

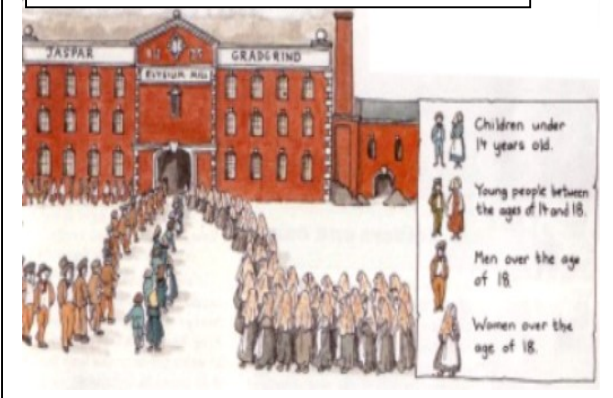
Life as a worker in a Northern Mill

In mills people worked long hours. The use of water power meant that many mills were built in the countryside next to rivers. Often there were not enough people living nearby to work in the mill. One solution was to get pauper children from workhouses in the towns. They worked as apprentices. Many parents who endured poverty would send their children to the mills so they could earn money to keep the rest of the family



A photo of mill children taken in the 19th century

The division of workers in the cotton mill, 1835



Women and children got lower wages than men, so the owners employed a lot of them. Children as young as six or seven worked upto **fourteen** hours a day in the mills.

At first, factories had no regulations concerning safety and health and hours of work. the Many children were killed or injured by the machinery in the mills. Others were sometimes badly beaten by the foreman. Provisions were often very poor. Many children became malnourished because they were not fed properly.

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The room filled with children. They wore ragged clothes and had dirty hair. They had no shoes or socks. Food was poor. The milk porridge was of a bluey colour. The bread was soft and black. The boys pulled out their shirts to catch boiled potatoes at a hatch door. The girls held out their greasy aprons to catch the potatoes.

Eyewitness account from a workhouse mill in Bradford.

Some decent employers paid their workers a fair wage. Some even built houses and ran schools for their children. However, most mill-owners were against reforms in factories. They said shorter hours for women and children would put them out of business.

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On a sunny bank stands a handsome house, built for the female apprentices. Here, 60 girls are well clothed, well educated and lodged. They come chiefly from the Liverpool poor-house. They have milk porridge for breakfast, potatoes and bacon for dinner, and butcher-meat on Sundays. They have bacon everyday.

Apprentices at Quarry Bank Mill 1833

Wednesday Reading Tasks

L.O. To retrieve information from a text

Questions – quick retrieval

- 1) Which groups of people did cotton mill owners tend to employ the most and why? (think of two or more reasons)
- 2) Why were parents keen to send their children out to work?
- 3) Why were the mills built in the countryside?
- 4) Give three examples of how you know life was dangerous for the mill children.

Next steps:

L.O. TO infer information from text and images.

What do you infer from the image. Answer the questions below.



- a) What risks to health are shown in the picture?
- b) Who is the person marked number 3?
- c) Describe what the people in the picture look like. You should for some 'differences' between some of them.
- d)

Next, comparing sources

- 5) How does the treatment of apprentices in source A differ from evidence B?
- 6) Why do you think the mill owners began to treat workers better?