Cotton, Coal and Change 1745-1901

Teacher		**Class**	Year 8
Subject	History	**Topic**	The Industrial Revolution
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United Kingdom

Students learn why Britain industrialised first and how towns changed. They make a verdict poster weighing progress against price.

Curriculum links

- The Industrial Revolution and its impact on life in Britain [1]
- How did Britain build an empire around the world and what was life like in the empire? [1]
- Protest and reform: the changing place of women and the vote [1]

Learning objectives

- Students will explain why factories grew first in Britain after 1760.
- Students will describe how mill work, housing and health changed towns.
- Students will judge if Industrial Revolution fits changes from 1750-1901.

Success criteria

- I can compare making cloth at home and in mills.
- I can describe factory work, back-to-back housing and disease.
- I can give a verdict with two pieces of evidence.

What students already know

Show a piece of string and a cotton T-shirt: ask where and how each would be made in 1740 versus 1850.

Key words

Industrial Revolution	time from about 1750-1900 when Britain changed to machine making and towns [3]
factory	large building where machines make cloth and other goods fast [6]
empire	lands ruled by one country that trade goods with it [3]
franchise	group of people allowed to vote in elections [10]
cholera	serious illness spread by dirty water or food [9]

Materials

- Slides 1, 3-7 and 9-12
- Video clip 2 Industrial Revolution in Britain explained (0:00-5:00) on slide 6
- Worksheet Task C timeline cards
- A3 paper, markers, verdict cards
- Three-box frame sheets: life before, what changed, life after

Before the lesson

- Print Worksheet Task C for pairs and three-box frame sheets for groups
- Print verdict cards marked revolution and slow burn, one set per group
- Test Video clip 2 (0:00-5:00) on slide 6 for sound and subtitles
- Lay out A3 paper and markers for poster task

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Lesson outline

0–5 min **Starter** 5 min · Whole class

Hook the class and recall the shift from home work to factory work.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 1 The Industrial Revolution title and read objectives on Slide 2.
2. Say the hook: Was it really a revolution in a flash, or a slow burn over 150 years? You are the historians. You decide.
3. Show Slide 3 From cottage to factory and explain before work was done in people's homes by hand [4], sometimes called cottage industries [4].
4. Ask pairs to guess hands v machine winner and take 3 quick answers.

STUDENTS DO

1. Look at Slide 3 and listen to the hook.
2. Turn to partner and predict who makes more in one minute.
3. Share one reason for prediction.

Say: Today we judge how Britain changed from 1745 to 1901. Before factories, most cloth was made slowly at home by hand. After, machines in mills made much more, much faster. Hands or machine - who wins?

Worked example: Before: a family spins one thread at a time at home by hand [4]. After: a mill with machines lets one worker spin many threads at once [5], so output greatly increased with the mechanised factory system [13].

Ask: Where was most cloth made before the Industrial Revolution? (In people's homes by hand [4], cottage industries [4].) · What changed with factories? (Bigger machines meant work moved to factories [6], first in textiles [6].)

Check understanding: Hands up for home wins v factory wins, then cold-call reason; if unsure, repeat home by hand v mill by machine contrast.

Support: Give word bank home, hand, factory, machine, faster, more for answers. **Stretch:** Ask why towns and cities grew quickly around mills, factories and mines [4].

Use: Slides 1–3

5–17 min **Why Britain first** 12 min · Whole class

Explain why inventions, coal and empire markets let factories grow first in Britain.

YOU DO

1. Play Video clip 2 (0:00-5:00) on Slide 6: spot coal, inventions and markets, listen for how empire helped sell factory goods.
2. Explain steam engines burned coal to create immediate power for mills and transport [3], and by mid-1700s Britain was becoming the world's most powerful empire [3].
3. Show Slide 7 Thread to trains to votes and Slide 10 steps: coal burned to make steam, steam drove machines, mills made cotton fast, canals and railways moved goods.
4. Hand out Worksheet Task C and model first two dates, then pairs order rest.

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch clip and note one thing Britain had: coal, machine or market.
2. In pairs do Worksheet Task C: place letters for jenny, water frame, Watt engine, power loom, locomotive and Rocket on the line.
3. Check line against Slide 7 and keep timeline for poster.

Say: Britain had coal for power, new machines, and customers overseas. Empire trade contributed to the Industrial Revolution [3] because colonies bought lots of British-made goods [3]. More buyers meant need for mass making.

Worked example: 1764 spinning jenny invented [5] spins many threads at once. 1769 water frame patented [5] and Watt's steam engine 1769-1781 [5]. 1785 power loom patented [5], 1804 first steam locomotive [5], 1829 Stephenson's Rocket [5]. More thread meant demand for quicker weaving.

Ask: Why did empire help factories grow? (Population in North American colonies grew and bought lots of British goods, creating larger market [3].) · What power changed everything? (Steam from coal gave immediate power beyond muscles, animals and waterwheels [3].)

Check understanding: Show washing-line timeline on mini-whiteboards 1764, 1769, 1785, 1804, 1829; reteach any out of order with dates [5].

Support: Give Task C with 1764 jenny and 1829 Rocket already placed as anchors. **Stretch:** Label which used water power, steam power or both, using Arkwright water frame 1768 [4].

Use: Video clip 2 (0:00–5:00), Slides 6–7, 10–11, Worksheet Task C

17–30 min **Price of town life** 13 min · Whole class

Describe hard work, crowded housing, disease and calls for votes.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 4 City life had a price: dirty water and packed back-to-back houses spread disease quickly, 50,000 deaths in England cholera outbreak from 1831 [9].
2. Explain owners built cheap back-to-back and terraced houses with families in single room [9], shared toilets [9], street pumps fed by polluted river [9] and thick smog from coal [9].
3. Explain factory side: profitable for owners but incredibly difficult conditions for workers [6], common to employ women and children in 1800s [3] to supervise equipment [3].
4. Run Slide 5 Think, pair, share: Would you leave your farm for Manchester? Then link to 1832 Great Reform Act after calls for political change [10].

STUDENTS DO

1. Copy two arrows: overcrowding leads to... and polluted pump leads to...
2. Think, pair, share on Slide 5: list one pull to city and one push from country.
3. Note who gained vote in 1832 and who was still left out.

Say: From 1750 people moved from rural to urban areas for factory work [9] because work was in new factories in towns [9]. Towns grew fast round mills and mines [4]. But crowded homes and dirty water spread cholera by contaminated food or water [9]. Workers then demanded more rights.

Worked example: Cause arrow 1: overcrowding plus shared toilets leads to pump water contaminated with waste, then cholera spreads [9]. Cause arrow 2: coal smoke leads to smog hanging over towns [9] causing breathing damage. Political result: 1832 Great Reform Act abolished rotten boroughs [10] and extended the franchise so more could vote [10].

Ask: Why did disease spread so fast in new towns? (Overcrowding, no clean running water or sanitation, shared toilets and polluted pumps [9].) · What did the 1832 Act do and not do? (Abolished rotten boroughs [10] and extended franchise [10], but many workers and all women still could not vote.)

Check understanding: Thumbs up for one pull reason and one disease cause; if mixed, revisit Slide 4 numbers and pump diagram.

Support: Give checklist to tick: noise, heat, hours, age, shared pump, smog. **Stretch:** Weigh benefit for mill owners against cost for workers using profit v difficult conditions [6].

Use: Slides 4–5

30–50 min **Revolution or Slow Burn?** 20 min · Groups

Judge whether Industrial Revolution is the right name using evidence.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 9 Your task: pick one good change and one bad change with evidence from inventions, housing, health or votes.
2. Give A3 paper, markers, verdict cards and three-box frame: life before, what changed, life after.
3. Model split at 1750 and 1900: left farming and hand work, right factories, steam and cities, noting period 1750-1900 of great change [3] and shift from agriculture and handicrafts to industry and machines [12].
4. Circulate, prompt evidence and remind some historians say term is misleading as change took long time [3].

STUDENTS DO

1. In threes draw split poster and fill three boxes with drawings and labels.
2. Choose one good and one bad change and write evidence under each.
3. Hold up verdict cards for revolution or slow burn and rehearse two reasons.

Say: You are historians. Make a before-and-after poster split at 1750 and 1900. Show farming and hand work on one side, factories, steam and cities on the other. Then agree: mostly progress or mostly price, revolution or slow burn?

Worked example: Before box: families live in countryside villages, work by muscle and waterwheel, cloth made at home [4]. Changed box: jenny 1764 [5] and steam 1769-1781 [5] plus empire market [3]. After box: textile mills, railways, crowded back-to-backs, cholera 1831 [9], Reform Act 1832 [10]. Verdict: slow burn because change took 150 years [3].

Ask: What two pieces prove big change? (Any two: many threads at once [5], output greatly increased [13], towns grew round mills [4].) · What evidence suggests slow, uneven change? (Change over 1750-1900 [3], long period so some say not a revolution [3], hard conditions stayed [6].)

Check understanding: Gallery walk: teacher reads two posters, checks each has before/after and verdict; if thin, add prompt from frame keywords.

Support: Provide a three-box frame: life before, what changed, life after, with key words to use. **Stretch:** Ask students to rank which changed most — work, housing, health or the vote — and justify the top choice.

Use: Slide 9

50–60 min **Plenary** 10 min · Whole class

Check understanding and agree what changed most by 1901.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 12 True or false? Read statements: began in Britain mid-1700s, led with textiles coal steam, most goods made by hand before.
2. Take votes for mostly progress or mostly price and ask two groups to give evidence.
3. Set exit ticket on mini-whiteboards with three questions.

STUDENTS DO

1. Answer true or false on whiteboards and correct false parts.
2. Show verdict cards and give 30-second reason using inventions, housing, health or votes.
3. Write exit answers to self-check against success criteria.

Say: We started hands v machine. We end historians. Hold your verdict card up. True or false will test facts, then your exit ticket proves your judgement with evidence.

Ask: The Industrial Revolution began in Britain in the mid-1700s with textiles, coal and steam? (True: began in Britain in the mid-1700s [7], textiles first [6], steam from coal [3].) · The 1832 Act gave everyone the vote? (False: extended franchise [10] but left out workers and women, later demands continued [14].)

Check understanding: Collect whiteboards: all three exit answers correct moves on; if errors, reteach that fact next lesson starter.

Support: Offer sentence starter: It was progress because... but it had a price because... **Stretch:** Ask to link empire, factory growth and votes in one sentence [3][10].

Use: Slide 12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Thinking the Industrial Revolution happened in one year like 1769	Timeline puts all inventions on same date	Stress period 1750-1900 [3] and long change, so some say term misleading [3]; practise ordering 1764 to 1829 [5]
Thinking factories made life better for everyone	Poster lists only inventions and forgets housing and health	Contrast profitable owners with incredibly difficult conditions for workers [6] and women and children employed [3]
Thinking 1832 gave the vote to all	Says franchise means everyone can vote now	Recall Act abolished rotten boroughs [10] and extended franchise [10] but politicised middle and lower classes still pushed for more [14]

Support

- Use three-box frame and word bank home, hand, factory, machine, faster, more
- Pre-mark pump and shared toilets on street plan if needed
- Pair readers for Task C timeline

Stretch

- Rank work, housing, health or vote by most change and justify top choice
- Explain water v steam power link from thread supply to weaving demand
- Link mill profit to strict rules and empire markets

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Sit with target group in main poster task; scribe labels, prompt evidence from timeline and housing facts, check verdict has two reasons.

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Check for understanding

Question	Answer
Give one reason factories grew first in Britain.	Coal for steam power [3] plus inventions [5] plus empire market buying British goods [3].
Give one bad change to town life with cause.	Cholera from contaminated water [9] due to overcrowding and shared pumps/toilets [9].
Revolution or slow burn? Give one reason.	Either with evidence: huge shift to machines [12] or long period 1750-1900 [3] so misleading [3].

Homework

Write 4-5 sentences: was town life mostly progress or mostly price? Use one invention and one health fact.

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