

DSA Labor 101

Outline for Moderators

This outline provides an overview for workshop moderators, with a brief summary of each section of the workshop and indications of when the handouts are to be distributed. The time allotments apply to the 90 minute Labor 101 workshop; for the 45 minute workshop (or any shorter modified Labor 101 workshop), the steps would be the same, but the time allotted for each step would be altered.

1. Introduction (3 minutes)

Moderator should introduce why this topic is important for their chapter, mention recent interactions with unions, mention that labor is one of national DSA's three priorities.

2. Initial Discussion (10 minutes)

Ask group to break into pairs to briefly consider this question: When have you personally seen or experienced a boss's arbitrary power ?

Moderator: When workers are organized in the workplace to push back against management's arbitrary power, that's unionism.

3. What's So Essential About the Working Class? (15 minutes)

Moderator: What does the term "working class" mean to you?

[Distribute **Handout #1**– "Defining the Working Class."]

[Distribute **Handout #2**, an excerpted version of Vivek Chipper's article "Why We Still Talk About the Working Class."]

4. Unions: what they are and what they do (40 minutes)

[Distribute **Handout #3**: "Snapshot: American Unions Today," and **Handout #4**: "Why Unions Matter."] Discussion of content.

5. The Labor Movement's Decline (10 minutes)

Moderator: Union membership has been declining for decades, and has really taken a nosedive since the early 1980s. Why? [Some historical background]

6. Renewed Hope? (5 minutes)

Moderator: But American labor may be on the cusp of a revival, as we are lucky to be living in a time when it looks like there may be a resurgence of union struggles.

7. What You Can Do (7 minutes; includes general summing up)

Moderator: Has anything we've talked about made you think about your own work life and how you might like to change it? [Like organizing a union, or getting a different job, or simply talking with co-workers about resisting something stupid.]

[Distribute **Handout #5**: "How to Help Build a Dynamic, Democratic Labor Movement."]