Module: British Civilization

Lesson 1: Industrial Revolution

Level: Second Year

Third Semester (2025/2026)

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Introduction:

The Industrial Revolution was a period of major technological progress that began around **1760** and continued until about **1900 (mid-18th century-19th century)**. Before this time, most people lived in **rural villages**, working on **farms** or producing goods at home. Farming was seasonal, so during the winter months many families faced **poverty and food shortages**. In early factories, **running water** had been used to power wheels and simple machinery.

However, the Industrial Revolution completely **transformed production and daily life**. Instead of goods being made slowly by individuals or small workshops, new **machines** allowed products to be created **faster, cheaper, and in large quantities**, all with the same quality. This process, known as **mass production**, created continuous employment in **factories, mills, and mines**. As a result, many people left the countryside and **migrated to cities** in search of work.

The Industrial Revolution was a transformative era that transformed societies from feudal, agrarian economies to capitalist, industrialised systems....

Read more at: https://vajiramandravi.com/upsc-exam/industrial-revolution/

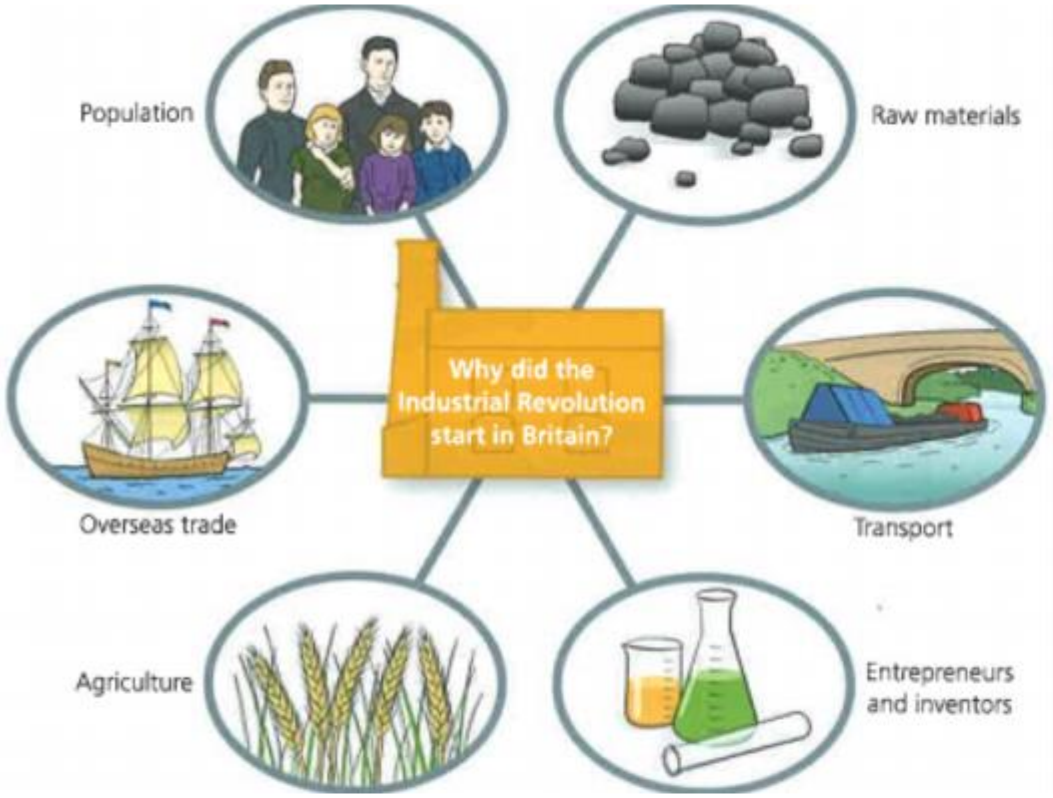
1. Causes of the Industrial Revolution

https://youtu.be/zhL5DCizj5c

The **Industrial Revolution in England** was caused by several connected factors that worked together to bring major change.
The growth of **trade and commerce** created a wealthy class of investors who wanted to use their extra money to build new industries. Much of this wealth came from **Britain's colonies**, especially **India**, which provided the capital needed to develop manufacturing. At the same time, **population growth** supplied more workers for the growing factories and helped keep labour costs low.

The **British government** also played a key role, as it supported trade and fought to expand markets and colonies. New **inventions** by Hargreaves, Crompton, Watt, and Cartwright made production faster and more efficient. Britain's strong **infrastructure**, including its ports and banking system, made trade and investment easier.

In addition, the state followed **laissez-faire economic ideas** promoted by Adam Smith and David Ricardo, which encouraged businesses to grow freely without government control. Finally, Britain's **colonies** provided both the **raw materials** and the **markets** needed for industrial products, helping the country become the world's leading industrial power.



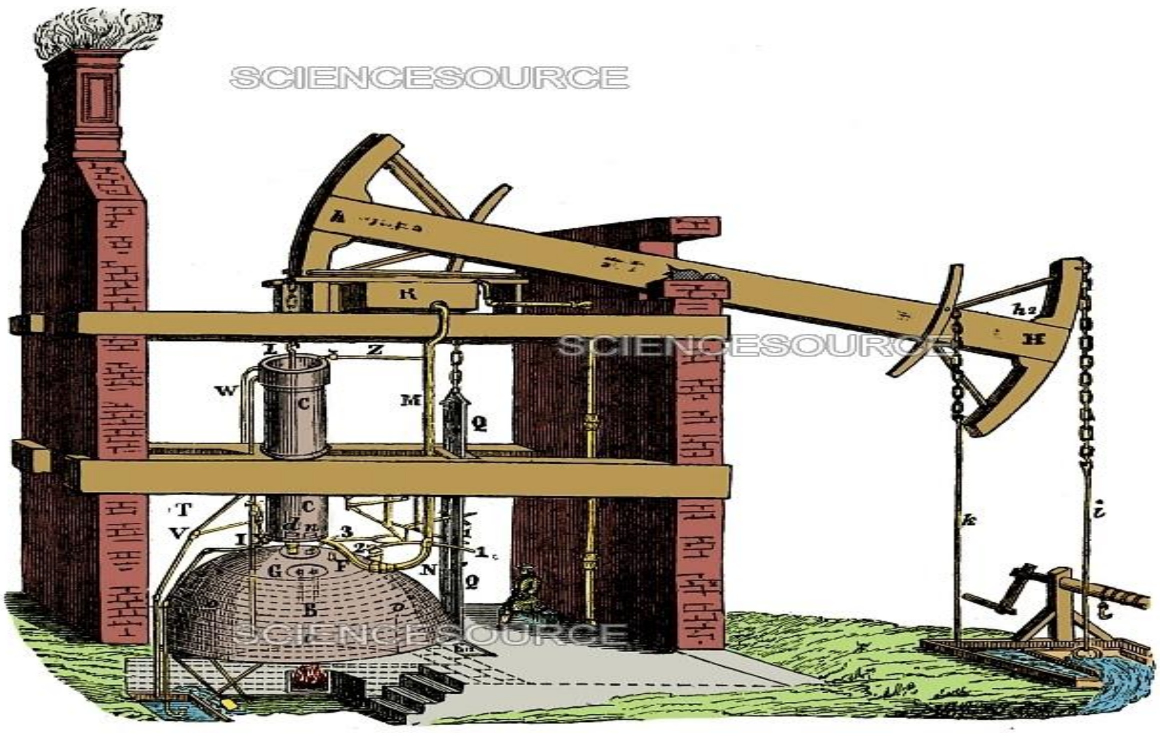
2. Major Inventions and Industries

The Industrial Revolution began in the **textile industry**, where inventions such as:

2.1. The Steam Engine

In 1712, Thomas Newcomen created the steam engine, a major innovation that changed industry and transport. Before its invention, large machines such as corn mills relied on flowing water to turn their wheels and gears. The new steam engine, however, used steam pressure to move pistons, which in turn powered machines.

Steam engines were soon applied to trains (locomotives), ships, and factory machinery, allowing production and travel to become far more efficient. Because they no longer depended on rivers for water power, factories could now be built anywhere. This invention also made transportation faster, easier, and less expensive, helping to drive industrial growth.



2.2. Railways

The invention of the steam engine made it possible to develop an extensive railway system, which allowed businesses to move larger quantities of goods to many different areas. Ordinary citizens also benefited from this progress. In 1825, Robert Stephenson constructed the first steam-powered passenger train, enabling people to travel across the country far more rapidly than before. Railways also improved communication, as newspapers from major cities could be distributed nationwide and the postal service became faster and more efficient.

2.3. The spinning jenny

The **spinning jenny** was an early machine designed to spin **wool or cotton** using multiple spindles at once. It was **hand-powered** and **patented by James Hargreaves in 1770**. This invention marked an important step in the **industrialisation of the textile industry**, as it greatly increased the amount of thread that could be produced. Although the yarn made by the spinning jenny was of lower quality than that produced by **Richard Arkwright's water frame**, it played a key role in making textile production faster and more efficient.

3. Social and Economic Transformations of the Industrial Revolution

The **Industrial Revolution** had a deep impact on European society, especially in **Britain**, where it brought major social and economic changes. Society became divided into three main groups according to wealth and occupation. The **industrial elite**, known as the *grande bourgeoisie*, included rich bankers, capitalists, and factory owners. The **middle class**, or *professional bourgeoisie*, was made up of educated professionals such as engineers, doctors, and lawyers. The **working class** consisted of labourers who moved from rural areas to cities in search of work in factories, mines, and docks.

Life for the working class was extremely harsh. **Child labour** became common, and workers often lived in **poverty**, working **long hours** for **very low wages**. However, the Industrial Revolution also brought **positive effects** such as increased **wealth**, a higher **standard of living**, and greater **availability of goods**. Many people gained access to **cheaper products**, **better housing**, and **improved diets**.

Economically, industrialization led to a large **increase in production**, which reduced the cost of goods and encouraged **capitalist growth**. Wealth was now tied to **factory ownership** and **machinery**, creating a new class of **capitalists**. The **banking system** developed further, as capital was moved from areas with surplus income to those needing investment. In the early 1700s, **private banks** were established by goldsmiths, merchants, and manufacturers. Finally, the discovery of new **trade routes** led to intense **competition among colonial powers** seeking raw materials, markets, and cheap labour to expand their empires.

Conclusion

The Industrial Revolution marked a turning point in history, transforming Britain into a modern industrial nation. It reshaped society, boosted the economy, and laid the foundations for the technological world we live in today.

Work cited

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