

# Manchester dbq essay sample



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As goes history, there always seems to be a revolution around the bend. An oppressed people, eager for change, overthrow the tyrant. In place instituting their own ideologies, only to make the same mistakes again. In mid-18th century Britain, something strange was brewing. Years of peace in the land, free trade between England and Scotland, and the amount of raw goods contributed by the colonies, provided the perfect genesis grounds for what we now know as the Industrial Revolution. Though it came at a price.

Due to new innovations in textile manufacturing and the mechanization of society, the small, river town of Manchester, England, became a metropolis. From just 1750 to 1850 this small town increased three times in size, as well as implemented factory buildings, canals, and railroads (Doc. 1). This new boom in industry for Manchester was a blessing for the few, and a curse for the many. The results of this new mechanized town were quite foul. Many reported crowded narrow streets, buildings of smog-blackened brick, and a solemn people. When artisans and craftsmen lost their jobs, their purpose, and the majority had to live in a grim reality, many people started to oppose the Industrial Revolution. Robert Southey, and English Romantic poet, after visiting Manchester in 1807, described it as “ A place more destitute than Manchester is not easy to conceive.” (Doc. 2). Though he is a Romantic, and his view may contain some extent of hyperbole, the sole description rings true, as others saw Manchester this way too.

Flora Tristan, French socialist and women’s rights advocate, wrote how in her visitation to Manchester “ Most workers lack clothing, bed, furniture, fuel wholesome

food-even potatoes!” (Doc. 7). In fact, an average day for the worker was a 12-14 hour day working in a factory filled with foul, polluted air, surrounded by other poor, emaciated souls. Sadly, the conditions of the actual town itself fared no better. According to a view of the River Irwell in *The Graphic* magazine, it was depicted as having heavy smog hovering over the city, and sewage running out of dreary buildings into the ink black river (Doc. 11).

According to *The Lancet*, British medical journal, these decrepit living conditions took their toll. According to this journal, the average life expectancy of a laborer in Manchester was a measly 17 years of age. On the other hand, in rural areas the average life expectancy for the common laborer was 25-38 (Doc. 8).

While many described completely atrocious living conditions and a dirty, filthy, ugly city, others on the opposite end of the spectrum believed it to be a place of achievement. According to Wheelan and Co. Manchester was the Workshop of the World, and even rivaled London in features, and “ There is scarcely a country on the face of the habitable globe into which the fruits of its industry have not penetrated.” (Doc. 9). Of course, being a well profiting business, Wheelan and Co. could only reap the benefits of this industrial town, therefore appearing to be a rather appealing place to live. Later in the Industrial Revolution, the journalist and historian William Alexander Abram seemed to believe that the condition of the laborers has been improved by the “ Hours of Labor in Factories Act, passed in 1844, worked a thorough reform.” (Doc. 10). Though he maintains his status as a journalist and

historian, it remains hard to believe that in such a polluted place, the quality of life is actually something likeable.

Though Manchester and the Industrial Revolution struck very contrasting opinions, it is no doubt that without the Revolution, for good or for worse, the world couldn't have progressed to this industrial age without it.