

Industrial Revolution – Lesson 1

What were the key features of Victorian Society?

Subject Knowledge Notes

The Victorian era was the period of Queen Victoria's reign, from 20 June 1837 until her death on 22 January 1901. The era followed the Georgian period and preceded the Edwardian period. The 19th century was one of rapid development and change, far swifter than in previous centuries. During this period England changed from a rural, agricultural country to an urban, industrialised one. This involved massive dislocation and radically altered the nature of society. It took many years for both government and people to adjust to the new conditions.

Between 1760 and 1900 an Industrial Revolution took place in Britain. This was made up of technological, scientific and industrial innovations (e.g. mass production, steam engines, railways, sewing machines, gas and electric light, the telegraph) that led to an enormous expansion of production, particularly through the factory system. There were huge social costs: the dehumanisation of work, child labour, pollution, and the growth of cities where poverty, filth and disease flourished. Child labour and poverty were also a feature of rural life, where farm work involved long hours, very low pay and exposure to all weathers.

Between 1801 and 1871 alone the population of the UK doubled. Migration in both directions was a feature of Victorian life. Many Britons left the UK for North America or the colonies in search of a better life. The Irish poor formed a large number of these migrants, especially after the Irish potato famine in 1845: the Irish moved in large numbers to England and Scotland, as well as abroad. Within the UK as a whole, people moved from the countryside into the new industrial cities to find work. Migrants from across the world also settled in Britain, notably Jews from Europe and Russia

During this era society was hierarchical, yet there was much social and geographical mobility. Self-made entrepreneurs used their new wealth to rise in society, building large houses, educating their children and employing domestic servants.

Before the start of the 19th century Britain had already lost her American colonies but the British Empire continued to expand steadily during this period. The Great Exhibition of 1851 displayed the wonders of both industry and Empire. Tied up with the Empire were Britain's trading dominance, naval and military strength, and competition for territory against other European nations.

Adapted from The Historical Association - Victorian Britain: A Brief History
(<https://www.history.org.uk/primary/resource/3871/victorian-britain-a-brief-history>)

Further Reading:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/overview_victorians_01.shtml
<https://www.historyextra.com/period/victorian/>

Lesson One: What were the key features of Victorian Society



10 mins

- Display the knowledge organiser (slide 3) and give all children a few minutes to read through the different sections and familiarise themselves with it.
- Explain that these facts must all be learnt off by heart and will be discussed in the lessons.
- Display the timeline of all the history units (slide 3) covered in key stage two. Locate the Industrial Revolution and discuss how it is more recent than previous periods they have studied.
- Ask children to write down anything and everything that they know about Industrial Revolution (circulate and read what they have written, and review at the end of the lesson, do not ask for pupils to share at this point as misconceptions may be shared and accepted by the rest of the class).









10 mins

- Call on different pupils to read aloud the opening paragraphs.
- Explain that this period saw significant changes to Britain, which was the first country in the world to industrialise.
- Read the paragraph on the British Empire and ask pupils in pairs to review the map (Slide 5) and with their partner identify as many countries as they can that were part of the British Empire.
- Collect feedback from the class.

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 5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the short section on the social class system in Britain.• Ask pupils to reflect on how this was similar to other societies that we have studied.• Elicit that the Upper Class and the Working Class was similar to the medieval period and even under the Anglo-Saxons but the difference in this period was the emergence of a strong middle class in Britain, which was new.
 5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Call on different pupils to read the section on The Industrial Revolution.• Explain that this is the change that we are going to be studying and seeking to better understand in this unit.• Ask all pupils to complete the question using information from the text (not their own ideas) in a full sentence.
 5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask pupils to reflect on this question.• They might discuss it in pairs. Take feedback and discussion.• The city offered more opportunities for entrepreneurship (starting own businesses). Having a lot of people living in the same place created a stronger service industry.• Following discussion, have pupils write their response here.
 10 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the section on population and have pupils answer the three questions underneath.• Circulate to check responses and to offer support where required.• Review pupils' sentences and give pupils an opportunity to correct.
 10 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remind pupils of the value of looking at original sources.• Explain that these are six images from the time (Slide 6).• Ask pupils to look at them and think about what life was like for different people living at the time.• Take feedback. Emphasise the different experiences people had. Point out the child working in a factory and how difficult life was (arguably harder than life in the village). Point out that the cities were very polluted and crowded but for the wealthy, life was much better.
 5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask pupils to return to page 3, and answer the question "What were the key features of Victorian Society".