

VICTORIAN BRITAIN – What was the industrial revolution and how did it affect society in Britain?

Topic Overview

The Victorian period saw immense change in Britain. In this unit we will consider how inventions, the industrial revolution and the growth of the railways had an impact on society in Victorian Britain.

Inventions and technological change

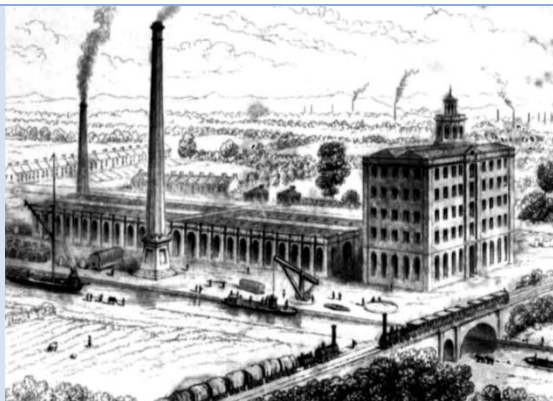
- During the Victorian period, many famous inventions were created that solved problems and made life better for people
- Farm machinery inventions replaced the jobs that people used to do.
- The development of steam power meant that machines in factories were more powerful and goods were produced more quickly.
- The manufacture of steel proved very useful in building machines, ships, bridges and railways
- Steam power's development also meant trains were more powerful and faster.
- The development of the railways influenced travel and trade.



Societal Change

Before the industrial revolution around 80% of people in Britain lived in the countryside. Most jobs were linked to farming the land.

- The industrial revolution saw a mass migration of people into towns and cities.
- Lots of factories were being built which meant there were lots of jobs on offer in the cities.
- Workers living conditions were cramped and unpleasant. Diseases spread easily.
- Industrialists became very rich and the country became wealthier.
- The new passenger steam railways meant people could travel around the country more easily and much more quickly. They did not have to rely on animals.



Bridgewater Foundry, alongside the Bridgewater Canal near Manchester. Artist unknown.

Key Vocabulary

Industry – the process of making products by using machines and factories

Revolution – a huge change in the way things are done

Invention- a new object or idea that has been created

Manufacture – to make something on a large scale using machinery

Trade – buying or selling goods

Population - people who live in a particular place

Rural – countryside

Pollution – harmful gases, smoke and chemical in the environment









Top Take-Aways

Having studied this topic you should be able to:

- Give examples of inventions that solved a problem or improved life for people
- Explain why people moved from the countryside to the city.
- Describe what the industrial revolution was and how Britain became wealthier but living conditions worsened
- Explain how the railways helped with the industrial revolution
- Describe why there was 'Railway Mania'

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Timeline	
1712	James Watt invents the Steam Engine.
1764	James Hargreaves invents the Spinning Jenny.
1842	Children under 10 can no longer work in underground mines.
1844	Samuel Morse invents the telegraph.
1846	Elias Howre invents the sewing machine.
1855	The Bessemer method of processing steel is founded.
1866	Alfred Noble invents dynamite.
1870	Louis Pasteur discovers vaccines.
1879	Thomas Edison creates the light bulb.
1880	The Education Act makes schooling compulsory for all children aged 5-10.
1903	Oliver and Wilbur Wright invent the first plane.

Key Inventions			
			
1800s—Railway Network	1838—Photography	1840—Penny Black Stamp	1843—Christmas Cards
			
1876—Telephone	1879—Electric Bulb	1885—Petrol Motor Car	1895—X-rays

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