

The industrial revolution and its lasting effects in europe

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



Impact of the Industrial Revolution

The term child labour refers to the employment of children who work to produce goods and services, usually they are exploited, underpaid or not paid and their working conditions are unpleasant. During the Industrial Revolution in 19th century Britain, children made a huge part of the workforce, with large numbers of children working in metal and coal mines. In 1851, 30% of the total coal miners in Great Britain were comprised of children and youth (under 20).

Under the authority of government officials, child workers were often picked up from orphanages, where many parents who lacked health or skills to earn sufficient income for their family, left their children. They would be housed, clothed and given food, compensating for the long day of work. Their only payment was in the form of basic needs. This common form of child labour was categorized as “ Parrish apprentice children.” Another form of child labour was known as “ free labour children,” where parents needed their children’s earnings and sent their children off to work. However, between the two, Parrish worker were subjugated to harsher working conditions that they couldn’t neglect any work as for the “ free labour children,” their parents could choose for them not to work if they found the conditions unacceptable.

The working conditions of the children were horrifying. Children that were lucky enough to get paid were given less than 10 cents an hour for 2 weeks of work. They were small and easily fit in small spaces or able to work with their small hands, and used for working in simpler jobs that required less and

no skill. Children would start as young as 4 years old working in production factories and mines as well as in the textile industry. Many started as scavengers, crawling beneath machinery to clear it from anything that may disturb the mechanism. Due to long hours of work, many children fell asleep whilst working and fell into the machine, because machinery was not fenced off it would kill them instantly. If their hair became tangled, it would rip their scalps off or their hands would be crushed by moving machines.

Many children had physical deformities due to the lack of exercise and sunlight. They became severely sick working in fatal conditions such as in match factories, children would have the job of dipping sticks in phosphorous, later in life their teeth to rot due to this chemical used. Many died from the long term inhalation of phosphorous. Spinning in the the textile industry required warm and humid environment. Cotton mills were poorly ventilated and steam engines contributed to the heat, children were forced to work in these conditions, many experienced dizziness and haziness and fainting was the norm.

Along with the despicable working conditions the children had to endure, they were also subjected to physical and verbal abuse if they had not performed a task suitably. They would be beaten and “ weighted”, a form of punishment where a heavy weight was tied to the neck of the child and they would have to walk around the factory, for other children to “ take example,” this could last an hour. This form of punishment led to serious injuries to the back and neck.

As the children workers started increasing, the treatment of and working conditions declined. The way the children were being treated was like they were slaves and the places they worked were heated, poorly ventilated, dimly lit and congested and this led to many children becoming ill. Working 12 to 16 hours a day, six days a week, children as young as five years worked long hours without breaks. There were many legislations that were put in to place to minimize child labour. The first was The Cotton Factories Act of 1819, that set out a minimum age of 9 that could only work a maximum of 12 hours a day. In 1833, the government passed a Factory Act to improve the working conditions and treatment of children in factories. It included children not working at night, no workers under 9 and at least two hours of school were to be allowed for the children. Children aged 9 to 13 were only allowed maximum 8 hours of work a day and ages 14-18 were only allowed 12 hours a day. However, there was a problem of the children having no birth certificates, so many factories still went on with children workers under 9 and the mistreatment of children did not end immediately. In 1847, the Ten Hour Bill was passed from the British parliament, limiting the hours worked by women and children to only 10 hours.