

Working conditions in the UK
during the Industrial
Revolution

Overview

1. Historical background
2. Working conditions in detail
3. Examples
4. Government act

1. Historical background

- ◆ 1760-1850: First Industrial Revolution
- ◆ 1850 – 1910: Second Industrial Revolution
- ◆ New system of working
- ◆ Need of workers



1) How long does a normal shift a day takes?

a) 9-10 hours

b) 12-14 hours

c) over 14 hours

2) What was the average wage of a male workforce a week?

a) 75 pence

b) 1 pound

c) 1.30 pounds

2. Daily working conditions

- ◆ Long working hours with normal shifts of 12-14 hours a day
- ◆ Low wages
 - man 75pence/week
 - woman 35pence/week
 - child 15pence/week

2. Wages



Source: <https://infoqr.am/women-during-the-industrial-revolution>

3) What does “strapping” stand for?

a) hanging iron weights around children’s necks

b) nailing children’s ears to the table

c) hitting children with a leather strap

2. Daily working conditions

- ◆ Cruel discipline

- „strapping“: hitting with a leather strap
- hanging iron weights around children's necks,
- nailing children's ears to the table,
- dowsing them in water butts to keep them awake

- ◆ Fierce systems of fines

- Alter times of their clocks

2. Daily working conditions

◆ Accidents

- roof falls, explosions, shaft accidents and drowning
- Forcing children to crawl into dangerous, unguarded machinery
- Up to 40 per cent in Manchester in 1833

4) What happened to a worker when he joined a Trade Union?

a) he was blacklisted and sacked

b) iron weights were put around his neck

c) he lost his wage for one month

2. Daily working conditions

- ◆ Consequences of joining a Trade Union

- ◆ Health

- pneumonia, chest and lung diseases

- Loud noise, smoke, hardly any light

3. Children's workplaces in mines

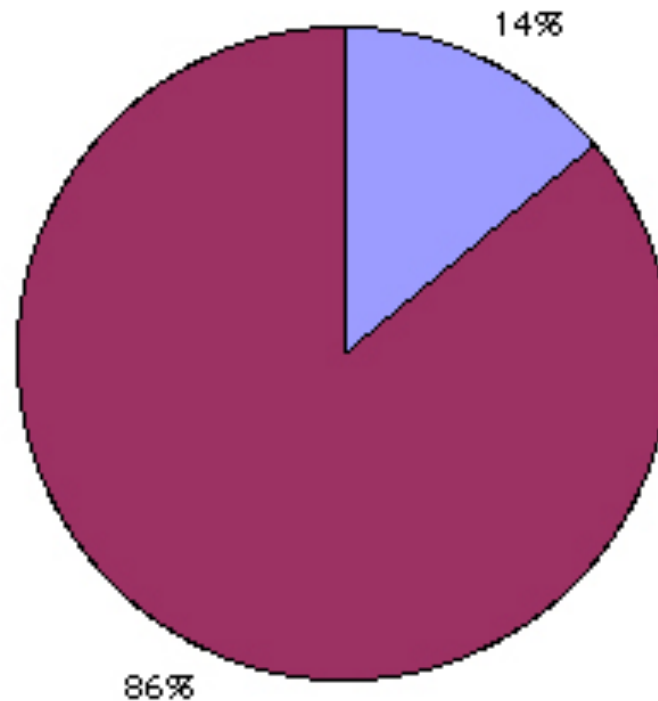
- ◆ Trappers: opening the doors for the coal trucks to pass trough
- ◆ Putters: carrying coal for the hewers
- ◆ Hewers: cut the coal with pickaxes



3. Percentage of child labour

Workforce in 1750 (Britain)

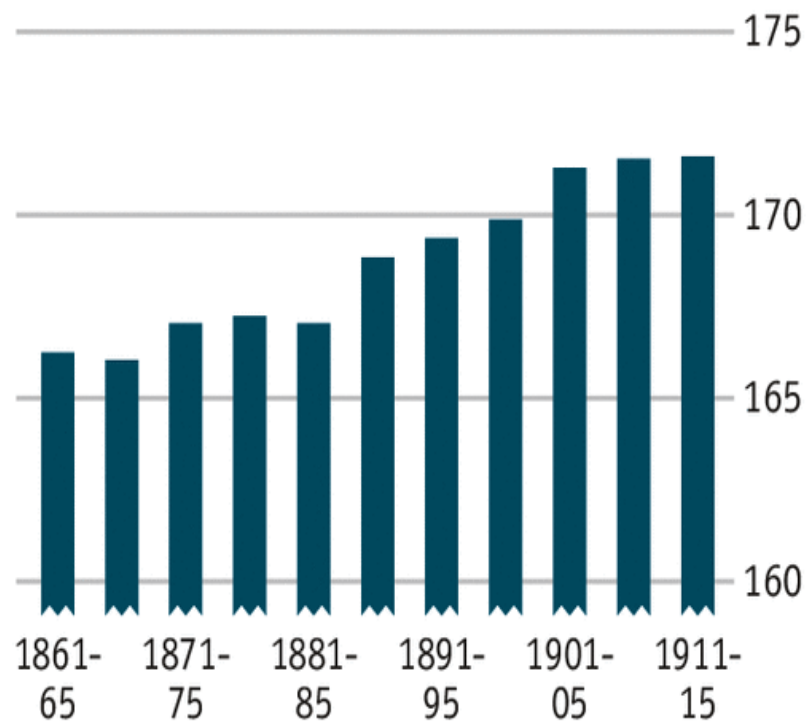
■ Workers Under 14 ■ Workers over 14



3. Long – term consequences

Mean height of men

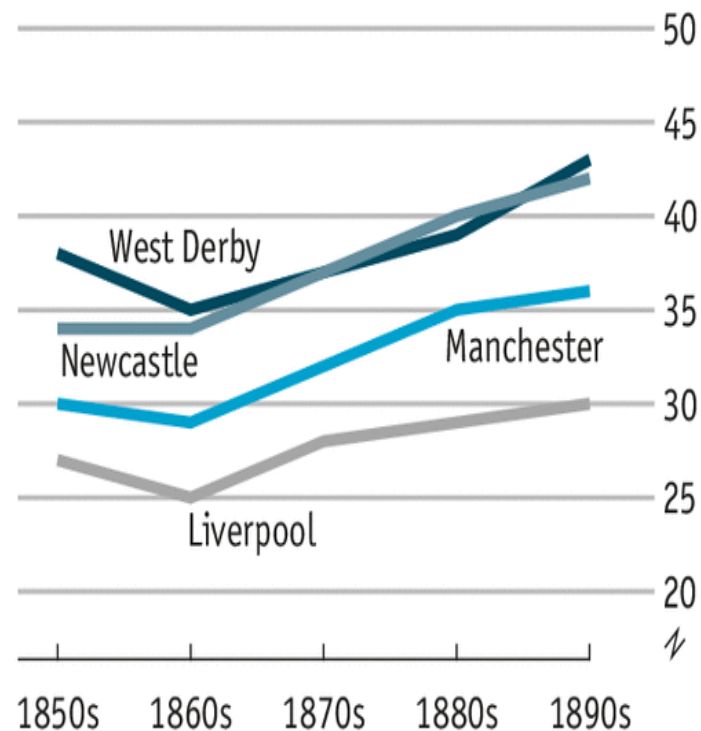
By birth cohorts, cm



Source: Hatton & Bray, 2010

Life expectancy at birth

Cities in England, years



Source: Szreter and Mooney, 1998

3. Working conditions for women in a silk mill in 1860



Source: <https://infogr.am/women-during-the-industrial-revolution>

4. Government Acts

Six government acts on working conditions

Acts

Year	Act	Main proposer	What it said...	Was it successful?
1802	Health and Morals of Apprentices Act	Robert Peel (a factory owner)	Factory apprentices only: a maximum 12-hour day; good accommodation and medical treatment.	Only apprentices, not enforced.
1819	Factory Act	Robert Owen	A maximum 12-hour day. No child under the age of nine to work.	Not enforced.
1833	Factory Act	Lord Ashley, Earl of Shaftesbury	No child under the age of nine to work. Children between the ages of nine and 13 years: 48-hour week; must go to school part-time.	Four inspectors made sure the law was obeyed.
1842	Mines Act	Robert Peel	No child under the age of ten to work. No woman or child under 15 to work underground.	Inspectors employed to report conditions.
1847	Ten Hours Act	John Fielden	No worker to work more than ten hours a day.	Ineffective monitoring.
1878	Factory and Workshops Act		No woman to work more than 60 hours a week. No child under ten to work. Laws on safety, ventilation and mealtimes.	Covered all factories, and workshops. More inspectors.

Sources

- ◆ <https://infogr.am/women-during-the-industrial-revolution>
- ◆ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/shp/britishsociety/livingworkingconditionsrev1.shtml>
- ◆ <http://firstindustrialrevolution.weebly.com/working-and-living-conditions.html>