Industrial Revolution Unit Test: Factory Conditions, Urbanization, and Reform

Unit Test with Master Answer Key | Educator | ULAT Partner | October 31, 2026

Grade: Global History, Grade 10 | Available time: 45 min

Learning goal: Students will analyze how industrialization shaped factory working conditions and urban life, and evaluate how reform efforts responded to the problems created by industrial growth, using historical reasoning rather than spelling or grammar.

Answer all eight questions. For each multiple-choice question, select the one best answer. For each written-response question, complete every part listed and give the number of responses each part requests. Write in complete ideas; spelling and grammar are not scored. You have 45 minutes. All scenarios and details in this test are fictional instructional examples created for practice, not authentic historical documents.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Total points: 19

Unit Test

1. [2 points] During early industrialization, many factory owners hired large numbers of women and children. Which explanation best describes why owners preferred this practice?

A. Owners could pay women and children less than adult men while still running the machines.

B. Laws required factories to hire a set number of women and children before any men.

C. Women and children worked only during seasons when adult men were unavailable.

D. Owners believed women and children were more skilled with complex machinery than adult men.

Ask yourself: what did hiring women and children save the owner?

Consider how a factory owner would weigh labor cost against output.

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2. [2 points] A fictional factory inspector's report from 1840 describes workers running machines for fourteen hours a day with short breaks and no safety guards. Which conclusion about early factory work does this scenario best support?

A. Factory owners were required by law to provide guards on all machines.

B. Long hours and dangerous machinery were common features of early factory labor.

C. Factory work was generally safer than farm labor because machines replaced hand tools.

D. Factory workers typically set their own hours based on the season.

Identify the two working conditions named in the scenario.

Match those conditions to the conclusion that best fits them.

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3. [2 points] As factories grew in the 1800s, many workers moved from rural villages to cities to be near jobs. Which result of this urbanization is best supported by historical evidence?

A. Cities quickly built enough housing and sanitation for all new residents.

B. Urban populations declined because workers returned to farms each year.

C. New city residents were guaranteed clean water and steady wages by law.

D. Rapid population growth often outpaced housing and sanitation, creating overcrowded neighborhoods.

Think about what happens when many people arrive in a city faster than housing can be built.

Consider which option describes a problem rather than a guaranteed benefit.

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4. [2 points] Reformers in the 1800s pushed for laws limiting child labor and shortening the workday. Which statement best explains the goal of these reform efforts?

A. Reformers wanted to raise the voting age for factory workers.

B. Reformers wanted to end all manufacturing and return to farming.

C. Reformers wanted to reduce the harm of industrial labor by setting legal limits on working conditions.

D. Reformers wanted to increase factory profits by reducing the number of workers.

Ask what a law limiting child labor and hours would actually change.

Choose the option that describes protecting workers rather than ending industry.

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5. [2 points] A fictional city council in 1850 debates building a public water system after several disease outbreaks in crowded districts. Which reasoning best connects urbanization to this reform debate?

A. The council wanted to reduce the city population by limiting water access.

B. Disease outbreaks were unrelated to city growth and had no effect on reform debates.

C. Crowded districts with poor sanitation raised the risk of disease, prompting demands for public health improvements.

D. Public water systems were built mainly to attract factory owners rather than protect residents.

Connect the crowded districts to the disease outbreaks.

Ask what a city might build to prevent disease from spreading.

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6. [2 points] Some historians argue that industrialization eventually raised living standards, while others emphasize the suffering of early factory workers. Which approach best reflects historical reasoning about this debate?

A. Reject both arguments because historians can never agree.

B. Use evidence about wages, hours, and health over time to weigh both arguments and explain which is better supported.

C. Choose the argument that matches personal opinion without examining evidence.

D. Accept the first argument because it was made most recently.

Ask what kind of evidence could support or challenge each argument.

Choose the option that uses evidence to compare the claims.

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7. [5 points] Industrialization changed where and how people lived and worked. Respond to both parts below using specific historical reasoning. A fictional example you may reference: a mill town where families moved from farms to row housing near factories.

Part A [4 points]: Describe changes caused by industrialization. Required responses: 2.

Part B [1 points]: Describe one reform that responded to a problem created by industrialization. Required responses: 1.

For each change, state what changed and then explain why industrialization caused it.

For the reform, first name the problem, then explain what the reform did about it.

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8. [2 points] Historians disagree about whether industrialization improved life overall. Respond to both parts below using evidence-based reasoning.

Part A [1 points]: Explain one reason industrialization could be seen as an improvement. Required responses: 1.

Part B [1 points]: Explain one reason industrialization could be seen as harmful. Required responses: 1.

For the benefit, name one group that gained and explain how.

For the harm, name one group that suffered and explain how.

Answer Key (Teacher Only)

Unit Test

1. A. Owners could pay women and children less than adult men while still running the machines. — Factory owners often preferred women and children because they could be paid lower wages than adult men for operating the same machines, which lowered owners' labor costs. The other options describe conditions that are not supported by the historical pattern of hiring during early industrialization.

Award the point for recognizing the wage-cost motive. Distractors describe skill, legal requirements, and seasonal availability, none of which explains the widespread hiring pattern.

Scoring (2 points): Award 2 points for A; 0 points for any other choice.

2. B. Long hours and dangerous machinery were common features of early factory labor. — The scenario describes long hours and unguarded machinery, which supports the conclusion that long hours and dangerous equipment were common features of early factory labor. The other options contradict the details or add legal requirements the scenario does not describe.

Award the point for linking the described conditions to a general conclusion about early factory labor. The scenario is a fictional instructional example, not an authentic document.

Scoring (2 points): Award 2 points for B; 0 points for any other choice.

3. D. Rapid population growth often outpaced housing and sanitation, creating overcrowded neighborhoods. — Urbanization during industrialization often produced rapid population growth that outpaced housing and sanitation, leading to overcrowded and unhealthy neighborhoods. The other options describe outcomes that were not typical and in some cases contradict the historical record.

Award the point for identifying overcrowding and inadequate sanitation as a common result of rapid urban growth.

Scoring (2 points): Award 2 points for D; 0 points for any other choice.

4. C. Reformers wanted to reduce the harm of industrial labor by setting legal limits on working conditions. — Reformers sought to reduce the harm of industrial labor by using laws to limit child labor and working hours, improving conditions for workers. The other options misstate the goals of these reforms.

Award the point for recognizing that reform aimed to regulate and limit harmful working conditions through law.

Scoring (2 points): Award 2 points for C; 0 points for any other choice.

5. C. Crowded districts with poor sanitation raised the risk of disease, prompting demands for public health improvements. — Rapid urban growth created crowded districts with poor sanitation, which raised the risk of disease and led residents and officials to demand public health improvements such as water systems. The other options misrepresent the connection between urban conditions and reform.

Award the point for linking crowded, unsanitary conditions to demands for public health reform. The scenario is a fictional instructional example.

Scoring (2 points): Award 2 points for C; 0 points for any other choice.

6. B. Use evidence about wages, hours, and health over time to weigh both arguments and explain which is better supported. — Sound historical reasoning weighs competing arguments against evidence such as wages, hours, and health over time, then explains which claim the evidence better supports. The other options rely on recency, blanket rejection, or personal opinion instead of evidence.

Award the point for selecting the evidence-based comparison approach. This assesses reasoning method, not a fixed verdict on the debate.

Scoring (2 points): Award 2 points for B; 0 points for any other choice.

7. A strong response describes two distinct changes and explains the causal link for each, then names one reform and connects it to a specific industrial problem. For example, one change is that families moved from rural farms to crowded cities near factories, because factory jobs drew workers into urban areas. A second change is that many workers, including children, labored long hours in dangerous mills, because owners sought low-cost labor to run machines. A reform responding to this is the passage of laws limiting child labor and working hours, which aimed to

reduce harm to workers by setting legal limits on factory conditions. Other valid changes include the growth of crowded housing or the shift from hand tools to machine production, and other valid reforms include public health measures or workplace safety rules, provided each is tied to a specific problem.

Score each criterion as one point per required response. For the change task, both changes must be distinct and each must include a causal explanation, not just a label. For the reform task, the response must name a specific problem and explain how the reform addressed it. Do not deduct for spelling or grammar. The mill town example is fictional and is not required.

Scoring (5 points): Part A: 2 response(s), 2 point(s) per response; 4 points total.
For each response, 1 point: Names one specific change and explains how industrialization caused it.
For each response, 1 point: Names a second, different specific change and explains how industrialization caused it.
Part B: 1 response(s), 1 point(s) per response; 1 points total.
For each response, 1 point: Identifies a specific problem created by industrialization and explains how the named reform responded to that problem.

8. A strong response gives one specific benefit with an explanation and one specific harm with an explanation. A benefit might be that factory production made goods cheaper and more widely available, which improved access to products for ordinary people. A harm might be that early factory workers faced long hours and dangerous machinery, which damaged workers' health and safety. The two parts should address different sides of the debate and each should explain the effect rather than only naming it.

Score each criterion as one point. Each part requires a specific point plus an explanation of its effect. Accept any historically reasonable benefit or harm that is explained. Do not deduct for spelling or grammar.

Scoring (2 points): Part A: 1 response(s), 1 point(s) per response; 1 points total.
For each response, 1 point: States one specific benefit of industrialization and explains how it improved life for some people.
Part B: 1 response(s), 1 point(s) per response; 1 points total.
For each response, 1 point: States one specific harm of industrialization and explains how it damaged life for some people.

Teacher support decisions

Need and support	When to use and check/adjust
Need: Students who struggle to explain causes rather than list events Support: Provide a sentence frame: Industrialization caused ___ because ___. Students complete it for each required change before writing full sentences.	When: Offer during the written-response portion when a student's draft lists changes without explaining why they happened. Check and adjust: Check whether the completed frame includes a because clause that names a cause. If the clause only restates the change, model one example aloud and have the student revise.
Need: Students who need help organizing a comparison of benefits and harms Support: Provide a two-column organizer labeled Benefit and Harm, with space to note who was affected and how.	When: Offer before question 8 for students who begin writing without separating the two sides. Check and adjust: Check whether each column names a specific group and an effect. If a column only names a topic, prompt the student to add who was affected and how.

Need and support	When to use and check/adjust
Need: Students ready for greater challenge Support: Ask students to add a sentence evaluating which side of the debate their evidence supports more strongly and why.	When: Offer after a student has completed both parts of question 8 with clear explanations. Check and adjust: Check whether the added sentence uses the student's own evidence to justify a judgment. If it only restates both sides, prompt for a claim about which is better supported.

Teacher notes and review

Optional supports in this test are suggestions for scaffolding; they are not required accommodations. Any required accommodation must be entered by the teacher based on the student's official plan, and this test does not claim compliance with any individual plan.

All scenarios and examples in this test are fictional instructional examples created for practice and should not be presented as authentic historical documents or quotations.

Written responses are scored on historical reasoning only; do not deduct for spelling or grammar.

Human review of factual content is recommended before classroom use.

Teacher review required: confirm factual accuracy, source attribution, translations, answer keys, and suitability of supports. Source matching is not independent historical authentication.