

# Positive and negative effects of the industrial revolution

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



The Industrial Revolution was a change in the mid-18th century from small scale, domestic production of goods to machine-based, mass production of goods. It is usually thought of as having mostly or only positive impacts on Europe. Although the revolution did have many positive impacts, it had its fair share of negative impacts as well. Some of the positive outcomes included the overall increase in production and value of goods, improved efficiency of how these goods were made, and the development of new power sources. The Industrial Revolution also caused a great increase in population and urbanization.

This increase resulted in several negative impacts. Some included unsafe working and living conditions, child labor, and lack of many public services. Clearly, the Industrial Revolution had a huge impact on European society with both positive and negative effects. The Industrial Revolution had many positive effects. Overall, the increase in quality, quantity, and efficiency of goods were the main positive impacts of the Industrial Revolution. However, it all started in the agricultural industry. Due to numerous inventions and improvements in the agricultural methods, many of the people who worked the lands on manors had to move to the cities.

This caused a growth in the number of cities as well as a growth of the population living in the cities- urbanization. This was one positive effect of the revolution. Inventions in the textile industry also were developed. The first was the flying shuttle which greatly sped up the weaving process. This invention led to a chain of new inventions that continually increased the speed and efficiency of production and quantity. Eventually domestic

production of goods evolved into larger machines run in factories, mass production, and the need for larger power sources.

This change from domestic production of goods to factory-based production was another positive effect (Docs 1a and 1b). The large-scale production of goods, first in the textile industry, caused a decrease in the price of these goods. This in turn caused a better economy. Therefore, as the goods became cheaper and the economy became better, the demand and production increased. These two impacts, the improved economy and decrease in price of goods were also positive. Because the machines mass producing goods in factories were so large, a new, stronger power source became a necessity.

This resulted in the invention of the water frame, which then led to the steam engine and the internal combustion engine (used mostly in vehicles and other modes of transportation). This development of new power sources was yet another positive impact of the revolution. Finally, as urbanization and industrialization caused unsafe living and working conditions, a series of reforms were made to improve these conditions. Reform groups such as the Labor Unions advocated for improvements in the laborers' conditions in which they were subjected to work and live. The Factory Act of 1833 was among several laws passed prohibiting child labor (Doc 2).

The Sadler Commission, a government sponsored organization, sent inspectors to the factories to enforce the new laws that improved the laborers' lives at work. Clearly, the Industrial Revolution had numerous positive impacts on Europe. Several negative impacts of the Industrial

Revolution also developed despite its numerous positive effects. Many of the negative impacts actually came as a result of urbanization and industrialization. According to document 3, the number of large cities just about doubled between 1801 and 1851. The primary negative impacts of the Industrial Revolution included the working and living conditions of the workers.

Because of their low social status and lack of money and land, the laborers were forced to work for people of higher social status, or the bourgeoisie. As previously mentioned, the workers, or the proletariat, were forced off of their land as their manual agricultural labor was replaced by faster, more efficient machines. With almost no money, they moved to the cities and set to work right away. Unfortunately, their poverty earned them horrible working and living conditions. They received very little pay given the number of hours they put in- they were usually overworked for up to 16 hours a day.

The machines they worked around were very large and dangerous, and a worker could get fired if he or she was injured by a machine. This lack of worker's compensation, or job security, was one negative impact of the revolution. Another major negative effect of the revolution was the worker's dangerous working conditions. Even the few hours the workers spent at home were pretty unsafe. Due to lack of plumbing and garbage disposal, the streets of the slums often exposed the inhabitants to many diseases because they were "filthy and strewn with animals and vegetable refuse" (Doc 5).

The families of the proletariat were also often overcrowded- many times multiple families were crammed into one small living space. The unsanitary

and overcrowded living conditions of the workers provided yet another negative effect of the Industrial Revolution. The extent of how unsanitary their living conditions were is shown in this quote: "... the annual loss of life from filth and bad ventilation are greater than the loss from death or wounds in any wars in which the country has been engaged in modern times" (Doc 6).

This proves that not only were the working conditions of the proletariat dangerous, but the unsanitary conditions in which they lived also provided an unsafe environment that caused the deaths of many. Finally, one dominant, negative issue that resulted from the Industrial Revolution was child labor. Children were often used in the factories and coal mines because of their size. In the textile factories, they were small enough to dart under the machines and try to fix tangled threads with their quick, nimble fingers.

However, this work was quite dangerous because they could lose their fingers if they were not fast enough; if they got injured in this way, or any way really, they could then lose their job. Fortunately, child labor was an issue soon solved due to the Labor Acts of 1833, 1842 (Mines Act), 1845, and 1874. Undoubtedly, the Industrial Revolution had a considerable number of negative effects. The Industrial Revolution was certainly one movement that had a huge impact on Europe. As with many things, it had its pros and cons. Some pros comprised of the increase of production, quality, and quantity of goods.

This increase also led to another positive effect: an improved economy due to lowered prices of goods. Some cons included the unsafe working

conditions workers suffered through as well as the unsanitary, overcrowded living conditions they had to deal with. Also, early on, lack of worker's compensation, or job security, and public services such as plumbing and proper garbage disposal did not make matters any better. The Industrial Revolution may have had its ups and downs, but nonetheless, completely changed the face of Europe by the time of its end.