

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION



The industrial revolution was a time of great change¹ due to technological inventions and innovations. It began in the English Midlands and then spread throughout England and into Continental Europe. The Industrial Revolution transformed England from an agricultural into an industrial country. English industry passed from a home based one which involved² the whole family to a factory based system.

The manufacture of cotton textiles was the key activity in the Industrial Revolution and the invention of Hargreaves' spinning jenny³ and Arkwright's power loom⁴ in the last years of the 18th century encouraged mechanization and mass production.

The crucial development of the period was the use of steam⁵ for power and the steam engine⁶, invented by James Watt in 1769, marked the highest point of this development. Shortly after the steam engine was developed, a steam locomotive by Robert Stephenson was followed by Robert Fulton's first steam powered ship. Canals and roads were built and the advent of the railway widened the market for manufactured goods.

However the passage to industrialization was not completely easy because in England working conditions were very bad and capitalists employed women and children. They made them work in factories for up to 15-16 hours a day for low wages and to the limit of their physical endurance.

The introduction of steam power required the use of coal so the new industrial districts were mainly in Yorkshire, Lancashire and South



notes

1. change: cambiamento.
2. involved: che coinvolgeva.
3. spinning jenny: filatoio multiplo.
4. loom: telaio meccanico.
5. steam: vapore.
6. steam engine: macchina a vapore.
7. widened: allargò.
8. slums: ghetti.

...in good times,
...in the better or for the worse,
...in the end it's all the same.

HISTORICAL NOTES



Exercises

1. Answer the following questions.
 1. What was the Industrial Revolution?
 2. Where did it begin?
 3. Which was the key industry?
 4. Which were the most important inventions?
 5. What were workers' conditions like?
 6. Where were the new industrial districts?
 7. What were "slums"?
2. Complete the following sentences and correct the mistakes.
 1. The industrial revolution was a period of great depression
 2. It began in the Highlands
 3. The tobacco industry was the key industry
 4. Children and women could not work in the factories
 5. The use of steel was mainly in Cheshire, South Wales
 6. People abandoned the towns
 7. The country became overcrowded

Wales, areas rich in iron and coal. As a consequence workers migrated there. The population of Britain increased rapidly - towns became overcrowded and workers lived with their families in "slums" under terrible conditions, lacking the most elementary principles of sanitation. Whole families often lived in a single room with a complete lack of hygiene. Special institutions to help the poor were set up. The Industrial Revolution was a period of great change, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse.



4 Completa le frasi con il *Past simple* o il *Past continuous* dei verbi tra parentesi.

- 1 What _____ you _____ (do) when I _____ (ring) you?
- 2 We _____ (meet) them while we _____ (leave) the supermarket.
- 3 _____ Sam _____ (sleep) when you _____ (come) back home?
- 4 It _____ (not / rain) when we _____ (decide) to go for a walk.
- 5 She _____ (not / have) a party because she _____ (be) ill.
- 6 What _____ (happen) while I _____ (do) the shopping this morning?

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Functions**6 Traduci in inglese.**

1 Sei mai stato ad un concerto dal vivo?

2 Pioveva quando sei arrivato?

3 Ho fatto i compiti mentre mia nonna cucinava.

4 Stavo preparando dei panini quando il gatto è saltato sul tavolo.

5 Tom è fortissimo: sono contenta di averlo conosciuto.

6 Sarà un viaggio emozionante domani!

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