

The Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution was a period in Britain's history which took place from the late 1700s to the late 1800s. During this time, Britain found itself rapidly moving from a predominantly agricultural way of life to one which was far more industrialised.

What Was Life like before the Industrial Revolution?

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, most people in Britain lived on farms; they raised their own livestock and grew their own produce.

The fastest mode of transportation was by horse-drawn cart and only a small percentage of the population lived in large towns.

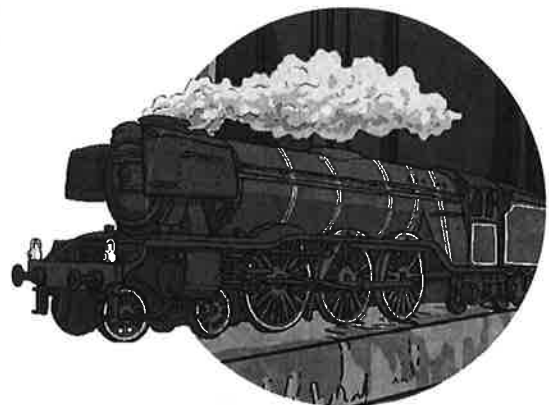
In addition to this, crafts, such as pottery and weaving, were completed at home by individuals and families.



What Made the Industrial Revolution so Successful?

While many historians debate the exact reasons for the success of the Industrial Revolution, there were several defining factors. Firstly, several key inventions were created during this period which led to many tasks suddenly becoming a lot easier. For example, James Watt perfected the previous work of Thomas Newcomen to create an efficient steam engine. Previously, machines had relied on water power therefore they could only be built near bodies of water. Now, with the new steam engine fuelled by coal, factories could be built all over the country.

Furthermore, canals, railways and roads were developed. Due to the vast improvement in transport links, a trip from London to Manchester (which would have taken four days in 1700) took only four hours by 1880! This also meant that produce, textiles and coal could now be transported across the country at a far greater speed.

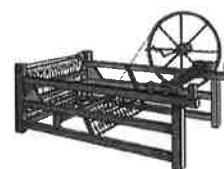


Important Inventions

Alongside the steam engine, there were a number of other key inventions during the Industrial Revolution. In 1764, the spinning jenny was invented. It was a machine that weaved cotton into cloth far quicker than a person could manage to do so on their own. To further transport links, the first route on the London Underground was built in 1863 and, by 1885, Karl Benz had invented the first motorised car.



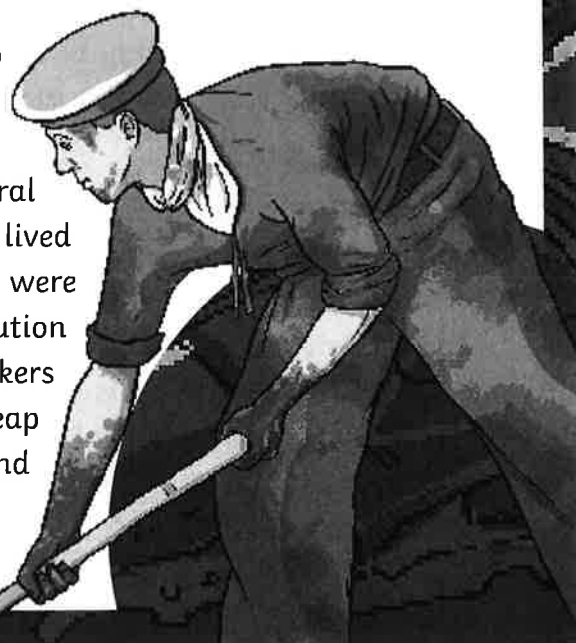
The origin of the name of the spinning jenny is unknown but has led to much speculation. Some people believe that the inventor had a family member named Jenny who inspired the invention. Others have guessed that 'jenny' was a slang term for an engine or generator.



What Was Life like during the Industrial Revolution?

Everyday life in Britain changed dramatically during the Industrial Revolution. Before the steam engine, most goods were made by hand. However, the introduction of steam power now made it possible to invent machines which were much faster at working than people were. As a result, large factories were built and people moved from working at home to working long shifts in dirty, noisy and dangerous conditions.

During this time, there were fewer laws to protect people and children as young as five years old would be sent to work in factories. People were no longer living in small rural communities. Instead, the majority now lived in large, industrialised towns. These towns were often overcrowded and were filled with pollution from the nearby factories. To afford their workers somewhere to live, factory owners built cheap houses; these were often very close together and rarely had running water.





Rights for Child Workers

Young children who worked in factories were often subjected to incredibly dangerous conditions. Because of this, the government introduced a Factory Act in 1833. This act said that any child working in a factory had to be given two hours of schooling each day. The act also stated that children under the age of nine were not allowed to work in a factory and that all children were forbidden from working at night. Although children were now receiving an education, children between the ages of nine and thirteen were still allowed to work up to nine hours per day.

By the late 1800s, the steam engine meant that lots of Britain's goods were now made in large factories. Soon, the invention of the telephone and the introduction of a widespread sewer system would lead Britain into a new era of technological revolution.

Questions

1. Draw four lines to match each event with the impact it had on Britain.

There was a vast improvement in transport links.

James Watt perfected the design of the steam engine.

The spinning jenny was invented.

The government introduced a Factory Act.

Factories could now be built in places away from water.

Cotton could now be turned into cloth far quicker.

Children who worked in factories were given two hours of schooling.

Produce could be transported across the country at a far greater speed.

2. During the Industrial Revolution, why did houses have to be built so quickly? Tick one.

- because the builders were needed for other jobs
- because there were lots more people needing houses
- because children were now working in the factories
- because giant factories were being built over the old houses

3. Look at the first paragraph.

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'mainly'.

4. Name one factor which led to the Industrial Revolution's success.

5. Fill in the missing words.

Children between the ages of _____ and _____ could work for up to nine hours per day.

6. The government's Factory Act gave working children two hours of schooling each day.

Do you think that this was fair?

Explain your answer.

7. During the Industrial Revolution, many jobs that were usually completed by people began to be completed by machines instead. How do you think this made people feel?

Explain your answer.

8. Would you like to have lived during the Industrial Revolution? Tick one.

Yes

No

Explain your answer fully using references from the text.

9. What similarities are there between life during the Industrial Revolution and life today?

10. Explain how the government's Factory Act could have changed to further improve the lives of children.

How did life change for Child workers during the Industrial Revolution?

Step 1: Create a summary of the paragraph in this box;

Between 1750 and 1805, a series of new inventions meant that workers who had spun thread and woven cloth in their homes went out of business. These men and women had to find work in other occupations, or go to work in the new factories and mills. Of course, it was not just adult men and women who went to work in the new factories and mills. It was also children, most factories employed children from the ages of six or seven.

Step 2: Answer the questions below using the information below.

1. **Had there always been child workers?**
There had/ had not always been child workers. This is because.....
2. **Who were the child workers?**
The child works were.....
3. **Why did mill owners want to employ children?**
Mill owners wanted to employ children for a number of reasons. For example,
4. **What did the child workers do?**
The child workers did a number of things, for example they.....
5. **Was the work hard?**
The actual job was/was not hard. However.....

Challenge

1. Do you think it was unusual for children to work before the factories came along?
2. Explain the significance of 1833.
3. Do you think children today should work or go to school? Explain.

Had there always been child workers?

No – children had always been expected to work. If their parents were farm labourers they might, for example, have been expected to pick weeds or gather crops. The children of home textile workers were also given simple tasks to do, although the spinning and weaving was left to older, more skilled workers.

Was the work hard?

The actual jobs that the children were given were not difficult. What was hard were the long hours, the strict discipline, and the danger involved in some of the tasks.

Who were the child workers?

- Orphans
- The children of adult mill workers

Further Challenge

Below is the minimum wage you can be paid in England depending on your age. Write a letter to the Government explaining why you agree or disagree with National Minimum wage.

25 and over	£8.21
21 to 24	£7.70
18 to 20	£6.15
Under 18	£4.35

Why did mill owners want to employ children and what did they do?

One of the reasons is machines like the 'water frame' were automatic and could be operated by children. However Some businesses hired children because they were cheap, and worked hard. In some cases, the businesses treated the children no better than slaves. They kept them locked up and forced them to work long hours. In other cases, the businesses felt they were helping the children out by feeding them and keeping them from starving. Children who worked often received little or no education.

Britain passed one of the first child labor laws in 1833. It made it illegal for children under the age of 9 to work.

Children in the coal mines often worked from 4 am until 5 pm. Some child workers worked all day pulling wagons of coal up small tunnels just a few feet tall. Many young girls worked in match factories, the harsh chemicals would often cause them lose their teeth.

They completed the following tasks in mills;

1. Bringing up a new basket of cotton to be put onto the spindles.
2. Cleaning the machinery so that it runs smoothly.
3. Reaching under the machinery to repair broken threads.
4. Passing cotton to an adult worker who is putting it onto the spindles to be spun.
5. Sweeping up cotton from the floor.



Source A

'My boy, Edwin, was well known for being lively and straight before he went to the mill, but after three years he was weak in his knees and it was so bad that he could hardly walk. Many people told me to take him away but I was a poor man with a large family and needed his wages.'

A father from Keighley, Yorkshire

Factory Act of 1833

After many terrible years of poor conditions for children in factories, the government decided something must be done to make things better.

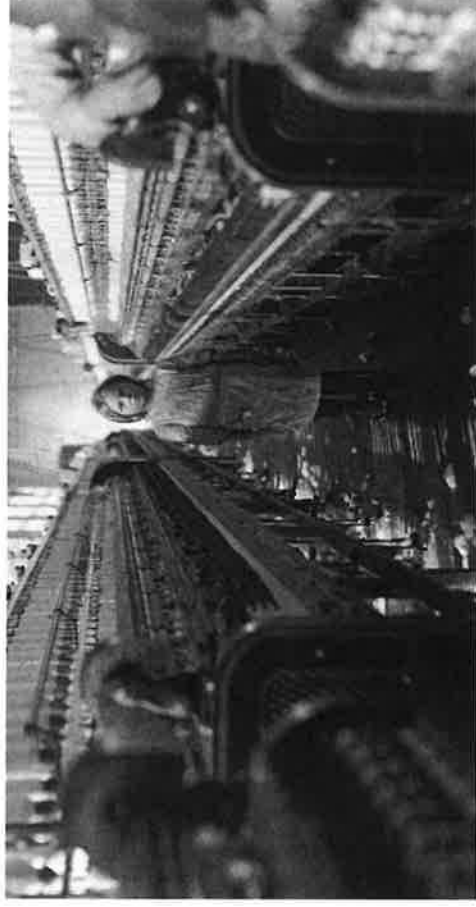
Shown here are the main points of the Factory Act, 1833; a new law that came into place to protect children:

- 1) No child workers under nine years of age.
- 2) Employers must have an age certificate for their child workers.
- 3) Children of 9-13 years to work no more than nine hours a day.
- 4) Children of 13-18 years to work no more than 12 hours a day.
- 5) Children are not to work at night.
- 6) Two hours schooling each day for children.
- 7) Four factory inspectors appointed to enforce the law. (in the whole of Britain!)

Source B

'I saw her shoulders and asked what the matter was. She said "the overlooker has strapped me, but do not complain for we will be sacked." The overlooker had strapped her because she hadn't done as she was told immediately. Her back was beat nearly to a jelly...'

Samuel Coulson talking about his daughter, who worked 18 hours a day in a mill in Leeds.



A small girl in an American cotton mill, 1908. This is a scene that could have been witnessed in many factories in Britain in the 19th century.

What was the role of children in the Industrial Revolution?

1. Read the information on the other side of this sheet.
2. What was life like for children in the factories?
3. What does source A and B tell you about what life was like for children?
4. Read the main aims of the Factory Act.
5. Which points do you think were improvements to the conditions? Why?
6. In your opinion, which two aims were still not good enough? Why?
7. Imagine that you are the girl standing in the photograph.
8. What can you see?
9. What can you hear?
10. How does it make you feel? Why?
11. Write a diary entry imagining you are a child working in one of the mills during this period. You should include:

Where you are working

The hours that you work

How you are treated

The reasons why you have to go to work

How things have changed with the new Act.

(If you need some support use the writing frame to the right)

Dear diary,

My name is _____ and I work in a factory in _____.

I work here for _____ hours a day and I am _____ years old.

The overlookers here treat me badly sometimes. They _____

I wish that I could stop working here, but I need to because _____

The law change recently and now my work day is different. The main changes are:

One last thing I want to say today is _____
