
British Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries

The British Revolution occurred from the 18th to 19th centuries, was a period during which predominantly agrarian, rural societies in Europe, specifically Britain, became industrial and urban. Before the Industrial Revolution, manual labor was done in houses with basic machines or manual tools. The main way of living was through farming, where most people lived in small rural communities. People made most of their own goods such as clothes, furnishing, and tools, keeping themselves self sufficient. However, the life of an average person was borderline abysmal as disease was prominent and the average income was meager. A number of factors led to the industrial revolution. Firstly, the Agricultural Revolution of the 18th century created a favorable climate for industrialization.

By increasing food production, the British population could be fed at lower prices with less effort than ever before. The surplus of food meant that British families could use the money they saved to purchase manufactured goods. The population increase in Britain and the exodus of farmers from rural to urban areas in search of wage-labor created a ready pool of workers for the new industries. Britain had financial institutions in place, such as a central bank, to finance new factories. The profits Britain had enjoyed due to booming cotton and trade industries allowed investors to support the construction of factories.

British entrepreneurs interested in taking risks to make profits were leading the charge of industrialization. The English revolutions of the 17th century had fostered a spirit of economic prosperity. Early industrial entrepreneurs were willing to take risks on the chance that they would reap financial rewards later. Britain had a vast supply of mineral resources used to run industrial machines, such as coal. Since Britain is a relatively small country, these resources could be transported quickly and at a reasonable cost. The British government passed laws that protected private property and placed few restrictions on private business owners. Britain's merchant marine could transport goods to foreign markets.

Lastly, Great Britain's colonial empire created a ready supply of consumers to purchase its manufactured goods. In the 1700s the industrial revolution kicked off with a series of innovations leading to ever-increasing productivity, while requiring less human energy. For example, around 1764, Englishman James Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny, a machine that enabled an individual to produce multiple spools of threads simultaneously. By the time of Hargreaves' death, there were over 20,000 spinning jennys in use across Britain. The spinning jenny was then improved by British inventor Samuel Compton's spinning mule, as well as later machines. Another key innovation in textiles, the power loom, which mechanized the process of weaving cloth, was developed in the 1780s by English inventor Edmund Cartwright.

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)

Developments in the iron industry also played a central role in the Industrial Revolution. In the early 18th century, Englishman Abraham Darby discovered a cheaper, easier method to produce cast iron, using a coke-fueled furnace. In the 1850s, British engineer Henry Bessemer developed the first inexpensive process for mass-producing steel. Both iron and steel became essential materials, used to make everything from appliances, tools and machines, to ships, buildings and infrastructure. The steam engine was also integral to industrialization.

In 1712, Englishman Thomas Newcomen developed the first practical steam engine. By the 1770s, Scottish inventor James Watt had improved on Newcomen's work, and the steam engine went on to power machinery, locomotives and ships during the Industrial Revolution. The British Industrial Revolution brought lots of long term changes to the world. The Industrial Revolution brought about a greater volume and variety of factory-produced goods and raised the standard of living for many people, particularly for the middle and upper classes. However, life for the poor and working classes continued to be filled with challenges. Wages for those who labored in factories were low and working conditions could be dangerous and monotonous. Unskilled workers had little job security and were easily replaceable. Children were part of the labor force and often worked long hours and were used for such highly hazardous tasks as cleaning the machinery. In the early 1860s, an estimated one-fifth of the workers in Britain's textile industry were younger than 15.

Industrialization also meant that some craftspeople were replaced by machines. Additionally, urban, industrialized areas were unable to keep pace with the flow of arriving workers from the countryside, resulting in inadequate, overcrowded housing and polluted, unsanitary living conditions in which disease was rampant. Conditions for Britain's working-class began to gradually improve by the later part of the 19th century, as the government instituted various labor reforms and workers gained the right to form trade unions.

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)