

History UNFOLDING

THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION



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Introduction

Western and Non-Western Responses to Industrialism

After the liberation of Afghanistan from Taliban rule in late 2001, scenes of people there playing video games and watching TV startled the rest of the world. Such images make it clear that modern science and technology have in our time transformed the globe. No place is now immune from the impact of that accelerating interaction of technology with markets that we know as the Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain in the 1700s. There, a systematic effort emerged to apply cumulative technical knowledge to the production process. Starting in textiles and mining, technical innovation and the use of coal-powered steam made Britain for a time the world's sole industrial superpower.

Everywhere it spread, industrialism disrupted life. The squalor and poverty of typical factory towns was matched by the wealth and comfort generated for growing millions. Both aspects of the Industrial Revolution drastically altered social and cultural as well as political and economic realities. The disruptive force of industrialism was real enough in England, Europe and North America. But elsewhere in the world, it was vastly more so. That was partly because of the suddenness of its arrival in societies that had not undergone a long period of agricultural reform, scientific advance, and the Enlightenment. In part, it was because those bringing industrial change also imposed colonial rule.

This booklet offers visual evidence of the impact of industrialism in both Western and non-Western societies. Its twelve visual displays are organized into the following four lessons:

Industrialism in the West: Progress and Wealth

The illustrations here focus on the positive effects of industrialization in Great Britain and elsewhere in the West—a vast increase in productive power, innovations that inspired the imagination as they added to wealth, the spread of middle-class comforts to millions.

Industrialism in the West: Squalor and Unrest

Industrialism came with a very high price—from polluted, disease-ridden slums to unrelenting, machine-driven work routines, even for the very young. The illustrations here focus on that price—and on the political unrest it helped generate throughout Europe in the 19th century.

Industrialism: Non-Western Responses

The impact of industrialism on non-Western societies was even more profound and disruptive than in the West. Some responded passively or defensively. A few adapted with surprising speed.

The Triumphant West

By 1900s, the influence of the West was enormous everywhere, even where it did not establish direct colonial rule. The illustrations here touch on several key aspects of this industrial and political dominance.

Using Photos, Cartoons, and Other Visuals to Teach History

Many textbooks are full of colorful visuals. However, all too often these visuals function primarily as window dressing. They make the text more entertaining, or at least more palatable. Only occasionally do the visuals in textbooks do more than offer simple pictorial reinforcement of ideas already presented in the text. In many cases, they pander to the visual orientation of the young while doing little to help young people master the challenges of the visual media that dominate their lives.

By way of contrast, our approach to using visual materials emphasizes their unique strengths as historical documents. The lessons in this booklet focus students on the visual symbols and metaphors in editorial cartoons, the dramatic qualities of certain photographs, the potential of many images to make abstract ideas more specific and concrete, the implicit biases and stereotypes in certain images, their emotional power, and their ability to invoke the spirit of a time and place. In the process, we make every effort to strengthen students' visual literacy skills in general, as well as their ability to think critically and engage in spirited but disciplined discussions.

How to Use This Booklet

The booklet is divided into four lessons, with three illustrations per lesson. Each lesson consists of the following:

A BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET This page provides brief summaries explaining the three illustrations on which the lesson is based and their relevance to the lesson's objectives.

DIGITAL IMAGES The booklet's PDF allows you to project the images for use in your class discussions.

DISCUSSION-ACTIVITY SHEETS

Each sheet displays one illustration. It includes a sequence of questions to help you plan an all-class discussion while using the projected images. The questions take students step by step through an analysis of the illustration. If you wish, you may reproduce these pages and hand them out. In addition to the discussion questions on the illustration itself, one or two follow-up activities are suggested. Some of these can be made into individual assignments. Others will work best as small-group or all-class activities.

*The Global Impact of the Industrial Revolution***OBJECTIVE**

1. Students will better understand the nature of the Industrial Revolution and the enormous wealth it rapidly generated in Great Britain and elsewhere in the Western world.

Industrialism in the West: Progress and Wealth

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain in the late 1700s. It was both a technical and a social revolution. It was technical in that new machines (with one invention leading quickly to the next) set off a sudden and rapid rise in the production of all sorts of goods. The use of coal-generated steam energy added enormously to the range and power of this machinery. The social aspect had to do with the factory and the new ways of working and living to which it gave rise. These illustrations suggest both aspects of the change—showing large factories where machine production has led to much more closely regulated, uniform, intense and carefully supervised forms of labor.

Illustration 2

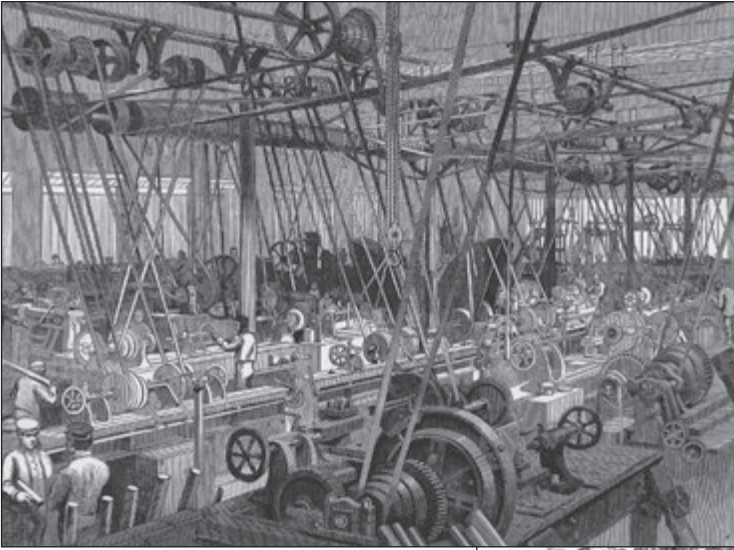
The Industrial Revolution began with a series of inventions in the textile industry. To sell their huge output, textile and other factory owners had to reach tens of thousands of customers, not just those in a small local community. Iron and steam solved this problem. Railroads helped make of England one huge national market. In the 1840s, enthusiasm about railroads led thousands to invest in them. The cartoon on the left pokes fun at those who rushed to do so carelessly. But the cartoon also conveys the sense of wonder people must have felt at the world-changing technology of the new industrial age. The other cartoon also captures this spirit, commenting on a new telegraph cable linking Great Britain with France across the English Channel.

Illustration 3

Historians often focus on the huge problems caused by industrialism. But it is important to see that it did improve life. Because of it, millions of people—business owners, merchants, shopkeepers, lawyers and doctors, skilled workers, managers and engineers—led a comfortable existence they would otherwise never have known. This illustration is of such a mid-1800s middle class family. True, few families fit this ideal image, with the male breadwinner waited upon by his gracious wife and sweet children. The scene suggests a life of discipline and decorum, as well as material comfort. This “Victorian” ideal was not just a fantasy. Many did live this way, or tried to. And their values helped give rise to and give meaning to the new industrial age in Europe and America.

Lesson 1—Industrialism in the West: Progress and Wealth

Illustration 1



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Discussing the Illustrations

1. These illustrations both help identify a huge change in economic life that swept across England first, then Europe and North America, in the early 1800s. That change is known as the “Industrial Revolution.” Using these images, briefly explain what the Industrial Revolution was.
2. Steam power was one of the major technological factors helping to bring on the Industrial Revolution. Can you explain how? How might steam power have been especially useful for the factory on the left here?
3. Steam engines in coal mines and textile factory production were at the heart of the early Industrial Revolution. Why do you suppose that was so?
4. What do you suppose work was like in these early industrial factories? How did it differ from craft production or farm work in Europe in the era just before the Industrial Revolution? Which forms of work would have been more difficult? Which would you have preferred to do? Why?

Follow-up Activity

1. **Small-group activity:** Each member should read more about how one of the following occupations did or did not change between 1700 and 1850 in England:

Ship builder	Shoemaker
Blacksmith	Spinner
Weaver	Carpenter
Printer	Farmer

Based on what you learn, prepare brief reports answering these questions on each occupation: In the early 1700s, did the owner and any hired workers in this occupation usually work together under the same roof? In what ways, if any, did this change from 1700 to 1850? What main tools were used at first, who owned the tools, and how did this change over this time period? How hard was it for a new worker to become an owner or master worker in this occupation, and how did this change over time? As a group, report to the class on what you learn.