your life like today? You probably go to school and do your homework. At home, you do a few simple chores, like doing the washing up or making your bed. You might complain about not having enough free time to relax.

In the past, children your age probably had a little more to complain about. Throughout much of history, many didn't go to school because they had to help all day at home or on the farm. Their parents taught them what they knew, but very few adults could read or write. The Aztec people, who lived from 1200 to 1473 in present-day Mexico, were unique. The Aztecs believed that education, or learning, was important. Every child went to school, although boys and girls learnt different things.

In addition to going to school, Aztec children were expected to help with chores at home. Girls learnt to weave at the age of about four, and they learnt to cook at the age of about 12. Boys, on the other hand, learnt occupational skills.

By the 19th century, many people began moving into cities to find jobs. In cities, there was no longer a need to have children work on the farm. So they began working in factories instead. In England, many children worked long hours six days a week. And they earned very little money in return. Children started working from a very young age, sometimes at only five or six years old. They gave all of their money to their parents to help pay for the family's needs.

Today, most children go to school. Sometimes teenagers work part-time jobs to earn money. But many use that money for enjoyment, not to help their families. Think about it! Even if you work and go to school, you still have time to relax or spend time with your friends. Next to children from the past, most children nowadays have it pretty easy!

1. What culture thought that education was very important?
2. Why couldn't some parents teach their children at home?
3. At what age did children learn to weave?
4. How often did children work in factories?
5. At what age did children begin working in factories?
6. What did children do with the money they earned?

LIVEWORKSHEETS