

Name _____ Date _____

The Industrial Revolution

“The Industrial Dream”

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. At the start of the 1700s, most people’s day-to-day lives moved slowly. Few people ever left their hometowns. Leisure and sports barely existed, and instead of shopping for things, most people made them. Usually, all members of a family worked all day, so the family was able to survive.

Notes

The Industrial Revolution, an 80-year period from about 1760 to 1840, set off an explosion of change, and history hasn’t stopped flying since. The technology of the Industrial Revolution turned daily life upside down. It changed how people ate, where they lived and how they worked, traveled, communicated and simply spent their days.

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Though the Industrial Revolution would later influence all nations, the technology explosion began in England. All of the ingredients needed for change were there: a strong economy fortified by riches brought back from the New World; an interest in science; a stable government; lots of coal to power new factories; and a huge population that could work in the new factories and buy what the factories made.

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England’s population growth could be traced to the invention of the seed drill. Invented by Jethro Tull in 1700, the seed drill made planting crops easier and, along with new forms of breeding and crop rotation, set off the agricultural revolution. Farming was easier than ever before, so people had more food to eat. Improved nutrition made people healthier, and they started living longer. This resulted in a huge population boom across Europe. In the 1800s, the population of Europe doubled, growing from 100 million to 200 million people.

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3. During this period, Thomas Newcomen and James Watt realized that steam could be used in a new and important way: to power machines. The steam engine used coal for energy. This meant factories no longer had to be near rivers to rely on water power, and they could produce goods quicker. Factories flourished and employed many people—including children—but working conditions were often very poor. Hours were long, the work could be dangerous and the pay was low.

Building on this technology, Richard Trevithick invented the steam locomotive, a train that runs on steam power. Suddenly, people and goods could travel faster and farther than ever before, and the world started to get a little bit smaller.

There were other important inventions as well. Eli Whitney's cotton gin, invented in 1793, changed the textile industry. It cleaned cotton 50 times faster. The telegraph, invented in the 1840s, drastically changed communications. Instead of writing letters that might have to be sent by a messenger on horseback, people could write messages tapped out in Morse Code and send them long distances over telegraph lines, almost like an old-school text message.

4. This period saw a lot of urban migration as people, drawn by factory jobs, moved from the country to the city. However, many cities weren't ready or able to accommodate their growing population. Families often lived in tenements, which were overcrowded apartments, and the living conditions were terrible. Outhouses and toilets often drained to the same water people drank. Diseases like tuberculosis and smallpox spread quickly. Life expectancy was much lower in cities than in the countryside.

The photographer Jacob Riis published a book called *How the Other Half Lives*, showing how bad it was to live in urban slums. Eventually, cities began some of the programs that we are used to today, such as garbage removal and clean water and sewage management to improve the quality of people's lives.

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As factories became more widespread, people started fighting for the rights of factory workers. Labor laws began to limit the number of hours that children and women could work in Britain, and soon, children in factories were required to receive an education. However, abuses in factories didn't fully end because owners still tried to exploit their workers. The American journalist Upton Sinclair wrote a book called *The Jungle* in 1906. It exposed the terrible conditions for workers in meatpacking factories. Over a century later, the fight for workers' rights and fair labor practices continues throughout many different industries.

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The Industrial Revolution was possible because England and America had capitalist or free enterprise economies. A country's economy is the way that goods and services are bought, sold and distributed. Under the capitalist system, if you think that a lot of people want to buy slippers that look like puppies, you can start a business making them. You can become an entrepreneur. And the more people want your puppy slippers, the more money you can make.

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Adam Smith wrote about the benefits of capitalism in *The Wealth of Nations*. He believed that capitalism is fueled by self-interest and competition. Business owners are interested in making money (self-interest), and competition from similar businesses encourages them to make good quality products at a reasonable prices. For example, if someone else starts a puppy slipper business and their slippers are better and cheaper than yours, you're going to have to make some changes if you want your company to stay afloat. Theoretically, both self-interest and competition are good for consumers. One downside of capitalism is that business owners often have little reason to pay or treat workers well. This was true throughout the Industrial Revolution: Business owners became rich at the expense of their workers' lives.

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