

SUBJECT: History

UNIT: To what extent was Britain changed by the Industrial Revolution?

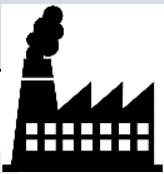


From 1750 Britain went through a process of change in a number of key areas:

Work – factories sprung up all over the country creating more efficient ways to produce goods such as wool, cotton and coal. The increase in factories brought thousands of new jobs. People moved to the factories for work.

Transport and communications – Factories needed access to raw materials, therefore the transport systems were created to make this process faster.

Technology - There were also many scientific discoveries and technological inventions that changed society and industry. Such as, the Steam Engine, the Water Frame, the Spinning jenny and the Locomotive.



Living conditions

Overcrowding: due to large numbers of people moving to the cities, there were not enough houses for all these people to live in.

Disease: typhus, typhoid, tuberculosis and cholera all existed in the cities of England. Overcrowding, low standard housing and poor quality water supplies all helped spread disease.

Waste disposal: gutters were filled with litter. Human waste was discharged directly into the sewers, which flowed straight into rivers.

Poor quality housing: houses were built very close together so there was little light or fresh air inside them. They did not have running water and people found it difficult to keep clean.

Lack of fresh water: people could get water from a variety of places, such as streams, wells and stand pipes, but this water was often polluted by human waste.



Factory working conditions

Working hours: normal shifts were usually 12-14 hours a day and sometimes even longer.

Low wages: Women and children were cheaper to employ than men so they were employed at a higher rate.

Cruel discipline: harsh rules were placed on people to make them work (linked to child labour).

Accidents: forcing children to crawl into dangerous, unguarded machinery led to many accidents and deaths.

Health: The air was full of dust, which led to chest and lung diseases and loud noise made by machines damaged workers' hearing.



Cholera in Sunderland

Sunderland was a busy port but the living conditions in parts of the town were filthy. Houses were crowded around courtyards and narrow alleys. There were open drains full of raw sewage, pigsties, manure heaps and pools of stagnant water. Fresh water was in short supply. People had to buy their water from water carriers. The first case of Cholera was in Sunderland in 1831.

Response to Cholera

No ships were allowed into Sunderland's port. The walls of the town were washed in lime, old clothes had to be disinfected. **1848 Public Health Act**- Local health boards would improve drainage, sewers, rubbish collections etc. They would also make sure that new houses were built with drains and toilets.

John Snow

During the 1854 cholera outbreak in London, John Snow proved that diseases could spread through water rather than "bad air."