

# Industrial Revolution - What was the Industrial Revolution?

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## What was the Industrial Revolution?

The Industrial Revolution was the time when machines were increasingly used to do work that had been done by people. The change began in Britain in the late 1700s and eventually spread throughout the world. The new machinery included large steam-powered looms for making cotton fabric quickly and cheaply.

## When were the first factories built?

The first factories were built around 1770 to house the big new machines of the Industrial Revolution. In the factories, large numbers of workers could be gathered together to operate the machines. Many poor people moved from the country to work in the factories, living in dirty, cramped homes in the overcrowded cities.

## How did railways make a difference?

Railways were important because they transported coal and raw materials to the factories, and carried finished goods away again to sell. The trains also allowed people to move around the country to find work. The first steam locomotive was built in Britain in 1803 and, by the mid 1800s, a network of railways covered the land.

### Did you know?

Before railways, canals were built to carry coal to factories and towns. Between 1760 and 1840, almost 7000 kilometers of canals were built in Britain.

## Where did children work?

Many children worked in factories and coal mines in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain. Some children as young as five years old worked up to 16 hours a day. They were often treated badly by their bosses and many were injured by the machines. In 1833, the British government passed a law to prevent children under nine working in factories.

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