

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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# The Industrial Revolution

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.

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In the decades after the Civil War, cities in the United States grew at an incredible rate. In 1860, only nine cities had a population of more than 100,000. By 1920, there were 68 such cities. For the first time in American history, the country's urban population exceeded that of rural areas. This massive growth was driven by three factors: immigration, migration, and industrialization.

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Though immigration was not a new phenomenon in the United States, the middle- and late-19th century saw a new wave of immigrants arriving from around the world. In the 1840s, groups of relatively well-off immigrants arrived from northern and western Europe. These immigrants, who were often Protestant and hailed from countries like Ireland and Germany, settled in cities along the East Coast and in the Midwest. Later on, in the 1890s, Jewish and Catholic immigrants from southern and eastern Europe as well as immigrants from Mexico and Asia began to arrive. These immigrants were often poorer than the earlier arrivals. Some were fleeing religious persecution or political unrest, while others sought greater opportunity in US cities. This influx of immigrants was fueled by the rise of steamship travel. A once-long and expensive trip across the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean had become affordable and only took eight to 12 days.

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Notes

Cities were a popular place for immigrants to settle for a number of reasons. Many immigrants arrived on the shores of US cities and, lacking the money necessary to travel farther into the country, stayed there. Lots of jobs were located in cities: steam and electricity led to a boom in industry during this time period. Finally, cities offered a support system to immigrants. Ethnic enclaves were cities within cities that allowed immigrants to speak their native language, build a social life with people from their home country, and maintain their culture.

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Not everyone who populated cities came from other countries. Many were migrants who came from other parts of the United States. As technological advances in agriculture began putting small farms out of business, many farm workers struggled to find work. Because of this, about a third of people moving to cities were Americans leaving farms for industrial jobs. At the same time, Black Americans were migrating from the South to cities in the North and Midwest. Faced with discrimination and danger as a result of Jim Crow laws and lynching, as well as punishing and unfavorable work as sharecroppers, Black migrants looked to Northern cities for opportunities that didn't exist in Southern states.

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The late 19th century marked a transition from rural farmers to urban factories as the cornerstone of American industry. For the first time, there were more wage workers than independent workers in the US meaning there were more people working for a boss than there were working for themselves. This resulted from the mechanization of agriculture, which sent many self-employed farmers into cities for work in factories and mills. Advances in steam and electricity during the Second Industrial Revolution meant factories no longer had to be located next to waterways. These advances brought many factories into urban areas, turning cities into industrial hubs. Many cities specialized in one industry: Pittsburgh had steel, Chicago had meat packaging, and New York City made clothing.

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The Second Industrial Revolution was incredibly lucrative for business owners. As titans of industry like Cornelius Vanderbilt and JP Morgan amassed fortunes, residents of cities worked long hours in terrible conditions for low wages. With the institution of mass production and assembly line practices, factories grew rapidly. With little competition, business owners had the power to set wages and working hours with no input from workers or unions. During this time, the divide between the rich and poor widened in both wealth and distance. As elevated railroads and subway systems were built, the rich moved farther away to wealthy neighborhoods or suburbs and only came to the city center during working hours.

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