

CORE CURRICULUM GUIDE

WHEELS OF CHANGE by Darlene Beck Jacobson Isbn 978-1-939547-13-2

Introduce students to the Industrial Revolution at the turn of the Twentieth Century, using the book as a basis for discussions. This topic is part of the national learning standards and curriculum for U.S. History.

Topics for discussion:

- Introduce causes of the Industrial Revolution and how it changed the workplace and production of goods in America.
- Discuss handmade vs. factory made goods.
- Discuss good change vs. bad change and how it affects individuals and society.
- Discuss women's emerging independence, their role in the workplace and at home, and how this affects the family.
- Discuss technological change vs. social change. Give examples of each.

Objectives:

- To understand the causes and effects of the Second Industrial Revolution (1890's through WWI)
- To understand how progress has negative as well as positive consequences for individuals and society.
- To understand how even when some members of society benefit from changes, others may not.
- To think critically about technological and social changes in order to better evaluate their benefits and costs.

Key Words/Concepts:

- Mass Production
- Assembly lines
- Women's Suffrage
- Segregation/Prejudice
- Mechanization

Background:

The Industrial Revolution began in the late 1700's through the 1840's when goods formerly produced by hand began to be made with machines. Almost every aspect of daily life was influenced in some way. The **second wave** of industrialization occurred at the turn of the

Twentieth Century and lasted until World War I. This revolution centered around steel, railroad expansion, electricity, chemicals, and communication.

Mass production of steel replaced hand wrought iron. Blacksmiths – like Henry Johnson in *WHEELS OF CHANGE* – would no longer be needed to produce the rails, machine components, and tools used to manufacture goods and move them from one place to another.

Railroads replaced steamboats to transport goods over longer lasting steel rails. Electricity allowed factories to increase production of clothing and household goods. It also made it possible for Henry Ford to redesign the factory using tools and specialized machines positioned in a unique sequence to eliminate unnecessary human movement. The assembly line was born. More goods could be made in less time at a cheaper cost.

It took Mr. Soper weeks to make one of his carriages. It also took Henry days to hammer out all the iron needed to support the carriage body. The new factory system eliminated this labor-intensive process.

Part One: Making the topic relevant:

Begin a discussion on all the modern conveniences we all enjoy thanks to factory made products. When things get lost or broken we can easily and cheaply replace them.

Set up a debate between two teams where one side takes the point of view that the most important aspect of production is providing people with quality jobs at good pay; the other side takes the point of view that cheap goods, allowing consumers to buy more and companies more profit is more important.

Another topic could be looking at the problems with factory production. Discuss the Triangle Shirtwaist strike and fire, along with contemporary issues in China and India where bad factory conditions are currently under investigation.

Part Two: Read *WHEELS OF CHANGE* with students and start a discussion using the following topics:

- Why was Emily worried about automobiles coming to town? Did she have good reasons to be worried?
- How did having electricity and a telephone change life for Emily and her family?
- Emily's mama had few modern appliances or household gadgets. How would having these things change her life?
- Why were some people upset when papa employed an African American blacksmith? How did prejudice impact some of the decisions actions taken in the story?
- Women could not vote and had few rights in 1908. Why do you think so many people were opposed to allowing women the right to vote?

- Why was the telegraph and mail service so important in the early 1900's? What communication tools have replaced them?

Concluding Activity: Have students write about what their lives would be like without electricity, telephones, or motor cars. Would some aspects of life be better without those things?

Or, have them write about prejudice and being judged by the color of your skin. Should groups be singled out based on ethnic origin, religion, or political beliefs? Where in the world are these things still taking place today?

Further Study:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Industrial_Revolution

www.ushistoryscene.com/uncategorized/secondindustrialrevolution/