

SOURCE EXERCISE – INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

SOURCE 1: Extract from an article in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (visited 13 October 2020 at 12:40) <https://www.britannica.com/event/Industrial-Revolution>

Industrial Revolution, in modern history, the process of change from an agrarian and handicraft economy to one dominated by industry and machine manufacturing. This process began in Britain in the 18th century and from there spread to other parts of the world. Although used earlier by French writers, the term Industrial Revolution was first popularized by the English economic historian Arnold Toynbee (1852–83) to describe Britain's economic development from 1760 to 1840. Since Toynbee's time the term has been more broadly applied.

The main features involved in the Industrial Revolution were technological, socioeconomic, and cultural. The technological changes included the following: (1) the use of new basic materials, chiefly iron and steel, (2) the use of new energy sources, including both fuels and motive power, such as coal, the steam engine, electricity, petroleum, and the internal-combustion engine, (3) the invention of new machines, such as the spinning jenny and the power loom that permitted increased production with a smaller expenditure of human energy, (4) a new organization of work known as the factory system, which entailed increased division of labour and specialization of function, (5) important developments in transportation and communication, including the steam locomotive, steamship, automobile, airplane, telegraph, and radio, and (6) the increasing application of science to industry. These technological changes made possible a tremendously increased use of natural resources and the mass production of manufactured goods.

SOURCE 2: This cartoon by the cartoonist, John Leech, was published in *Punch Magazine*, in 1845. The caption of the cartoon is: **Cheap Clothing.**



SOURCE 3: *Extract from a textbook used by Higher Education in the USA. McKay, John; Hill, Bennett D. & Buckler, John. A History of Western Society. Fourth Edition. Volume C From the Revolutionary Era to the Present. Houghton Mifflin Company. 1991 (pages 692-693)*

Although many aspects of the English Industrial Revolution are still matters for scholarly debate, it is generally agreed that the industrial changes that did occur grew out of a long process of development. First of all, the expanding Atlantic economy of the eighteenth century served mercantilist England remarkably well. The colonial empire that England aggressively built, augmented by a strong position in Latin America and in the African slave trade, provided a growing market for English manufactured goods. So did England itself. In an age when it was much cheaper to ship goods by water than by land, no part of England was more than 20 miles from navigable water. Beginning in the 1770s, a canal-building boom greatly enhanced this natural advantage. Nor were there any tariffs within the country to hinder trade, as there were in France before 1789 and in politically fragmented Germany.

Agriculture played a central role in bringing about the Industrial Revolution in England. English farmers were second only to the Dutch in productivity in 1700, and they were continuously adopting new methods in farming as the century went on. The result, especially before 1760, was a period of bountiful crops and low food prices. The ordinary English family did not have to spend almost everything it earned just to buy bread. It could spend more on other items, on manufactured goods – leather shoes or a razor for the man, a bonnet or a shawl for the daughter. Thus demand for goods within the country complemented demand from the colonies.

England had other assets that helped give rise to the industrial leadership. Unlike eighteenth-century France, England had an effective central bank and well-developed credit markets. The monarchy and the aristocratic oligarchy, which had jointly ruled the country since 1688, provided stable and predictable government. At the same time, the government let the domestic economy operate fairly freely and with few controls, encouraging personal initiative, technical change, and a free market. Finally, England had long had a large class of hired agricultural laborers, rural proletarians whose numbers were further increased by the enclosure movement in the late eighteenth century. These rural wage earners were relatively mobile – compared to village-bound peasants in France and western Germany, for example – and along with cottage workers they formed a potential industrial labor force for capitalist entrepreneurs.

Question 1a: What according to **SOURCE 1** were the main features of the Industrial Revolution?

Question 1b: What is the message about the Industrial Revolution conveyed by **SOURCE 2**.

Question 2: With reference to the origin and purpose, assess the value and limitations of **SOURCE 3** for anybody studying the early Industrial Revolution.

Question 3: “*The main reason for the development of the industrial revolution in England was the technological development in the country*”. Discuss this statement using these sources and your own knowledge.