

## Industrial Revolution – Lesson 2

### How did living conditions change during the Industrial Revolution?

#### Subject Knowledge Notes

A common feature of industrial cities and towns was the construction of inexpensive and poorly built row housing, intended for working-class people. Wealthy factory owners and entrepreneurs constructed the homes for their workers but also used the homes as a means of making more profit. The homes were often referred to as back-to-back terraces because they were literally built side-by-side and connected to one another. The only part of the home that was not connected to another was the front. The homes were made with the cheapest materials available and lacked basic features such as windows and proper ventilation. As well, most of the homes were built without running water or sanitation. As a result, many people were unable to properly bathe and thus suffered from very poor hygiene.

The lack of sanitation also led to the spread of diseases. Since most homes did not have running water or sanitation, people resorted to dumping their filth and waste into the street. This made the streets of industrial towns incredibly dirty places to live but also allowed communicable disease to spread easily from one individual to another. Pits were sometimes established in communities to accommodate the building waste, and property owners would sometimes pay to remove the filth. However, often, much of the filth was emptied into the local rivers, making them horribly polluted.

Cholera was a greatly feared disease during this period. Caused by contaminated water, it could spread with speed and with devastating consequences. Industrial Britain was hit by an outbreak of cholera in 1831-32, 1848-49, 1854 and 1867. The cause was simple – sewage was being allowed to come into contact with drinking water and contaminating it. As many people used river water as their source of drinking water, the disease spread with ease. The disease usually affected those in a city's poorer areas, though the rich did not escape this disease.

An attack of cholera is sudden and painful – though not necessarily fatal. It causes sickness, diarrhoea and extreme dehydration. In London it is thought 7000 people died of the disease in the 1831-32 outbreak which represented a 50% death rate of those who caught it. 15,000 people died in London in the 1848-49 outbreak.

In August 1854, a cholera outbreak occurred in Soho. After careful investigation, including plotting cases of cholera on a map of the area, Dr John Snow was able to identify a water pump in Broad (now Broadwick) Street as the source of the disease. He had the handle of the pump removed, and cases of cholera immediately began to diminish. However, Snow's 'germ' theory of disease was not widely accepted until the 1860s.

Pollution was one of the most recognizable aspects of industrial cities and towns. Not only were the streets and waterways heavily polluted with human waste and garbage, but the air was also heavily polluted. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, wealthy businessmen established countless factories and mines throughout Britain. These factories produced large amounts of air pollution from the burning of coal. Coal was easily the most used fuel during the Industrial Revolution, since it was needed to power the newly developed steam engines. However, coal is also known as a heavy air pollutant since when it is burned it sends small particles into the air. As a result, the numerous factories in the city centers caused the air quality to be horrible and gave industrial cities and towns a characteristic 'smog' that seemed to hover over them.

Crime was a big problem during the Industrial Revolution since there was no official police force. People had moved from small villages, where they knew their neighbours well, to big cities where they were surrounded by hundreds of strangers. This gave people a sense of anonymity – people did not know who they were – which made it easier to commit crime without being caught or punished.

In 1829, the first Metropolitan Police force was created in London by Robert Peel to try to reduce crimes including robbery and violence. The original 3000 officers were nicknamed 'bobbies' after Peel's first name. This extended to the rest of the country in 1856.

Adapted from History Crunch – Living Conditions During the Industrial Revolution (<https://www.historycrunch.com/living-conditions-in-industrial-towns.html#/>)

#### Further Reading









[https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/crime\\_01.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/crime_01.shtml)

<https://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/britain-1700-to-1900/industrial-revolution/life-in-industrial-towns/>

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#### Revolution

 5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Display the key question for the lesson (Slide 2)</li><li>• Display the retrieval quiz and give pupils five minutes to complete it independently (Slide 3).</li><li>• Circulate to gather information about common misconceptions or mistakes.</li><li>• Display the correct answers and allow pupils to self-mark (Slide 4).</li></ul>
  10 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Call on different pupils to read aloud the opening paragraphs.</li><li>• Make sure that pupils understand the term 'ventilated'. Explain that this was particularly problematic because the cities were also very polluted.</li><li>• Ask pupils to reflect on what it would have been like to live in these conditions (Slide 5).</li><li>• Collect feedback from the class.</li></ul>
 10 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read the section on health. Ensure that pupils can pronounce the word 'cholera'.</li><li>• Ask pupils to review the table individually and then answer the questions underneath (Slide 6).</li><li>• Circulate if pupils need support.</li><li>• Take feedback and have pupils correct their work in green.</li></ul>
 10 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Call on different pupils to read the section on Crime.</li><li>• Ask all pupils to complete the question using information from the text (not their own ideas) in a full sentence.</li><li>• Read the section on Jack the Ripper and explain that this case really caught the imagination and is still of interest to people today (you can go on Ripper walks in East London, for example).</li></ul>
 5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask pupils to reflect on this question having read the section on pollution.</li><li>• Explain that this was the first time in Britain that pollution was a problem. Explain that compared to today, the factories were right in the middle of cities because people were not able to travel to work other than on foot.</li></ul>
 15 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain that pupils are going to answer a question that will require them to review everything we have covered in the lesson.</li><li>• Model going back through the text and identifying key points (one on housing has been done for them).</li><li>• Explain that they should do this for the four themes we have covered, writing in bullet points, and then write a paragraph incorporating these.</li><li>• Ask pupils to feed back when they have finished.</li></ul>
 5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask pupils to return to page 3, and answer the question 'How did living conditions change during the Industrial Revolution'.</li></ul>