

LO: To fully understand the text, find and trap answers and use evidence to support my view.

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.

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.

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

There was a vast improvement in transport links.

Factories could now be built in places away from water.

James Watt perfected the design of the steam engine.

Cotton could now be turned into cloth far quicker.

The spinning jenny was invented.

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

The government introduced a Factory Act.

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

4. In what year was the Factory Act introduced?

5. What was the minimum age a child could work in a factory before the Factory Act was introduced?

6. List 4 inventions that came from the Industrial Revolution.

7. Farhaan believes that the Factory Act of 1833 improved children's lives enough.

Do you agree? Explain fully below using evidence to support your view.

Extension

Imagine you are a child on your first day at the factory. Imagine your feelings. Write a short piece describing your journey to the factory gates and how you felt when standing outside the mill for your first day.

