

DBQ 4: Effects of the Industrial Revolution

(Adapted from *Document-Based Assessment for Global History*, Walch Education)

Historical Context: The Industrial Revolution which began in England in the late 1700's had a wide range of positive and negative effects on the economic and social life of the people of England. These results have been interpreted from a variety of perspectives—the factory workers, the factory owners, the government, and others who observed the conditions in industrial cities at the time.

Part A: Analyze the following documents that describe the effects of the Industrial Revolution and answer the questions that follow.

Document 1: The following is an excerpt from William Cooper's testimony before the Sadler Committee in 1832.

Sadler: What is your age?

Cooper: I am eight and twenty.

Sadler: When did you first begin to work in mills?

Cooper: When I was ten years of age.

Sadler: What were your usual hours of working?

Cooper: We began at five in the morning and stopped at nine in the night.

Sadler: What time did you have for meals?

Cooper: We had just one period of forty minutes in the sixteen hours. That was at noon.

Sadler: What means were taken to keep you awake and attentive?

Cooper: At times we were frequently strapped.

Sadler: When your hours were so long, did you have any time to attend a day school?

Cooper: We had no time to go to day school.

Sadler: Can you read and write?

Cooper: I can read, but I cannot write.

Questions: Does this testimony describe positive or negative effects of the Industrial Revolution? Describe the effects of industrialization on children working in the factory.

Document 2: Excerpt from the testimony of Joseph Hebergam to the Sadler Committee.

Sadler: What is the nature of your illness?

Hebergam: I have damages lungs. My leg muscles do not function properly and will not support of weight of my bones.

Sadler: A doctor has told you that you will die within the year, is that correct?

Hebergam: I have been so told.

Sadler: Did he tell you the cause of your illness?

Hebergam: He told me that it was caused by the dust in the factories and from overwork and insufficient diet.

Sadler: To what was his (your brother's) death attributed?

Hebergam: He was cut by a machine and he died of infection.

Sadler: Do you know of any other children who died at the Mill?

Hebergam: There were about a dozen died during the two years and a half that I was there. At the Mill where I worked last, a boy was caught in a machine and had both his thigh bones broke and from his knee to his hip the flesh was ripped up the same as it had been cut by a knife. His hand was bruised, his eyes were nearly torn out and his arms were broken. His sister, who ran to pull him off, had both her arms broke and her head bruised. The boy died. I do not know if the girl is dead, but she was not expected to live.

Sadler: Did the accident occur because the shaft was not covered?

Hebergam: Yes

Questions: Does this testimony describe positive or negative effects of the Industrial Revolution? What effect did the working conditions have on the workers?

Document 3: This excerpt is from *The Philosophy of Manufacturers* by Andrew Ure, 1835. I have visited many factories, both in Manchester and in the surrounding districts, and I never saw a single instance of corporal chastisement [beating] inflicted on a child. They seemed to be always cheerful and alert, taking pleasure in the light play of their muscles. . . .As to exhaustion, they showed no trace of it on emerging from the mill in the evening; for they began to skip about. . . .It is moreover my firm conviction [opinion] that children would thrive better when employed in our modern factories, than if left at home in apartments too often ill-aired, damp, and cold.

Question: How does Andrew Ure describe the conditions in factories he visited?

Document 4: This excerpt is from *The Working Man's Companion* subtitled *The Results of Machinery, Namely Cheap Production and Increased Employment*. It was published in 1831. You are surrounded, as we have constantly shown you throughout this book, with an infinite number of comforts and conveniences which had no existence two or three centuries ago and those comforts are not used only by a few, but are within the reach of almost all men. Every day is adding something to your comforts. Our houses are better built, your clothes are cheaper, you have an infinite number of domestic utensils. You can travel cheaply from place to place, and not only travel at less expense, but travel ten times quicker than two hundred years ago.

Question: According to this author, were the effects of the Industrial Revolution positive or negative? Cite three details from the excerpt to support your answer.

Document 5: This description is from a pamphlet published in 1797 by the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor. The village contains about 1500 inhabitants, of whom all are capable of work are employed in and about the mills. Of these there are 500 children who are entirely fed, clothed, and educated by Mr. Dale. The others live with their parents in the village and have a weekly allowance for their work. The healthy appearance of these children has frequently attracted the attention of the traveler. Special regulations, adopted by Mr. Dale, have made this factory very different from the others in this kingdom. Out of the nearly 3000 children employed in the mills from 1785 to 1797, only fourteen have died.

Question: What benefits were provided to people of this village?

Document 6: This excerpt, from *Manchester* in 1844, was written by Leon Faucher (Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1969) after his visit to English factory towns. The little town of Hyde was at the beginning of the century, a little hamlet of only 800 people, on the summit of a barren hill, the soil of which did not yield sufficient food for the inhabitants. The brothers Ashton have peopled and enriched this desert. . . .Mr. T. Ashton employs 1500 work people [in his factories]. The young women are well and decently clothed. . . . The houses inhabited by the work people form long and large streets. Mr. Ashton has built 300 of them, which he lets [rents] for . . . 75 cents per week. . . . Everywhere is to be observed a cleanliness which indicates order and comfort.

Question: What did Leon Faucher observe when he visited Hyde?

Document 7: This excerpt from *The Conditions of the Working Class in England* was written by Friedrich Engels after he visited an English industrial city in 1844.

Every great town has one or more slum areas where the workers struggle through life as best they can out of sight of the more fortunate classes of society. The slums . . . are generally unplanned wildernesses of one- or two-storied houses. Wherever possible these have cellars which are also used as dwellings. The

streets are usually unpaved, full of holes, filthy and strewn with refuse. Since they have neither gutters nor drains, the refuse accumulates in stagnant, stinking puddles. The view of Manchester is quite typical. The main river is narrow, coal-black and full of stinking filth and rubbish which it deposits on its bank. . . .One walks along a very rough path on the river bank to reach a chaotic group of little, one-story, one-room cabins. . . .In front of the doors, filth and garbage abounded. . . .

Questions: What did Engels observe as he visited an English industrial city?
Why did Engels focus on the negative results of industrialization?

Document 8: This table shows **British Iron Production (1740-1900)**.

British Iron Production (1740-1900)	
1740	17,350 tons
1796	125,079 tons
1839	1,248,781 tons
1854	3,100,000 tons
1900	9,000,000 tons

Questions: Describe British iron production between 1740-1900.
Is this a positive or negative effect of the Industrial Revolution? Explain.

Part B—Essay : Evaluate the positive and negative effects of the Industrial Revolution.