

Globalizing the Origins of Industrial Revolution

- [Lesson Overview](#)
- [Lesson Components & Procedure](#)

Modern World History - Course Inquiry

How do we get into right relationship with the planet and each other?

This lesson is one in a series to support the teaching of **Modern World History** in a way that investigates the consequences of the **industrial revolution** and **colonialism** and the resulting **climate crisis** we face today, while highlighting **alternate visions for a sustainable and more just future**. Explore the [course map here](#).

Lessons in this series support the teaching of this new course, or can augment an existing course to help globalize the traditional Eurocentric approach to world history.

Course and Lesson Series Overview: Globalizing World History

The course and lesson series are premised on several understandings:

- The developments in Europe after the 15th century have to be viewed and understood in the context of slavery and the colonization of peoples around the world.
- The climate crisis that threatens our planet is a central theme running throughout the course and must be understood in the context of colonialism and industrialism. Solutions must address these core issues and center justice and indigenous rights.
- People have always challenged power and domination in the pursuit of basic human rights, independence, and self-determination. Exploring visions of a different and just future provide hope and direction for change.
- A non-Eurocentric exploration of the world teaches through global voices and experiences.
- Critical inquiry to engage with and critique dominant narratives must be explicitly taught.
- Inquiries should empower students to develop their historical thinking as they draw their own conclusions and articulate evidence-based narratives.

Notes:

- While guided by our course inquiry and map, these lessons can be used in any existing World History course to help globalize student understanding.
- This course map and the resulting lessons are a work in progress. We welcome [feedback, revisions and suggestions](#).

Lesson Overview: Globalizing the Industrial Revolution

Inquiry: *How did global factors contribute to the Industrial Revolution in Britain?*

Teaching Thesis

The traditional narrative of the Industrial Revolution centers the developments and resources within Britain. It overlooks or excludes the significance of colonial resources and the system of slavery in providing the pre-conditions for the emergence of industrialism. These include the raw materials needed for industry (e.g. cotton), the capital accumulated through slavery that funded many of the industrial innovations and development, the plantation sugar that provided a substantial portion of the caloric intake of the emerging British working class, and the suppression of the existing textile industry in India.

Course and Unit Context

This lesson can be used to supplement any study of the Industrial Revolution. It can also fit well within a [‘Current Context’ unit map](#) that starts with asking *“How does industrialization impact our contemporary world?”* and proceeds to look at the global and domestic pre-conditions, the emergence of industrialism, the social and environmental impacts both within England and in the colonies. It then examines the resistance to industrialism and the emerging capitalist system, again both domestically and globally, and ends by returning to the contemporary world with considerations of possible responses to the global climate crisis. Such a unit can be a component of a [course-long map](#) that asks *“How do we return to being in right relationship with the planet and each other?”*

Lesson Goals

This lesson source set is intended to challenge and extend the traditional narrative of the Industrial Revolution. It supplements and encourages a reconsideration of the causes and effects of the Industrial Revolution, but does not reiterate the basic element of that transformation that will still need to be taught drawing on readily available existing materials.

The [traditional narrative](#) of the Industrial Revolution centers many factors that existed within Britain at the time, while barely (euphemistically) mentioning the global and colonial influence, if at all. The included sources, both primary sources and analysis by African and Caribbean historians, allow students to rethink this narrative. Students examine the role of slavery on indigenous lands that supplied the cotton for the emergent textile industry, and grew the sugar that satisfied a substantial portion of the caloric needs of the growing British working class. They consider the tremendous profits from slavery and colonization that banks used to fund industrial and urban development as well as directly financing the development of key technologies such as Watt’s steam engine. Students also examine how Britain mandates and taxation suppressed the textile industry in India and forced India to export cotton instead.

Lesson Procedure: Globalizing the Industrial Revolution

Part 1: Interrogate the Narrative: [Link to Part 1](#)

Invite students to interrogate a traditional narrative of the Industrial Revolution. Students generate, and then reflect upon, a series of questions about the text.

Teacher tips:

- This builds on the Ethical Dimension, Guidepost 1, from [The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts \(Seixas et. al\)](#). An introduction to worldview and implicit bias could be useful (See [Making History - Ethical Dimension](#)).
- Don't set too much context for the activity so that you don't influence the type or direction of the questions the students generate.
- If students run out of questions, encourage them to look at a different angle, but don't feed prompts.

Part 2 - Developing a Global Perspective - Lesson: [Scaffolded Source Set](#) / [Source Set Only](#)

Part A: Counter Narrative Overview - Headings and Highlights:

- Students read a selection and individually write a short heading for each section.
- Pairs of students discuss and come to consensus, followed by groups of four coming to agreement on a heading.
- Pairs of students then highlight the key words and short phrases that support the final heading.
- Using a graphic organizer, they summarize their headings, associated evidence (highlights) and discuss how these help them answer the focus question.
- Note: Alternate format is offered to use a Cause and Consequence analysis

Part B: Source Analysis.

- Students collaborate to read and analyze a set of sources. These include:
 - Visual sources: Images, graphs and maps
 - Historical accounts or commentaries
 - Contemporary analysis by Caribbean and African historians
- Source analysis scaffolds are provided for each source, tailored to the specific type of source.

Part C - Developing a Global Narrative

- **Summarizing, categorizing and analyzing the evidence.** Students use an expanded EAR chart (Evidence, Analysis and Relevance) to compile the most useful evidence from the sources.
- **A global narrative:** Students consider the evidence and arguments presented in the sources and craft a narrative that globalizes the emergence of industrialization in Britain. The particular form that this narrative takes can vary - written response, map markups, poems, etc.

Part 3 - Extension Lesson - British Impact on the Indian Textile Industry:

Inquiry: *What factors led to Britain's dominance in the textile industry at the turn of the 19th century?*

Before 1750, India produced 25% of the world's textiles. British colonizers demanded that raw cotton, not textiles, be shipped to England for spinning there. This, along with steep taxation and other policies, escalated the demand for the products of Britain's emerging textile industry and contributed to the development and dominance of British industry as a whole.

[Lesson Organizer](#) and [Source Set](#)