

SOCIAL STUDIES · GRADES 5–6

# The Industrial Revolution

When machines changed everything

## Before and after

	Before (c.1750)	After (c.1900)
Most people lived...	In small villages, farming	In rapidly growing cities
Most things were made...	By hand, in homes or small workshops	By machines in large factories
Travel speed	About 8 mph (horse, ship)	60+ mph (steam train)
Power source	Muscles, water, wind	Steam engines, then electricity
Children's lives	Often working from age 6 on farms	Often working in factories or mines
Diseases	Mostly farming injuries, simple infections	Tuberculosis, cholera, factory injuries

## Source — A child mill worker, 1830s (paraphrased)

We start at six in the morning. The bell rings and we run inside before the foreman shouts. The machines are loud — you cannot hear what your friend says. We crawl under them to pick out scraps of cotton. My fingers are bleeding before lunch. Lunch is bread and a pickle, eaten standing up. We finish at seven at night. I am seven years old. Three of my brothers also work here. My mother says we are lucky to have the work.

## Source questions



1. What does this source tell us about working hours for children?
2. What dangers did these children face?
3. Why might the mother have said they were 'lucky'?
4. Eventually, child labor laws were passed. Why do you think it took so long?

