

What can historians say about the Industrial Revolution?

Medieval

14th century

15th century

Early Modern

16th century

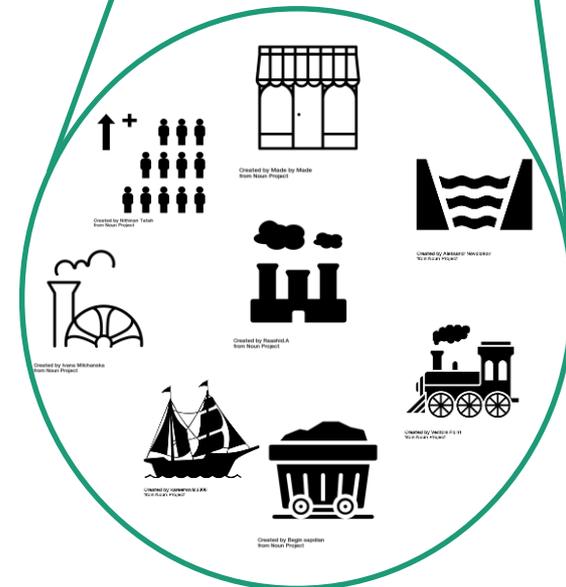
17th century

Industrial Revolution

18th century

19th century

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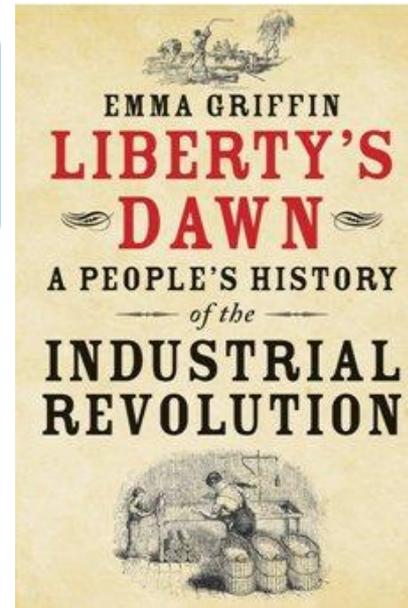
20th century

What can historians say about the Industrial Revolution?

It was a disastrous and terrible event!



Historian Arnold Toynbee



Professor Emma Griffin

Evidence for the Industrial Revolution

Archaeology and material evidence



PERSONS EMPLOYED IN THE MINES. 23

tion, says—"Of the adult mining population of this district, I am convinced that a very large proportion have commenced work as early as the sixth or seventh year of age." (J. L. Kennard, *Emp. Report*, p. 149.)

It is but fair to state, however, that there is, in this county, a growing feeling against employing very young children in the mines; and there is a rule laid down at Worsley in the Bridgewater trust, prohibiting the employment of male children under 10 years of age, and females under 12. Another fact to be noticed is, that the disposition existed by many of the collieries to carry their children into the mines at so early an age, arose out of the legal restriction that now exists against sending them to the neighbouring factories.

DERBYSHIRE COAL-FIELD.

Under 15 years of age	725	Total, 1241.
Under 18 years of age	516	

The Sub-Commissioner for this district records several cases in which children began to work in the mines at five, and between five and six years of age.

PENNSYLVANIA.

Under 13 years of age	45	Total, 137.
Under 18 years of age	92	

Of whom 154 are females.

YORKSHIRE.

Under 15 years of age	1120	Total, 2647.
Under 18 years of age	1527	

Of whom 154 are girls.

It is not uncommon in this district for infants of five years old to be employed in the pits.

CHESTERFIELD COAL-FIELD.

Mr. Symons says he can form no correct estimate of the number of children who work in the pits here; but they are not so numerous as in Yorkshire. They seldom commence work before 10 years of age, however.

NORTH WALES.

Mr. Jones says, "In the mines and collieries considerable numbers of children and young persons are employed; I have, however, no data on which to compute the numbers, as I have not had returns from all the works to which I sent tabular forms, and there are a great number of small works employing only a few hands in which I sent no forms. The returns that have been made and my own personal inspection, enable me to say that the number of children and young persons employed in the mines and collieries in North Wales must amount to some thousands. It is only in the collieries of Ebbw Vale and girls under eighteen are employed; in the mines no females have any employment. I have great satisfaction in reporting that, though girls did work at the pit mouths, they never go under ground, such a practice has not yet found its way into the northern parts of the principality. The number who work on the surface is comparatively few, and the custom of employing females at all is confined to the district around Wrexham. In most cases, the females employed exceed the age of eighteen; as strength is required, there are but few under that age, and rarely any to be found under thirteen."

THE NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT IN MINES. 41

ing to say for themselves. "Their whole time is spent in sitting in the dark for twelve hours, and even it is not for the picking and reaping of the wages, it would be equal to solitary confinement of the worst order."

But I will not hear some of these poor children tell their own sad story. The four following were in collieries in Glamorganshire:

John Richards, thirteen years old.

"From eighteen months cleaning the train-roads on the coal-hill. We under-ground before for six years, keeping an air-hole. Never got hurt very much. Often fell asleep, all the while over the wheel longer or out."

Henry Thomas, nine years old.

"Began work when seven years old. Has often fallen asleep when tired. Runs home and sits there and shivers. When first set to the first-emption twelve months and half by five months, reported to die. When the accident took place, some men were in the mine; one had gone into the old work. The men were first alarmed. I was carried home by a man; the doctor was very badly; it took the child from my face. Have returned to work three months. Father is a cooper. Mother has eight children, three out at work." [See quite disagreeable.]

Mary Child, twelve years old.

"Been five years in the Plymouth mine. Never leaves till the last drop [water] is drawn out by the horse. Works from six till four and five at night. Has run home very hungry & runs along the bank, or hangs on a cart as it passes. Does not like the work in the night, would not mind the daylight work."

Henry Davis, and seven years old.

"A very young little girl, who was first asleep under a piece of rock, under the air-hole before ground. Her father had gone out for work of old, and upon waking her, she said she was so sore she had run away with her forehead and cheeks, so she went to sleep. The cooper, who was with her, thought she was not so old, though he felt sure she had been below near eighteen months."

Here are some others:

John Smith, seven years old, collier's boy at the Soap Pit, Bishfield.

"I stand and open and shut the door; I'm generally in the dark, and sit on down against the door. I sleep twelve hours in the pit. I never see daylight now, except on Saturdays; I fall asleep every day, and a worse way ever to go to bed and wake in misery; they'd squeeze me against the door of fall to sleep again." (Cotton, P. 1, p. 226.)

John Smith, eight years old.

"I'm a trapper in the Gander Pit. I have to creep without a light, and I'm scared. I go to bed and sometimes fall asleep three or four hours at a stretch. I never go to sleep. Sometimes I sing when I've light, but not in the dark; I don't sing now. I don't like hanging in the pit. I'm very sleepy when I go on again in the morning." (Ibid., p. 226.)

From 1840 to 1850 was very distressing time for our parents, and although the children were very young we know that our parents were passing through a time of trial, as we were frequently very sick of food & other things. This caused a feeling of sad depression on our childish minds, which never thoroughly passed off in after years, but caused a feeling depression & sadness all our lives.

bad, and my father's business fell away, almost to nothing, and from that time we gradually ~~came~~ ^{fell} into distress and trouble, and during the next ~~two or three~~ ^{next} years we suffered very great privations and hardships in every way, ^{and} remember the brothers taking possession of our home during that period, and were paid out by friends at the last hour to save our home being taken away, from 1840 to 1850 was the most distressing time of the 19th century, during that period a very large number of people were in the greatest distress. Riots and Chartist meetings were constantly taking place. The great meeting place was on Clorkemead Green. These I well remember. We children seldom got sight of any money, at that time, there was an old lady ~~living~~

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Archaeology and material evidence



The legacy of the Industrial Revolution can still be seen all across Britain, in surviving buildings, canals and bridges. This photograph shows part of Manchester.

Although some features in the photograph such as the vehicles, and electrical cables on the railway, are more modern, much of what you can see dates to the 18th-19th centuries. Can you see:

- the canal, with lock gates;
- a railway bridge;
- an industrial building with a chimney;
- a house with typical 19th century sash windows.

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How can historians use this evidence?

Which of these things can we find out from archaeology and material evidence?

- A. The living and working conditions of ordinary men, women and children during the Industrial Revolution
- B. How many men, women or children worked in particular industries
- C. Where factories and machinery, coal mines, canals and housing were located in relation to each other
- D. What concerns were raised at this time about the safety and treatment of workers in factories and mines
- E. The effect of industrialisation on the landscape of Britain

Explain your answer here or in your exercise book:

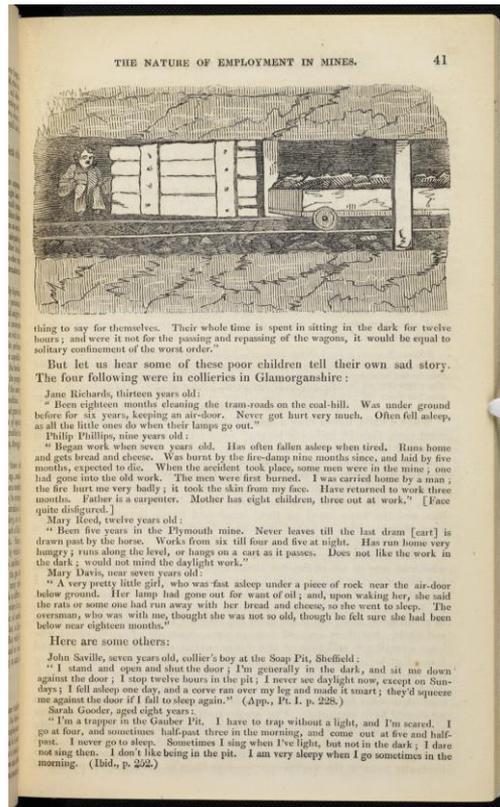
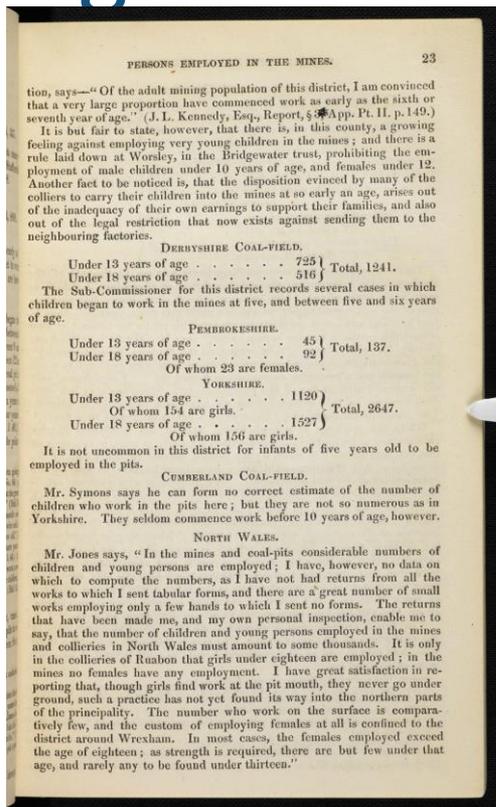
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Parliamentary investigations and legislation



These pages are from a report to MPs about conditions in mines and factories.

Concerns were raised about safety and working conditions, especially for children, in mines and factories. Parliament commissioned an investigation, and the findings led to the Factory Acts. These laws put rules in place about working conditions, especially for children.

The report contains a number of features, including:

- Statistics on the numbers of children employed and their ages
- Illustrations of conditions for children in coal mines
- Examples of individual children's experiences as told to the investigators

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How can historians use this evidence?

Which of these things can we find out from parliamentary investigations and legislation?

- A. The living and working conditions of ordinary men, women and children during the Industrial Revolution
- B. How many men, women or children worked in particular industries
- C. What concerns were raised at this time about the safety and treatment of workers in factories and mines
- D. The experiences of individuals and how they changed and varied at different times and in different places
- E. The effect of industrialisation on the landscape of Britain

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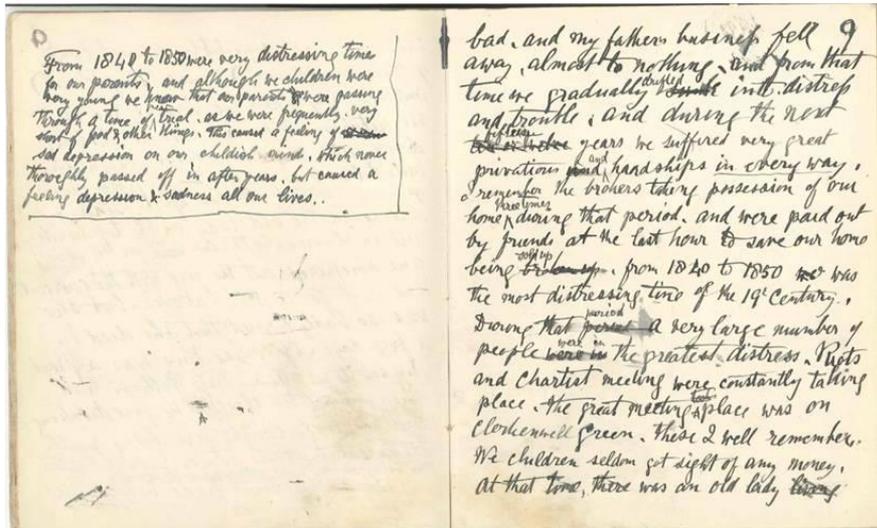
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Autobiographies



These pages are from the autobiography of John Shinn, born in 1837. Not many working class men and even fewer women wrote autobiographies. But those who did recorded their own lives and experiences, and often those of their families too.

Professor Emma Griffin, who has researched nearly 400 autobiographies or life histories from the 18th and 19th centuries, writes that they:

‘...capture a broad swath of working class life: the skilled and unskilled, agricultural, urban and industrial workers, the reasonably comfortable and the desperately poor.’ They ‘wrote about their working lives’, but also ‘condensed their lives into a few pages’ and left many things out. Nevertheless, their stories are ‘freely narrated by ordinary men and women themselves.’

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How can historians use this evidence?

Which of these things can we find out from autobiographies of working men and women?

- A. The living and working conditions of ordinary men, women and children during the Industrial Revolution
- B. How many men, women or children worked in particular industries
- C. What concerns were raised at this time about the safety and treatment of workers in factories and mines
- D. The experiences of individuals and how they changed and varied at different times and in different places
- E. The effect of industrialisation on the landscape of Britain

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Evidence from autobiographies

The information in the pdf **Working lives of men in the Industrial Revolution** is based on examples from the autobiographies studied by Professor Emma Griffin.

Use the information in each of the three sections (paragraphs and speech bubbles) to make notes on:

1. a) Advantages of work in mines and factories
b) Disadvantages of work in mines and factories
2. Reasons why the Industrial Revolution offered new opportunities to train in a range of skills
3. a) Benefits of work as a navy, compared to being a farm labourer
b) Disadvantages of work as a navy

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Evidence from autobiographies

Use this slide for your notes for the previous task, if you are working on the slides

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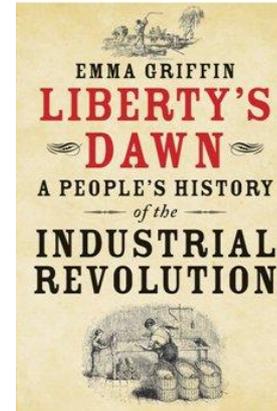
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What can historians say about the Industrial Revolution?



It was a **disastrous**
and **terrible** event!

Historian Arnold Toynbee



Professor Emma Griffin

Based on what you have learned so far, do you agree with Toynbee's interpretation that the Industrial Revolution was 'disastrous and terrible'?

Why do you think Griffin described it as 'liberty's dawn'?