



# The Industrial Revolution: A Global Event

A Simulation for Grades 8-12

by

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WORLD HISTORY

Era Seven: An Age of Revolutions, 1750-1914



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# TEACHER BACKGROUND MATERIAL

## I. UNIT OVERVIEW

The Industrial Revolution has fundamentally altered the way human beings live more drastically than has any other historical phenomenon. An essentially static agrarian human society based on rigid social distinctions dominated by traditional elites gave way to a dynamic system with no predictable outcome. This is the legacy bequeathed to our current students. By engaging in this simulation students will better understand the historical basis of the contemporary world's fluid and volatile character. We live today within an ever restructuring world economy, one that produces rapid social mobility and the emergence of new divisions of labor and new power elites.

The principal aim of this unit is to offer an alternative to the traditional textbook approach, which typically focuses narrowly on the English Industrial Revolution and its spread to the continent. This unit stresses the notion that the "Industrial Revolution" was in fact a long-term process of worldwide discoveries. Recent research and writings have increasingly demonstrated that industrialism, from its inception, was a global phenomenon.

The unit directs students to perceive historical events in an expanded frame of time and space. Students will understand that industrial development and change occurred over centuries. Although the initial focus of industrial change had European roots, local histories and political-economic structures around the world provided the context for a rich interaction among peoples. The simulation provides a series of biographies which reflect this interaction and describe the resultant winners and losers in this new global environment.

The simulation raises additional questions concerning unpredictable consequences of historical phenomena. Each of the biographies forces students to consider linkages between industrialism and imperialism. They reflect both the acceptance and rejection of "Westernization." They also identify the local resistance movements which contributed to the evolution of nationalist movements. Other interconnected global trends appear in many of the biographies such as population growth, urbanization, migration, changing gender roles and scientific and cultural diffusion.

The approach of this unit is to have each student understand the perspective of a specific individual who witnessed, participated in, or was in some way affected by world industrialization during the period 1850–1914. That individual is associated with a specific social class within a specific nation during the nineteenth century. The core documents of this unit are fifty-four profiles of individuals. Together, these profiles represent prototypes of six social classes in each of nine countries.

The six social classes are:

**Farmers**  
**Workers**  
**Ruling elites**  
**Merchants/Entrepreneurs**  
**Religious figures**  
**Intellectuals/Artists**

The nine countries are:

**Brazil**  
**China**  
**Egypt**  
**Germany**  
**Great Britain**  
**India**  
**Japan**  
**Russia**  
**South Africa**

Through a series of learning activities, the student will come to appreciate his or her character's connection to a particular social class and nation-state and to the global phenomenon of industrialization. Ultimately, we want students to deal with a "big question," an "essential question," which, based upon their study of history, leads them to make their own clear response to an issue of continuing significance in their lives: economic and technological change. The profiles are based on lives of persons who lived and worked between 1850 and the outbreak of World War I. Although the focus is on these seven decades, the issues raised in this simulation cover the broader development of industrialization and its global impact. Most of the profiles are of actual individuals, who appear with their names. When real historical actors were not available, a composite biography was constructed from historical sources. The composite profiles are labeled "typical," for example "typical farmer."

In addition, teachers and students will discover among the profiles individuals who, true to real life, did not necessarily represent the views of the majority of their social class. One example is the Russian merchant/entrepreneur who gave funds to the Bolsheviks. Another is Karl Marx, who was a German intellectual but did not represent the majority viewpoint of that class. These inconsistencies will stimulate student thinking and help them appreciate the complexities of historical reality.

## II. PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

**A**wareness of multiple intelligences and learning styles, commitment to the concept of "student as worker, teacher as coach," and application of authentic assessment techniques, form the pedagogical cornerstones of this unit. In teaching history, such principles support the philosophy that guides much educational research, including the "Standards in Historical Thinking" in the *National Standards for History*. In working with this unit, students know at the outset the "essential question" to which they will seek their own answer. They will also know the criteria they will have to meet in order to demonstrate that they have successfully grappled with the question.

This unit incorporates use of four scoring sheets. These are integral to this pedagogy because they delineate for both teachers and students what students should know and be able to do, and by what criteria they will be assessed. Students will become more engaged in their learning and self-critical of their work as they use explicit criteria to guide their efforts.

The methods used in this unit demand that students interpret historical evidence, do research effectively, synthesize their data, and engage in higher order applications. For teachers the process demands modeling a successful product and facilitating cooperative learning skills. Also, it requires teachers to help students make decisions to overcome obstacles as they move from step to step.

The Mastery Project is a summative feature of the simulation. By providing students with a variety of media through which they can show their understanding of the “essential question,” the project fulfills the promise of multiple-intelligences, learning-style theory, and authentic assessment. The formats the Mastery Projects may take reflect the variety and range of intelligences described by Gardiner, giving the teacher an opportunity to reach every student (See Howard Gardiner, *Frames of Mind*, New York, 1985). The projects require students to address independently and critically an open-ended historical question that gives focus to all the work they do to engage in the simulation.

### III. UNIT CONTEXT

This simulation unit may be presented in connection with a wide variety of commonly taught topics centered on the nineteenth century. These might include the Industrial Revolution, patterns of technological and scientific change, the social impact of industrialization, economic and social reform movements, new political ideologies, and initiatives and enterprise of peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America amid global economic change.

### IV. CORRELATION TO THE NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

*Industrialization: A Global Event* provide teaching materials that address the *National Standards for History*, Basic Edition (National Center for History in the Schools, 1996), **World History, Era 7**, “An Age of Revolutions, 1750–1914.” This unit relates particularly to **Standard 2** on the agricultural and industrial revolutions; **Standard 3** on transformations of Eurasian societies; **Standard 4** on patterns of nationalism, state-building and social reform; **Standard 5** on global change in the era of Western dominance; and **Standard 6** on major global trends 1750–1914. The unit also address **Era 8**, “A Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement, 1900–1945,” **Standard 1** on reform, revolution, and social change in the world economy of the early century.

## V. UNIT OUTLINE

The profiles may be used in different ways, depending on the amount of time and depth each teacher wishes to give the simulation. In past experience with this unit in New York State, projects have ranged from ten weeks using all or most of the historical character profiles to mini-lessons of one or two days. If most of the profiles are used, the simulation may take approximately four weeks.

The overarching objective of the unit is to ask students to analyze and respond to an Essential Question: **Can the effects of major economic and technological change in any era be limited and controlled, or will these effects bring global consequences that go beyond the expected?** Investigation of industrialism around the world thus becomes a case study for considering a question of continuing significance in our lives.

The simulation has four basic stages, culminating in a hypothetical Global Conference of Social Classes held in Geneva in 1913. The purpose of this Conference is to address six important issues, one issue directed toward each of the six social classes represented in the simulation. In preparation for the Conference students proceed through the following stages:

- Stage I: **Students learn their character.** Each student learns to identify with one of the characters represented in the profiles. The student should identify with the character as an individual, as a member of a particular social class, and as a citizen of a nation.
- Stage II: **Students learn the historical context of their character's life.** Each student locates his or her character in the context of historical events occurring in that character's country.
- Stage III: **Students meet as National Delegations.** Each student gets ready to participate in the Global Conference in Geneva as a member of a National Delegation. The student learns how social class and national interest may conflict in the face of global industrialism.
- Stage IV: **Students attend the Global Conference of Social Classes.** Each student participates in the Global Conference primarily by representing his or her social class. The student learns how that class was similar to and different from comparable classes in other nations. The student also learns how nationalism and national traditions affect class interests, and perceptions about class interest, in different countries.