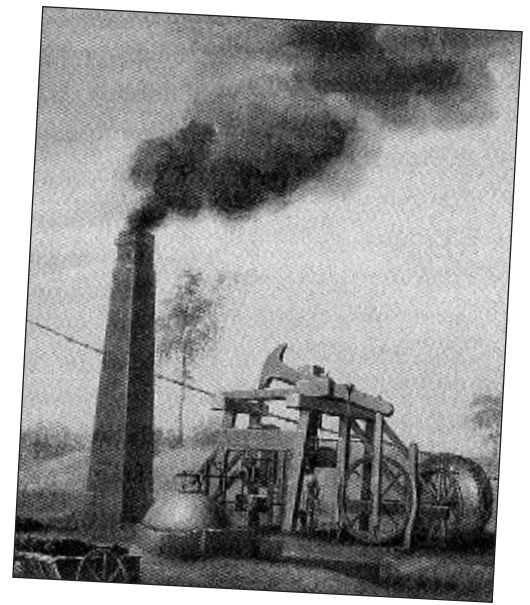


# Teaching From Farm to Factory - the Industrial Revolution and Ireland in the 1840s



*The wide sweep of this topic, the lack of a central character and the length of the Special Study are some of the challenges faced in teaching From Farm to Factory, as outlined by **Dermot Lucey***

## Introduction

Teaching From Farm to Factory presents certain challenges. It is the second longest section in Second Year but it comes at the end of the year so teachers can get caught for time in trying to complete it. Unlike the Explorations, the Reformation and the Political Revolutions, it doesn't have any central character – rather it is dealing with the wide sweep of history. The Special Study in From Farm to Factory differs from the other sections in Second Year. There is a choice of explorer or reformer, for example, but there is no choice here. The Special Study in this topic is also far longer than the other special studies because it takes up most of the topic. Finally, there is a danger of being overwhelmed by some difficult concepts or terminology and swamped by technology, but after the first few lessons these should be kept to a minimum.

## Time and Resources

I allow 6 to 7 weeks to complete this section. I have 3 classes a week for History in Second Year so this is about 18 to 21 classes, if the summer exams don't catch me. My students have a hard cover copy for notes and a soft cover copy for home exercises. They read sections of the textbook for their homework in advance of each lesson, and undertake short written exercises. After the section is taught in class, this is reinforced with further exercises.

When Farm to Factory is completed there isn't time for a short class test which I would have given after the previous topics, such as the Explorations or the Reformation. This revision test, of about 15 to 20 minutes, is usually composed of multiple choice questions or short one-word answers, which are easily corrected.

The walls of the classroom are covered with illustrations from all parts of the course and those on the Industrial Revolution are useful for complementing illustrations in the textbook. The Industrial Revolution is very well served in History books produced in England (Macmillan Educational, Collins Educational, Stanley Thornes) and I use some of these for class material.

## Lesson 1 - Background and Causes of the Industrial Revolution

I have already asked the class to read the background and causes of the Industrial Revolution at home and I have highlighted some terms which they should know. During the class, I will be trying to get as much information as possible from the students by questions and answers. We begin by briefly defining 'Industrial Revolution'. We separate the 2 words - 'industry' and 'revolution'. We come across 'domestic industry' and 18th

### Lesson Plan

Lesson 1 - Background and Causes of the Industrial Revolution

Lesson 2 – the Agricultural Revolution

Lesson 3 – the Transport Revolution

Lesson 4 – Manufacturing Inventions

Special Study:

Lessons 5 and 6 – Working Conditions in Factories and Mines

Lesson 7 and 8 – Living Conditions

Lessons 9 and 10 - Health and improvements; Clothes, food, education and leisure

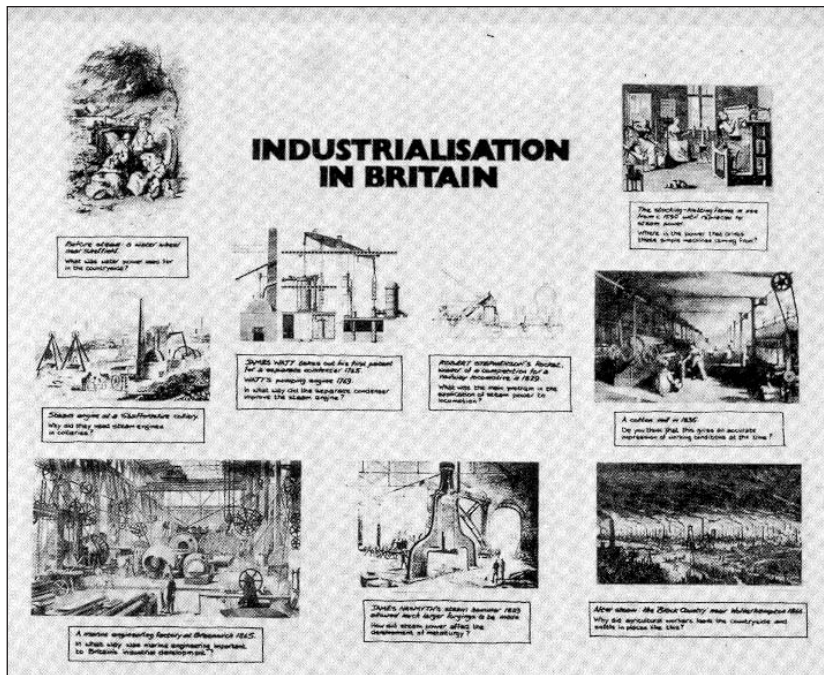
Lesson 11 - Rural Ireland

Lesson 12 – Contrast Rural Ireland and Industrial England

Lesson 13 - Causes of the Great Famine

Lessons 14 - 16 - Help for famine victims; The results of famine

Lesson 17 – Test or debate

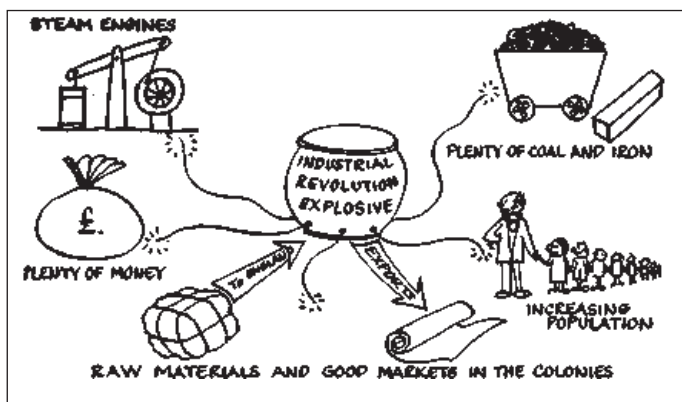


Wall poster from *Methods of History Teaching in the Secondary School*, Garvey and King

century agricultural society. I can point to a (photocopied) chart on the wall which has a 'Before' and 'After' the Industrial Revolution. I approach the Causes by getting the class to build up a spider of them on the blackboard - they are suggesting the subheadings and I fill them in. Once I am satisfied that I have what I want, we investigate how each sub-heading caused the Industrial Revolution. We work through each of the causes but 3 of them – the Agricultural Revolution, the Transport Revolution and Manufacturing Inventions – will be looked at in greater detail over the next few lessons.

## Lesson 2 – the Agricultural Revolution

In teaching the Agricultural Revolution, we can revise briefly the 3 Field system from the Middle Ages. I sketch a medieval village on the board and the class provides the weaknesses of the system. So now we can see why improvements were needed. This leads to a second diagram which shows how the land of the 18th century village was enclosed. Now we understand how farmers could introduce further improvements, such as crop rotation and selective breeding. From this it is easy to show how these agricultural improvements helped cause the Industrial Revolution. The idea of change is highlighted all the time. Quotations from Arthur Young and illustrations to show the increase in the size of animals are useful in helping the students to understand the Agricultural Revolution.



## Lesson 3 – the Transport Revolution

Change is again the central theme of the Transport Revolution. Once again the existing 18th century transport system is examined to show its faults. We then have to ask why improvements were needed and how they were brought about. I can use local examples of turnpike roads so for part of their homework the students have to enquire at home where 'Pike Corner' in our town was and where the turnpike gate now stands. There's a Mars bar in the caf for the winner.

Illustrations are most useful in explaining the road improvements and the introduction of canals and railways but the changes are kept to a minimum. Roads can be linked to present road changes and their effects. An account of the building of the Liverpool to Manchester line and the effect of trains on animals and onlookers highlights the changes which are happening. A one-page handout of contemporary accounts of the railways and a map of Britain and Ireland showing the expansion of the railways is used for homework. The students come up with their own suggestions as to the effects of each of the transport changes and their influence on the Industrial Revolution.

## Lesson 4 – Manufacturing Inventions

This a tricky section because these technological changes can be confusing so it is best to keep them simple – unless it is a very good class I avoid using the word 'technology' (even though the word was used in the 1999 paper). I refer again to domestic industry and to spinning and weaving. Why can't domestic industry satisfy the demand for clothes? What inventions speeded up spinning and weaving? Now we are faced with a problem of power because the machines are getting bigger so water power is introduced and local examples of waterwheels can be referred to.

But I emphasise steam power and particularly Watt's contribution which led to steam powered machines in factories. This is one place where I delve a little deeper into technological changes by showing very simply how Watt's addition of a wheel to the steam engine could drive machines in factories. I highlight cause and consequence as the syllabus states – why is there a need for inventions and what effects these inventions have on the Industrial Revolution. (They will need to know some inventions and their inventions). After briefly looking at the role of coal, iron and steel, finally we can conclude by showing how all these inventions led to the factory system and the development of cities.

## Special Study - Lessons 5 and 6 – Working Conditions in Factories and Mines

Some students may or may not like the earlier part of the Industrial Revolution but the Special Study is where the human interest comes in. I emphasise the terrible working (and living) conditions – the more gruesome the examples you have the better – this provokes interest; it also illustrates the problems of change – losers and winners – and it shows that not all change is good. Illustrations and good stories or quotations are very important here. Stories of women and children from the Factory

*A quick summary of the causes of the Industrial Revolution from P Moss, History Alive, 1789-1914,*

Reports or the Mines Report show that you are not making up how bad conditions were.

*“Margaret Leveston, 6 years old ... been down at coal-carrying 6 weeks; makes 10 to 14 journeys a day; carries full 56lb. of coal in a wooden backit (basket) ...”* or 11 year old Ellison Jack who had to get 2 people to help lift a basket of 70 kg of coal on her back to fill 4 500kg tubs each day.

This is where a document study can be used. Short extracts on different aspects of working conditions such as factory rules, the factory owners views etc and an illustration such as Cruickshank’s cartoon on factory conditions can be laid out in one one sheet, along with a series of questions to comprehend and interpret the documents. This section on working conditions could be concluded with homework on a People in History question from the exam papers such as ‘A worker in a coal mine or a textile factory during the Industrial Revolution’ (Q4B(ii) 2000) or ‘A factory owner during the Industrial Revolution’ (Q4B(i) 1997). Some of the older People in History questions are good for hints or guidelines, though with a word of warning to the students that these are not now given in Higher course papers.

### Lesson 7 and 8 – Living Conditions

While the class is still reeling from the terrible conditions in factories and mines, knock them out with your best and most disgusting stories from the streets. Our mostly comfortable students, reared on the Celtic tiger, love stories of the water pump being next to the outdoor loo and the ghastly consequences of seepage, the open sewers and so forth. These can be contrasted with the life of the better-off classes of the time and they can be linked to modern Third World examples. It is important, however, to have good historical information because students can get easily carried away by the disgust but have little solid information backing it up for answering questions in exams. In exam questions students could be faced with 10 mark (Q.5) or 20 mark questions (Q.4), which in the latter case will demand about 8 statements of historical information – not bluffing or padding. Contemporary descriptions and illustrations help students understand how bad conditions were.

### Lessons 9 and 10 - Health and improvements; Clothes, food, education and leisure

Now its time to use the resources of the school library or the Internet or both. This is to prepare for a project – short and specific – so that the students investigate this topic – Health and Improvements – and the next topic – Clothes, food, education and leisure. A different title is given to each student e.g. Jenner, Chadwick, soccer, women’s and men’s clothes etc with the instructions that the project must not have much written information but must be heavily illustrated. They must also present some of their findings to the class.

Each project is displayed on one A3 sheet. It can be a straightforward presentation of information or it can be a newspaper report or an account by a visiting foreigner to England. The students are already familiar with the school library and we have a good number of books on the Industrial Revolution. But the Internet can also be used. This means taking the class to the computer room for one period. I have already checked some of the sources and the students can begin with these. We use [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and enter words such as Edwin Chadwick, soccer, cricket and so on. The completion of the project is given for homework and the students each make a 2 minute presenta-

tion of their findings to the class. More Mars bars in the caf for the best presentations!

### Lesson 11 - Rural Ireland

There is a big jump from Industrial England to Rural Ireland so it important to

highlight the differences between the 2 countries at the time, especially the importance of farming and the countryside in Ireland. Students need to understand the landlord-tenant-labourer relationship and the widespread poverty that existed in pre-famine Ireland. The social structure in Ireland can be illustrated with a diagram on the blackboard, beginning at the top with the landlords. The housing, work and lifestyle of each class should be illustrated as much as possible.

Housing	Work	Lifestyle
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Landlord		
Strong farmer		
Small farmer		
Labourer		

This can be complemented by an outline of an estate showing the landlord’s own private estate and the rest of the land rented out. A brief description of the workhouse system concludes this section.

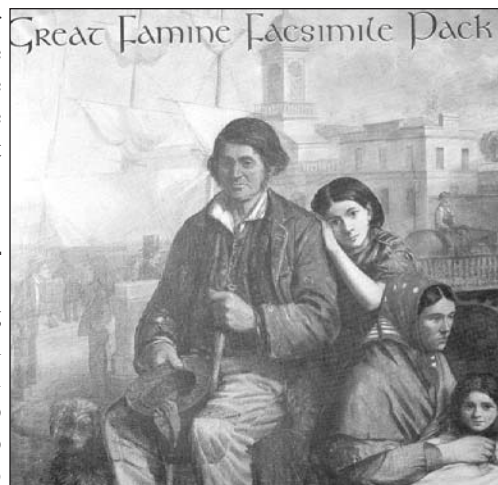
### Lesson 12 – Contrast Rural Ireland and Industrial England

This is a good excuse for revision. The students prepare the night before under a series of headings e.g. population, work, housing. The lesson will be driven by a few illustrations – workers, houses, streets - which were used in previous lessons. The blackboard is used with headings and sub-headings. The class is divided in 2 - one half of the class providing information on Rural Ireland and the other half on Industrial England. (they won’t know beforehand which side of the topic they are on). Students from one side are entitled (with my permission!) to ask questions of the other side.

### Lesson 13 - Causes of the Great Famine

When the 150th anniversary of the Great Famine was commemorated, some county libraries produced educational packs which are very useful for this topic. Tim Cadogan in Cork County Library produced the *Great Famine Facsimile Pack* for Cork and this was distributed to all schools in the county. There is also *The Irish Famine – A Documentary History*, produced by Noel Kissane and the National Library. These have illustrations as well as extracts and they can be used selectively to highlight many aspects of the famine.

In developing the causes of the Famine, I get help from the class. I use a ‘spider’ on the blackboard and the students have to provide the sub-headings (similar to working on the causes of the Industrial Revolution). Once we have established the main causes, we look at each one in more detail. The students have to





be able to connect up the information and show, for example, how the rise in population, the greater subdivision of land, the growing poverty and the dependence on the potato are all inter-related.

The progress of the Famine is helped by illustrations and vivid descriptions of suffering – the stories will tell their own tale and grip the attention. A timeline can help make sense of the changes from year to year.

#### Progress of the Famine

1845  
1846  
1847  
1848  
1849-1850

#### Lessons 14 - 16 - Help for famine victims; The results of famine

We can begin briefly with a modern famine. How successful is the modern world in containing famine and helping famine victims? What do the students think of efforts to solve the problems of starvation in Africa? Then its time to take them back to the 19th century. What would they do to help Irish famine vic-

tims? This is the time for them to come up with their own solutions. Their classmates will be quick to point out the strengths and weaknesses of their solutions. What did they think of the actual efforts made to bring help to the famine victims?

It is very easy for this discussion to go ‘off the rails’ so my role in this is to guide them as systematically as possible to assess what was done between 1845 and 1850. The discussion can be enlivened by extracts from the Cork Union Board of Guardians Minute Book concerning food in the workhouse or the listing from the Kinsale register of the details of those seeking relief in the workhouse there.

The People in History question on ‘A person who left a small farm in Ireland to work in a Lancashire cotton mill about the year 1850’ (1998 4B(ii)) can be used here for homework.

The lesson on the results of the famine gives an opportunity to bring together all the different strands of the Famine and life in Ireland in the 1840s.

#### Lesson 17 – Test or debate

If there is time before the summer exams, then I will include either a test or a debate. Indeed an historical debate is a great way to end. It can be great fun but it must follow normal procedures of chairpersons, judges, time etc. So apart from those debating, there are 5 or 6 more students actively involved. The motions can be controversially worded such as “That the Industrial Revolution did more good than bad” or “That the British government did all it could to help famine victims”. I will privately give each team direction or ideas which they can work on for their speeches. The winners get homework off or.. guess what!... Sometimes these debates generate more heat than light – but then what’s History without emotion!

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#### Note on Higher and Ordinary Level

I make no distinction in Second Year between Higher and Ordinary Level in mixed ability classes; the only differentiation comes in Third Year after Christmas or the pre-exams when they are revising for the Junior Cert. It is only in classes which are definitely Ordinary Level by the beginning of Second Year that I follow a strictly Ordinary Level course – in this case reducing the overall content, treating the general study as a brief introduction, concentrating on the Special Study, using more People in History, even building up an answer on the blackboard.