

Name: _____

Industrial Revolution

In the early days of the United States, most of the people were farmers. Most of the things that people used, such as clothes and tools, were made by hand. It took a long time to make the items that people needed. In the 1800s, this slowly began to change. This change was called the Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution started in Britain. In the 1700s, inventors made new machines. These machines changed the textile industry. This industry made material that people could use for clothes and other items.

For hundreds of years, spinning wheels had been used in homes to make thread. But the spinning wheel was very slow. It could only spin one thread at a time. James Hargreaves invented a machine called the spinning jenny. It could spin eight threads at one time. Later models could spin even more.

Other inventions helped to make cloth faster. One man built a loom that used water for power. This helped the workers make the material faster. One worker could make fifty times more cloth in one day than he ever could before.

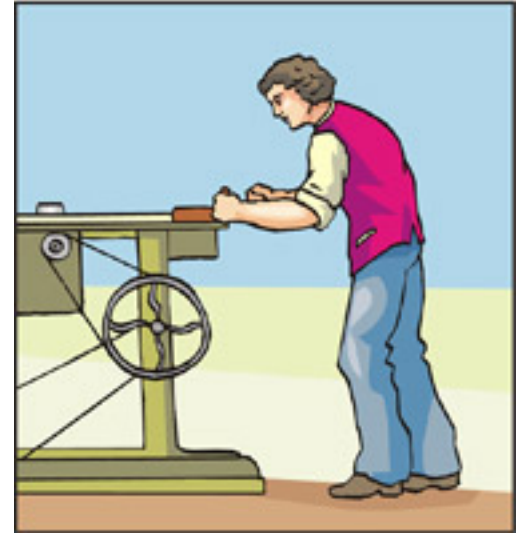
These new inventions changed how people worked. Before the inventions, many goods were made at home. Most people lived on farms. After the new machines were invented, factories were started in cities. Many people worked in factories to make the goods. People moved away from farms into the cities. These people earned money for their work.

Britain wanted to keep the new inventions a secret. A British law said that no one could take the plans of the new machines out of the country.

This law was very hard to enforce. Samuel Slater was a mechanic in Britain. He heard that the United States would pay a lot of money for the plans to the new machines. In 1789, Slater left Britain. He knew that he would be searched when he left. He could not take any of the plans with him - on paper. So he wouldn't be arrested, Slater memorized how the machines in the mill were made.

In 1793, he built a mill in Rhode Island. This was the first successful textile mill in the United States. It was powered by water.

Slater's wife also helped the mill. She made a new thread that wouldn't break as easily. This stronger thread made the mill run better and faster. The new factory was a big hit. Soon other people were copying his ideas.



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An important American inventor was Eli Whitney. Whitney was famous for inventing the cotton gin. But he also made guns. At that time, all parts of a gun were made by hand. This meant each part could be a little bit different. If one of the parts broke, someone would have to make a new part by hand. This meant getting parts could take a long time.

Whitney thought that if factories made the parts, they would all be the same. Then if a part broke, it would be much easier and faster to get a new one. This idea of interchangeable parts had been thought of by others before Whitney. But he made it popular. The idea of interchangeable parts would save a lot of money.

Whitney used the idea to make guns for the government. Soon, interchangeable parts were being used for many different things. Small shops quickly grew into large factories.

The Industrial Revolution changed life in the United States. Some people still farmed in the United States. Others left farming and moved to cities. They got jobs in the new factories. This helped cities to grow and changed the face of the nation.

Working in factories wasn't easy. The hours were very long. The workers didn't make much money. This didn't stop a lot of people from working there anyway. Many immigrants saw these jobs as a chance to make a new life in America. In a very short time, the Industrial Revolution changed the United States.

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Questions

- _____ 1. Where did the Industrial Revolution start?
 - A. Mexico
 - B. The United States
 - C. Britain

- _____ 2. Who brought the plans for machines from Britain to the United States?
 - A. Eli Whitney
 - B. Samuel Slater
 - C. James Hargreaves

- _____ 3. What idea did Eli Whitney make popular?
 - A. interchangeable parts
 - B. spinning jenny
 - C. a loom that used water for power

- _____ 4. What year did Samuel Slater build a mill in Rhode Island?
 - A. 1793
 - B. 1789
 - C. 1800

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5. How did Samuel Slater bring the plans for a new machine to the United States?

6. How did Samuel Slater's wife help the mill?
