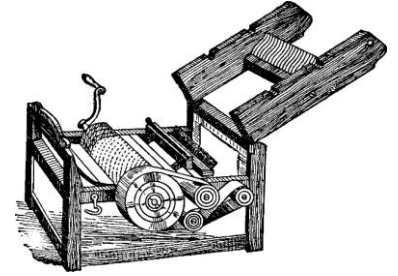


Cause & Effect

The Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain during the middle of the 18th century. It was a period of great change. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, goods were produced in small workshops or even homes. Most people in Britain lived outside of the cities and towns. Many people worked as farmers or craftspeople in rural areas.

The introduction of machinery to farms, and changes to farming practices, resulted in more productive farms. An example of an agricultural invention was the cotton gin, a machine that separated cotton seeds from the fibres. Before the cotton gin, this was a process that had to be done by hand and was therefore very time consuming.



Cotton gins made separating seeds and cotton fibre

Thanks to inventions like the cotton gin, farms produced a greater amount of food and other crops. The increased use of machines on farms also meant that fewer people were needed for farming jobs. Because of an increase in the amount of food and other resources, the population started to rise in the late 18th century. The larger population resulted in an increase in the demand for goods such as textiles and clothing.



Many workers were needed in factories to operate machines

New machines in other industries were also invented, allowing more goods to be produced more quickly than ever before. Factories were needed to operate these machines and to produce goods in such large quantities. Workers who crafted such goods by hand could not produce them quickly enough. Thus, it was impossible for these workers to compete against the factories who could produce goods more quickly and cheaply. Many people were left without jobs. Consequently, many left the countryside and moved to towns and cities in search of work in one of the many new factories that had been built. The population of these cities grew extremely quickly. This population shift from rural areas to towns and cities is called urbanisation.

The invention of the steam engine was the most important invention to emerge from the Industrial Revolution. Prior to its invention, power was generated by water, wind, horse and by people. The steam engine provided a more reliable power source, and one which could power these new machines that were being designed.

The Industrial Revolution was responsible for a number of positive changes for people. It saw the invention of machines which were able to complete work more quickly than before. Telegraphs and railroads were built. Prices of common goods were lowered.

The Industrial Revolution also caused many problems. The sudden and significant increase in the population of cities was one of these problems. Houses were small and overcrowding was very common. Living in such close quarters caused sanitary problems. At the time there was no sewage system, which meant people would dispose of their waste on the streets and into rivers. Diseases spread easily. Smoke from factories, engines and fireplaces polluted the air around the cities. The waste from factories was also regularly dumped into rivers.

Working conditions were very poor. People worked long hours and in dirty and dangerous conditions. Many workers lost limbs or even died in their job. Workers had to use equipment that expelled smoke and as a result, many suffered from breathing problems. It was also common for children to be forced into labour.

Fill in the boxes to show a causal chain of the events of the Industrial Revolution.

