

Name:

Date:

Block:

## The Industrial Revolution: Setting the Stage

**Directions:** Next class we are going to play a game. In order to get you prepared for the game, please read and annotate the passage below. You will use this in class so please remember to bring it. The rules of the game are on this sheet as well, be familiar with them because we can very easily change plans and do something much less interesting.

The year is 1700 and the nation is England. The scene is a rural village.

Life here in our rural English village is similar to other villages throughout Europe in the 18th century. Change traditionally comes very slowly. People moved at a much slower pace and had access to very little information about the world outside their village. London, England's largest city and one of the two real cities in Europe had a population of about 750,000 in 1750. Three out of every four Englishmen were rural and lived in small villages like this one. The average village was inhabited by about 200-400 people. The tallest structure in the village was the church. The religion of England is Anglican (Church of England). Home life and work life were closely integrated as most work was done in nearby fields or in the home or perhaps adjoining workshop. The family was an economical unit as well as a social unit. Every member of the family worked very hard from sun-up to sun-down. Even small children had chores. The homes of villagers were very small with earthen floors and inadequate lighting and ventilation. All members of the family slept in the same room and sometimes shared living quarters with the livestock. Sons worked with their fathers farming and tending livestock while daughters worked with their mothers cleaning, cooking, sewing and at other domestic chores. Life expectancy was slightly over 40 years of age. Most people married in their teens and had babies before they were 20. It was common for women to die during childbirth so the average marriage lasted about 15 years. Step mothers and step fathers were common. One baby out of three died before their first birthday, only one child in two saw their 21st birthday.

Unlike France, the English were not rigidly divided into social/legal Estates. However, there was a distinct social class system. Most English were poor far. Traditions concerning land guided daily living. These traditions were designed to ensure the stability and welfare of the greater community. Hence marriages and inheritance were geared to maintaining family property intact. Marriages were always arranged by parents to maintain or better the economic status of their sons or daughters. Not all could get married however. A man had to generally own land on which to support a family before he dared to marry. It was not uncommon for men to wait until their 30s' when they inherited property from their parents which enabled them to marry. If a woman did not bring land into marriage, she had to have some kind of dowry. Daughters who inherited property from their parents had to pass it on to their husbands. All land was given to the eldest son while younger sons might receive cash payments or wait for their older brother to die.

The main occupation of England was farming. Private and public lands were not separated by fences as they are today. Every village had a public area called the commons. This was land which was available to anyone for pasturing, hunting, the gathering of fire wood, growing of crops, etc... So poor farmers who did not own their own land, or rented, could eke out a marginal living by depending on the commons. Unlike France, most English peasants or farmers did own their own land, however small.

Villages were connected by a system of dirt roads that became almost impassable during the wet season. As a result, transportation was often slow and trade beyond the village was not easy. Most English farmers never visited any place further than 25 miles from their birthplace, ever! People made their own food, clothes, furniture, tools, and homes. A few items which could not be produced could be obtained from wandering peddlers who also brought with them news.

Finally for fuel, there were two sources: Firewood and coal. Nearly every English village had a coal mining operation. These mines employed a small number of village dwellers, especially in the winter. Coal pits from which coal was extracted belonged to the owner of the property where the coal mine was situated. Over the next 100 years, a revolution as significant as the Neolithic Revolution (when early man turned from hunting and gathering to agriculture) will completely change life in your village. Some historians believe this revolution (the industrial) is the most fundamental change in human history. We will experience some of these changes next class...

## Rules

1. When the timer goes off, **stop talking immediately** and turn your attention to Mrs. *Gabehart*
2. Use pencil
3. Follow all directions carefully and listen carefully
4. Be ready to go immediately when the bell rings – this game will take the full class time.