The Industrial Revolution was not a war. Rather, it was a process of change in the way people lived their lives. It began in England and spread throughout Europe, arriving eventually in the United States of America. It had a huge effect on human history.

Before the Industrial Revolution, people did things by hand. The Industrial Revolution enabled people to use machines instead. As a result, people went from living in the countryside and working on farms to living in cities and working in factories.

The Industrial Revolution took place between 1760 and 1860.

**Life Before the Industrial Revolution**

Before the Industrial Revolution started, life was very hard. People worked on farms and had to use their own strength to plow their fields and harvest their crops. Farmers did have animals to help but handling the animals could also be difficult.

There was no electricity. People used a stove for cooking, and had to chop and burn wood to keep the stove working.

There were also no bathrooms or running water!

The roads were smaller and rough as tarmac had not yet been developed. There were no cars or trains so communication was difficult. News was spread by travellers and goods were only sold in their local area.

People made goods to sell in their local area only, perhaps reaching a few nearby towns. They made clothing from locally-found materials such as animal hides and furs. Nylon had not yet been developed, and transportation was not good enough to import large quantities of cotton.

Most people were farmers, working in small towns and villages.
If you lived in a port city such as London or Bristol, you could benefit from imported goods that arrived by ship.

While there was some technology, it relied on wind and water power, such as using a windmill to grind wheat into flour.

Education was poor and mostly reserved for the rich who could employ private tutors. There were schools and universities but again, these were reserved for the wealthy.

The politics of this time in Britain was based upon land ownership so ordinary people had little influence and few rights.

**WORKSHEET**

1. Why is the Industrial Revolution described as a revolution?
2. Where did the Industrial Revolution begin?
3. Why did people move into cities?
4. When did the Industrial Revolution take place?
5. What occupation did many people have before the Industrial Revolution?
6. Why did people use wood-burning stoves before the Industrial Revolution?
7. Why were roads rough before the Industrial Revolution?
8. Why was communication between towns difficult before the Industrial Revolution?
9. Why was cotton generally not used to make clothes before the Industrial Revolution?
10. What types of technology existed before the Industrial Revolution?
11. What type of people benefitted from university education?
12. In Britain, why did ordinary people have few rights before the Industrial Revolution?
A Watt steam engine. The steam engine, fueled primarily by coal, propelled the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain and the world.[1]

The Industrial Revolution was a period from 1750 to 1850 where changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, transportation, and technology had a profound effect on the social, economic and cultural conditions of the times. It began in the United Kingdom, then subsequently spread throughout Western Europe, North America, Japan, and eventually the rest of the world.

The Industrial Revolution marks a major turning point in history; almost every aspect of daily life was influenced in some way. Most notably, average income and population began to exhibit unprecedented sustained growth. In the two centuries following 1800, the world’s average per capita income increased over tenfold, while the world’s population increased over sixfold.[2] In the words of Nobel Prize winner Robert E. Lucas, Jr., “For the first time in history, the living standards of the masses of ordinary people have begun to undergo sustained growth ... Nothing remotely like this economic behavior has happened before”. [3]

Great Britain provided the legal and cultural foundations that enabled entrepreneurs to pioneer the industrial revolution.[4] Key factors fostering this environment were: (1) The period of peace and stability which followed the unification of England and Scotland, (2) no trade barriers between England and Scotland, (3) the rule of law (respecting the sanctity of contracts), (4) a straightforward legal system which allowed the formation of joint-stock companies (corporations), and (4) a free market (capitalism).[5]

Starting in the later part of the 18th century, there began a transition in parts of Great Britain’s previously manual labour and draft-animal–based economy towards machine-based manufacturing. It started with the mechanisation of the textile industries, the development of iron-making techniques and the increased use of refined coal.[6] Trade expansion was enabled by the introduction of canals, improved roads and railways.[7] With the transition away from an agricultural-based economy and towards machine-based manufacturing came a great influx of population from the countryside and into the towns and cities, which swelled in population.[8]
The critical manufacturing change that marks the Industrial Revolution is the production of interchangeable parts. Lathes and other machine tools of the Industrial Revolution enabled (1) high precision, and (2) the mass reproduction of parts with that precision. Guns, for example, had previously been made one at a time, with the parts filed to mate together accurately on one gun, but they were not made to mate with any other gun. With the repeatable precision of the Industrial Revolution, interchangeable parts for guns or other products could be produced on a mass basis, which dramatically reduced the price of the product.

The introduction of steam power fuelled primarily by coal, wider utilisation of water wheels and powered machinery (mainly in textile manufacturing) underpinned the dramatic increases in production capacity. The development of all-metal machine tools in the first two decades of the 19th century facilitated the manufacture of more production machines for manufacturing in other industries. The effects spread throughout Western Europe and North America during the 19th century, eventually affecting most of the world, a process that continues as industrialisation. The impact of this change on society was enormous.

**Worksheet 1:**

1.) Briefly explain the term 'revolution'.
2.) Where and when did the industrial revolution begin? How many years ago was that?
3.) Explain in your own words what the industrial revolution entails.
4.) Why do you think England was such a strong power in Europe during the industrial revolution?
5.) Under whose power was France after the French Revolution?
6.) England’s military power was stronger than France in this time period, explain why.
7.) The economy may be divided into three activities such as Primary, secondary and tertiary. During the industrial revolution there was a transition from agricultural to Industrial. In other words, a transition from ________ to _________ activities.
8.) Why did urbanization happen so fast during the industrial revolution?
9.) What does it mean when rural communities wither? And why did it happen in this time?
10.) When did the industrial revolution end?
11.) Consider and explain the following statement: "The industrial revolution made the world a better place". (This means that you have to give your opinion on the statement, true or false, and then you have to give reasons why you think so.)