


## Impact of the Industrial Revolution



**Work**

- 12-hour days
- Dangerous job
- Low pay

**Home**

- One-room apartment
- No water/sewer
- Disease

**Women**

- Discrimination

Imagine that you lived in England during the Industrial Revolution. There is a good chance that instead of doing schoolwork for seven or eight hours a day, five days a week, that you work in a factory for twelve or more hours a day, six days a week. Your job would probably involve some of the more dangerous work, because you are expendable and are paid a low wage. Every day, more and more families move to your city, and their children look for work. They are happy to replace you and would probably work for less than you are getting paid.

You might live in a one-room apartment with no running water or sewer system. With so many people living so close to one another, garbage in the streets, and open sewers, you can imagine how easy it is for disease to spread in your neighborhood.

If you are a woman, you are especially unlucky, since you will not even have the same rights as men once you become an adult.

The Industrial Revolution changed the world. It was one of the most important forces that shaped people's working and living conditions. Not all of the effects were negative, but some were. In response, some people pushed for reforms to fix the worst aspects of industrialization.



For centuries in Europe, most people lived in the country and farmed the land in order to fulfill their feudal obligations. The second Agricultural Revolution, in combination with the Enclosure Movement, pushed people off the land and into cities. With better agricultural techniques, farmers produced more food per acre than ever before. As a consequence, farms grew, and land that was previously shared by all members of the community became privately owned during the Enclosure Movement. Without these public lands, many small farmers could not produce enough food to live, and they moved to cities in search of work.

More productive farms, though, meant more food. With increased food supply and advancements in medical technology, the population boomed, meaning that more people had to move to the cities to support themselves. The new factories employed many of those people, including women and children, often at very low wages.

Not all of the effects of the Industrial Revolution were negative. Some reform movements aimed at fixing the worst of the problems, including the abuse of child labor. Educational opportunities improved for many, as public education expanded. Although many poor people lived in urban slums, industrialization led to the growth of the middle class in much of Europe.



As the Industrial Revolution was happening, many people were moving from rural areas where they lived off agriculture, to urban areas where they worked for wages. As the population grew, more people moved to the cities in search of work at the new factories. Europe's urban population doubled between 1800 and 1850 as many cities became industrial centers. Most of the larger cities grew as a result of geography. Often, these cities were close to a river or a body of water, which was important for many factories, as well as for the transportation of raw materials and finished goods. Some examples of industrial and trading centers that grew rapidly during this time were Paris, New York, and London.

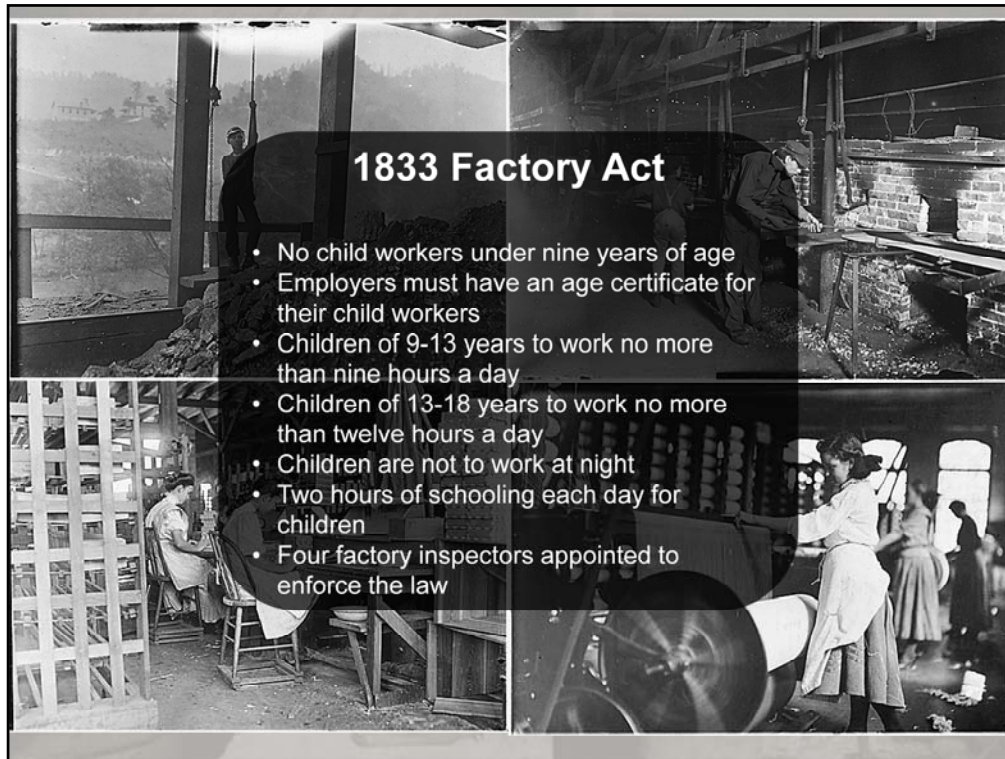
As Europe became more urban, a divide grew between the wealthy and middle class, who lived in nice neighborhoods, and the poor, who struggled to survive in foul-smelling slums full of tenements. Tenements were multi-story buildings divided into crowded apartments. Entire families often lived in a space no bigger than a modern-sized bedroom, and it had no running water, sewage, or sanitation systems. It was common to see human waste and garbage rotting in the streets next to markets where food was sold. Because of the lack of infrastructure, such as sewer and sanitation systems, disease spread rapidly in these slums. Over time, as these problems worsened, many people pushed for laws to improve the poor living conditions, which they saw as inhumane.

Not only were the poor neighborhoods polluted, but many cities were extremely dirty and produced lots of waste that was released into the environment, often contaminating the water supply. Even the air was unsafe to breathe because of the smoke produced by the burning of coal.



The nature of work changed, as seen with Britain's textile industry. At one time, textile production was a cottage industry. People worked in their homes producing small amounts of cloth to sell to larger companies. With the invention of several new devices, such as the spinning jenny, the textile industry became one of the first industries to build factories. Businesses developed expensive machines housed in one building. People traveled to work in these factories, which could produce far more cloth than individual workers could in their houses.

Many of the new factories and mines forced their employees to work long hours, often under very dangerous working conditions. Workers had very few protections, and many died or suffered serious injuries on the job. Factory and mine owners had a good deal of control over the lives of their employees. Owners kept wages as low as possible in order to keep prices low and profits high. Men competed with women and children for factory jobs. Factory owners often preferred women and children because they could pay them lower wages and could control them easier. Children as young as seven years old often worked as miners or factory workers.



### 1833 Factory Act

- No child workers under nine years of age
- Employers must have an age certificate for their child workers
- Children of 9-13 years to work no more than nine hours a day
- Children of 13-18 years to work no more than twelve hours a day
- Children are not to work at night
- Two hours of schooling each day for children
- Four factory inspectors appointed to enforce the law

In response to the awful conditions that many children faced on the job, in 1833, the British Parliament passed laws establishing a minimum age for certain jobs. These laws also limited the number of hours that children could work. In addition, the government gave children greater access to education by building more public schools and requiring that children go to school for a certain number of hours on workdays.

Other countries passed similar child labor laws along with mandatory public education for children in the “three Rs” – reading, writing, and arithmetic. Many Western governments began to promote the idea that education was an important part of raising children into productive and better citizens.

A British suffragette handbill produced during the women's suffrage movement

**Inequality between the sexes**

- Women paid less than men
- No vote
- Can't hold office
- Suffrage – the right to vote

**Hampstead Women's Social and Political Union,  
178, FINCHLEY ROAD, N.W.**

**WINDOW BREAKING  
AND  
INCITEMENT  
TO  
MUTINY.**

For Breaking Windows as a Political protest, Women are now in H.M. Gaols serving sentences of Four and Six months imprisonment.

For Inciting Soldiers to Disobey Orders, a much more serious crime, known to the law as a felony, and punishable by penal servitude, the Publishers of the "Syndicalist," were sentenced to nine months hard labour, and the Printers of the paper to six months hard labour.

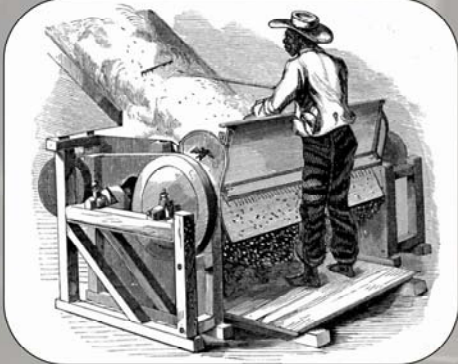
The Government under the pressure of men with votes reduced this sentence on the Publishers to Six months imprisonment without hard labour. and the sentence on the Printers to One month without hard labour.

**IS THIS JUSTICE TO  
VOTELESS WOMEN ?**

Children were not the only ones exploited on the job during the Industrial Revolution.

Factory owners usually paid women less than they paid men to do the same job. Women were not considered equals before the law and could not vote, nor could they run for office. As more and more women began to work outside the home, they wanted to have a say in the decisions that their government made. Women began to push for suffrage, or the right to vote, so that they could help determine the government policies that affected their lives.

## Impact on Slavery



More cotton = more slaves

Early 1800s – ban slave trade

1833 – England bans slavery

1865 – U.S. bans slavery

Eli Whitney's cotton gin increased the need for slaves to pick cotton


The slide features a central illustration of a man in a hat operating a large wooden cotton gin. To the right of the illustration, a list of historical events is presented. Below the illustration, a caption explains the impact of the cotton gin. The background of the slide is a faded image of a factory interior.

Meanwhile, in the colonies of the New World, Eli Whitney's cotton gin and the industrialization of the textile industry led to an increased demand for cotton, thereby increasing the demand for slaves to produce the cotton. Many people began to see the conditions in which slaves worked and lived – as well as the institution of slavery itself – as inhumane.

As the number of abolitionists, or people who wanted to outlaw slavery, grew, slavery came under attack. In the early 1800s, Britain banned the slave trade, and then in 1833, it banned the institution of slavery, which continued in the United States until the end of the Civil War in 1865.

## Positive Effects of Industrialization

Growth of middle class  
Higher standard of living  
Technological innovations



The Industrial Revolution did have some positive effects.

The middle class started to expand in Europe and North America. Greater industrialization created more possibilities for more people to make more money. As a result, the standard of living went up for the majority of people, although conditions were bad for many factory workers and miners. As production costs went down, people could buy more goods for less money. Many technological innovations made life easier for those who could afford them.