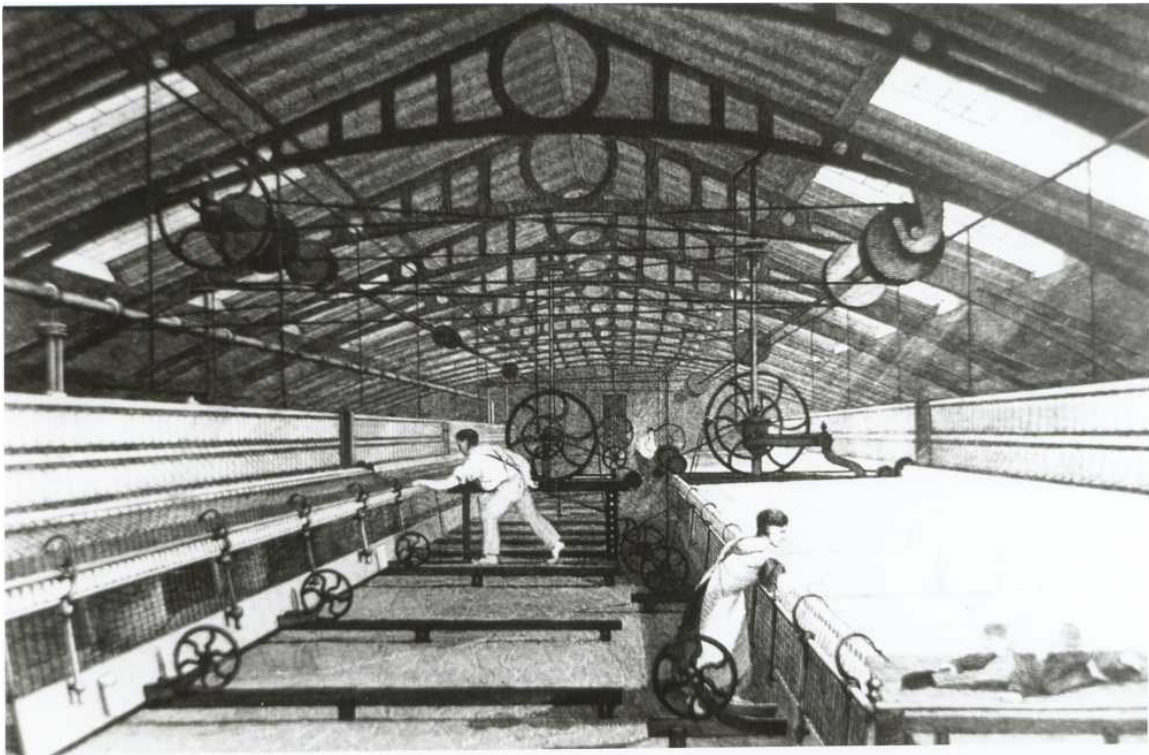


# The Cotton Industry



Part of the "Victorian Manchester" series of education packs  
for Key Stages 1, 2 & 3.



## Aims

The images provided have been selected from original sources at Greater Manchester County Record Office. It is the aim of this pack to encourage the use of original source material in historical study from a young age.

The pack is part of a series covering Victorian Manchester, which covers both the Victorian Britain and the Local History aspects of the National Curriculum. The pack can also be used outside of the classroom, by parents or youth groups, involving a visit to the record office.

## Sources

The sources used in this pack are:

1. A photograph of a "little piecer" sweeping up in a cotton warehouse (origin unknown).
2. A transcript from an interview with a Mr Rigby (born 1901), with thanks to the North West Sound Archive for allowing the use of this extract.
3. A copy of an indenture between Joseph Gartside and Joseph Gartside, dated 1819, GMCRO.
4. A photograph of cotton mills in Bolton (date unknown).
5. A copy of a poster of rules from Water-Foot Mill, Near Haslingdon, September 1851. With thanks to Oldham Local Studies for finding the piece, and Helmshore Textile Museum, part of Lancashire County Museum service, for allowing its use in this pack.

The picture on the title page is of Mule Spinning in Holmes Mill, Clitheroe.

All photographs are taken from the Documentary Photography Archive at Greater Manchester County Record Office.

## Background

- Cotton was first imported to England in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century.
- Raw Cotton was imported to Liverpool from the slave plantations in America (and later India and Egypt), and then transported to Manchester to be made into yarn.
- The development of transport between Liverpool and Manchester (trains and canal boats) led to a great increase in the cotton trade in Manchester and the surrounding towns.
- The Cotton trade in the nineteenth century was very important to major towns such as Manchester, and had become centred in Lancashire.
- Manchester was one of the main centres of the cotton trade during the "Industrial Revolution". The Cotton trade produced lots of jobs and money for the city, and took over from the woollen industry.
- Although by the mid-nineteenth century much of the production was done in the "cotton towns", like Bolton, Bury, and Rochdale, Manchester was the centre where raw cotton was purchased, and finished cotton and cloth sold.

## Source Work



### Source 1

This source is a picture a young boy, known as a "little piecer", sweeping up in a cotton warehouse.

This source can be used for Key Stages 1 - 3, covering the changes in the way of life, and the development of industry.

### Key Stage 1

- Look at the clothes the boy in the picture is wearing. How are they different to the clothes worn in factories today? What do his clothes say about him?
- Look at the machinery behind the boy. What differences can you see between the machinery and the factory building to those used today?
- Do you know anyone that works in a factory? How do you think their experiences would compare to those of the boy in the picture?

### Key Stage 2

- How old do you think the boy is? What do you think it would be like to have to work in a factory at this age?
- Imagine that you work in a cotton warehouse in the nineteenth century and write a diary of your day.
- What strikes you about the conditions that cotton factory workers worked in?

### Key Stage 3

- Why was the cotton industry so important to developing towns in the nineteenth century?
- Use a globe to plot the route of the import of raw cotton to Liverpool, and then to Manchester.
- The Cotton Industry eventually declined in the 1930s. Why do you think this might have happened?
- Look at the charts included at the back of this pack :
  1. What do you think is the significance of the opening of the Bridgewater Canal and the Liverpool - Manchester Railway?
  2. Why was the cotton industry so important to the Industrial Revolution?
  3. Why do you think cotton production moved to the smaller towns outside of Manchester?



Source 2  
A Personal Account

This extract is taken from an interview with a Mr Rigby, born in 1901, and although he was working in a cotton factory in the early 1900s, little had changed since the Victorian period .

*Where did you first start work?*

When I was twelve I went to this school across the road here and when I was twelve year old I got my half time paper, which was a blue paper and I went and got on at the spinning mill at Atherton and I worked half time, that's from morning at six o'clock and I think it was 'til twelve an then I'd come running home, had my dinner and went to school at the afternoon.

*What was your job in the spinning mill? What did you do?*

Well my job in the spinning mill was a little piecer and eventually when I got to full time at thirteen I must have got on a bit because the made me into a side piecer. So that was a promotion over little piecer.

*These are mules we are talking about?*

They were the mules, the spinning mules, yes. I stuck there until I was 15.

*What did you wear when you were doing that job?*

Well you wore a pair of white pants and nothing on your feet.

*Nothing?*

Nothing at all on your feet. You walked about between the mules with nothing on your feet making the ends up as they broke. Backwards and forwards as the come out and went in.

*Did you ever get splinters in your feet?*

Yes you did get splinters in your feet and then you'd go to the first-aid room and have it took out. All the time you were getting splinters in your

feet. With the continued walking, you know the continued walking, and the oil, it got slippery with oil you know, it was like a dance floor, but that's the way it was in the spinning mill.

*(Taken from the North West Sound Archive)*

### Key Stage 1

- If you have older brothers or sisters with part time jobs, think about how their experiences compare with the account of Mr Rigby.
- Why do you think cotton factories employed children?

### Key Stage 2

- Why do you think it is now illegal to have a proper job under the age of sixteen?
- Do you think the bosses of the factories would have cared about Mr Rigby's schooling as a child?
- Imagine you are the owner of a cotton mill. What are the advantages of employing children and women, and what is the most important thing to you about running a cotton mill?

### Key Stage 3

- Divide into groups, one side take the part of an owner of a cotton mill, and the other take the part of a worker in the mill. Discuss whether the cotton mills are a good thing or not, and how they affect you.

## Apprenticeships

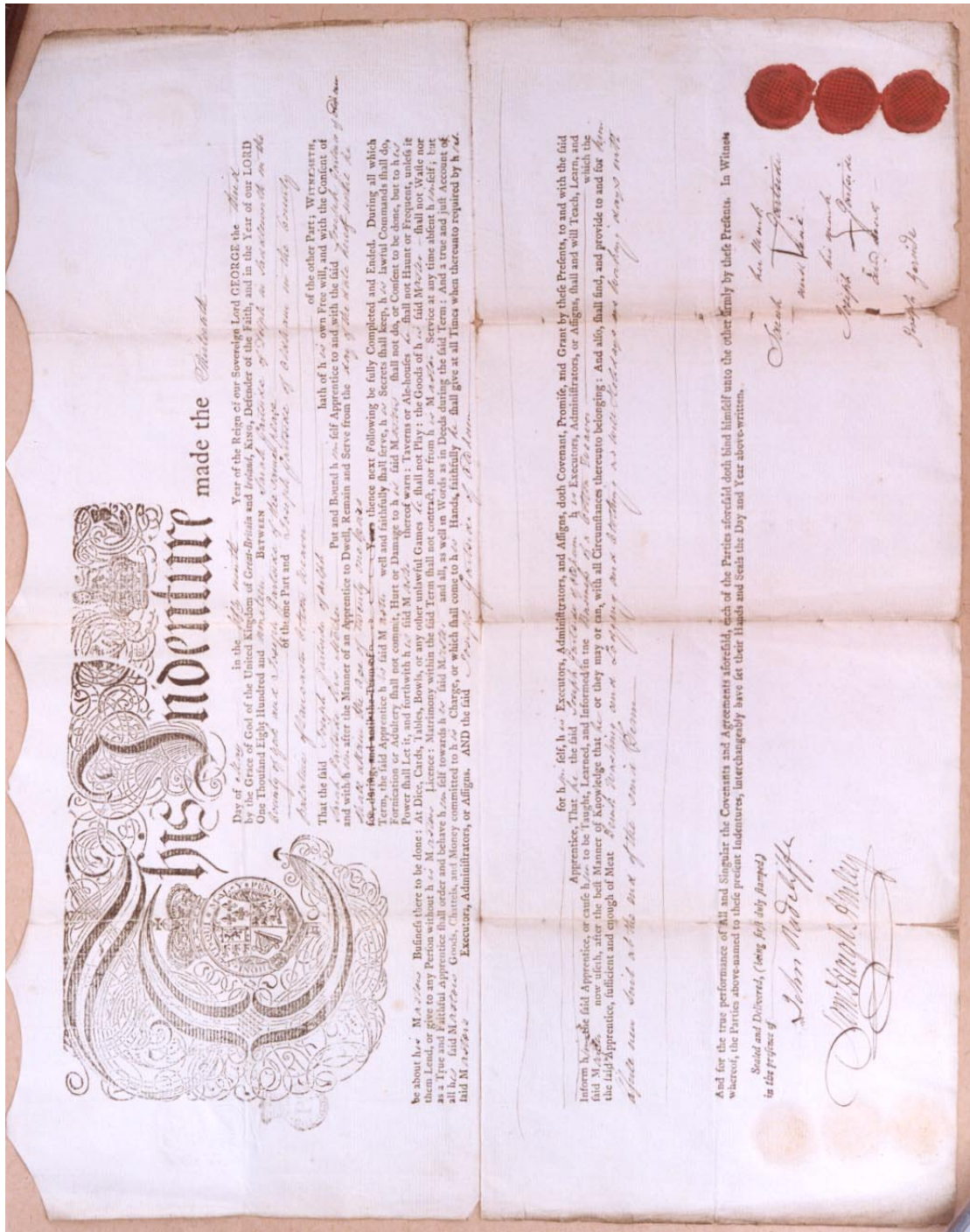
- When young people wanted to learn a trade in the nineteenth century, they would become an apprentice of someone experienced in that job.
- The apprentice would work with their master for several years, and would be paid (although much less than would be the normal wage for the job), and usually lived with his employer.
- The apprentice would normally get food and accommodation provided for the time they were an apprentice.
- When someone decided to become an apprentice, they had to complete an "Indenture" as an agreement between the master and the apprentice.
- The master would agree to provide for the apprentice, and teach him the trade, whilst the apprentice would agree to turn up for work, and be well behaved.

Below is an example of an indenture from 1819 (it has been typed up so it is easier to read).

In this example the apprentice has the same name as the master, they are probably related.

Notice the language used in this indenture - it takes 6 lines to say the date!





This Indenture made the thirteenth Day of May in the Fifty Ninth Year of the Reign of our sovereign Lord GEORGE the third by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, and in the Year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and nineteen BETWEEN Sarah Gartside of Delph in Saddleworth in the County of York and Joseph Gartside of the same place of the one part and Joseph Gartside of Oldham in the County Palatine of Lancaster, Cotton Weaver of the other part; WITNESSETH, That the said Joseph Gartside of Delph hath of his own free will, and with the consent of Sarah Gartside his mother put and bound himself Apprentice to and with the said Joseph Gartside of Oldham and with him after the manner of Apprentice to dwell, remain and serve from the day of the date hereof until he shall attain the age of twenty one years thence next following be fully completed and ended.

During all which term, the said Apprentice his said Master well and faithfully shall serve, his secrets shall keep, his lawful commandments shall do, fornication or adultery shall not commit, hurt or damage to his said masters shall not do, or consent to be done, but to his power shall let it, and forthwith his said master thereof warn: Taverns or Alehouses he shall not haunt or frequent, unless it be about his masters business there to be done: at dice, cards, tables, bowls, or any other unlawful games he shall not play: the goods of his said master shall not waste nor them lend, or give to any person without his masters licence: matrimony within the said term shall not contract, nor from his masters service at any time absent himself; but as a true and faithful Apprentice shall order and behave himself towards his said master and all, as well in words as in deeds during the said term : and a true and just account of all his masters goods, chattels, and money committed to his charge, or which shall come to his hands, faithfully he shall give at all times when thereunto required by his said masters

executors, administrators, or assigns, and the said Joseph Gartside of Oldham for himself, his executors, administrators, and assigns, doth covenant, promise and grant by these presents, to and with the said Apprentice, that he the said Joseph Gartside of Oldham his executors, administrators, or assigns, shall and will teach, learn, and inform him the said Apprentice, or cause him to be taught, learned, and informed in the business of cotton weaver which the said master now useth, after the best manner of knowledge that he or they may or can, with all circumstances thereunto belonging : and also, shall find, and provide to and for him the said Apprentice, sufficient and enough of meat, drink, washing, and lodging and clothing as well holidays as working days with a full new suit at the end of the said term.

And for the true performance of all and singular the covenants and agreements aforesaid, each of the parties doth bind himself unto the other firmly by these presents.

In witness whereof, the parties above named to these present indentures, interchangeably have set their hands and seals the day and year above written.

Sealed and Delivered (being first duly stamped)

In the presence of

John Radcliffe

Sam Haigh Amley

- What is the modern equivalent to an Indenture?
- Why do you think this document would have been used?
- What is Joseph Gartside not allowed to do?
- What will Joseph Gartside of Oldham provide for his apprentice?

## Make Your Own Indenture

Follow the example given in this source, fill in your details in the spaces provided, and become an apprentice!

This Indenture made the

..... Day of ..... in the Year of our  
Lord .....<sup>1</sup>

BETWEEN ..... of ..... in  
the county of ..... AND ..... of  
..... in the County of .....<sup>2</sup>,  
.....<sup>3</sup>

WITNESSETH, That the said ..... of  
..... hath of his own free will, and with the consent of  
..... his mother put and bound himself  
Apprentice to and with the said ..... of  
..... and with him after the manner of Apprentice  
to dwell, remain and serve from the day of the date hereof until he  
shall attain the age of twenty one years thence next following be  
fully completed and ended.

In witness whereof, the parties above named to these present  
indentures, interchangeably have set their hands and seals the day  
and year above written.

Sealed and Delivered (being first duly stamped)  
In the presence of

.....  
.....<sup>o</sup>

- 1 Insert the date here in words
- 2 Insert your name and where you are from, and the name and place of your employer
- 3 Insert the profession you are going to be an apprentice in (e.g. cotton weaver)
- 0 Insert the names of two of your classmates here.

## Useful Terms

- Factory - A large building used to make a certain product, such as cotton.
- Industrial Revolution - The development of new machinery and technology in the nineteenth century, which caused major changes in the way of life of the people in Britain.
- Manufacture - To make a product from raw materials
- Mule - A type of spinning machine, used to make raw cotton into threads.
- Piecer - Worker in a cotton warehouse, who would lean over the spinning machines to repair broken threads (piecing them together). The work was normally done by children, since they had small fingers that could tie the broken threads together with ease. It is thought that these workers walked many miles every day between the machines looking for broken threads.
- Raw Cotton - Cotton is harvested in bales, like hay, and then made into the substance we recognise in factories. "Raw" means that it is in its natural state, and has not been altered by people.



## Factories

- The Buildings used for storing and producing cotton are still prominent in Manchester, such as the Britannia Hotel on Portland Street, and India House on Whitworth Street.
- When factories were first built in the countryside, they were seen as a thing of wonder, but as time passed they became hated as pollution-producing places in which local people were forced to work in order to survive.
- The first factories were powered by water, meaning that they had to be near rivers, but with the invention of steam power, this became unnecessary and factories spread across the countryside, manufacturing more cotton than people could have imagined.
- Work in the factories was long and hard, and often led to physical deformities caused by constant standing and repetitive work.
- The factories not only produced pollution outside, but were heavily polluted within the building, making work difficult and unhealthy. In cotton factories, the cotton fibre in the air sometimes caused tuberculosis and bronchitis, especially amongst young children.
- Children would be punished for arriving late or working slowly by being hit with a strap, or being dipped into a water container.
- Workers were also in at risk of being injured by the machines which were unguarded, and very dangerous. They rarely got any help or compensation if they were injured and survived the machines.

## Source 4



*This is a picture of the cotton mills in Bolton (date unknown), which gives an idea of the type of buildings that were being developed during the industrial revolution.*

### Key Stage 1

- Look at the picture of the factory. What differences can you spot between this factory and a modern one?
- Write down as many things as you can think of that are made in factories.

### Key Stage 2

- Imagine you are living in Bolton in the nineteenth century. Write a letter either in favour or against the building of the mills in the picture.

### Key Stage 3

- Divide into groups, one side in support of factories, and one against.

## Source 5

This is a copy of poster of rules to be observed in Water-foot cotton mill, near Haslingden.

It also lays out punishments for breaking the rules.

# TO BE OBSERVE By the Hands Employed in THIS MILL

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RULE 1. All the Overlookers shall be on the premises first and last.

2. Any Person coming too late shall be fined as follows:—for 5 minutes 2d, 10 minutes 4d, and 15 minutes 6d,

3. For any Bobbins found on the floor 1d for each Bobbin.

4. For single Drawing, Slubbing, or Roving 2d for each single end.

5. For Waste on the floor 2d.

6. For any Oil wasted or spilled on the floor 2d each offence, besides paying for the value of the Oil.

7. For any broken Bobbins, they shall be paid for according to their value, and if there is any difficulty in ascertaining the guilty party, the same shall be paid for by the whole using such Bobbins.

8. Any person neglecting to Oil at the proper times shall be fined 2d.

9. Any person leaving their Work and found Talking with any of the other workpeople shall be fined 2d for each

10. For every Oath or insolent language, 3d for the first offence, and if repeated they shall be dismissed.

11. The Machinery shall be swept and cleaned down every meal time.

12. All persons in our employ shall serve Four Weeks' Notice before leaving their employ; but L. WHITAKER & Co. shall and will turn any person off without notice being given.

13. If two persons are known to be in one Necessary together they shall be fined 3d each; and if any Man or Boy in the Women's Necessary he shall be instantly dismissed.

14. Any person wilfully or negligently breaking the Machinery, damaging the Brushes, making too much Waste, &c. shall pay for the same to its full value.

15. Any person hanging anything on the Gas Pendants will be fined 2d.

16. The Masters would recommend that all their workpeople Wash themselves every morning, but they shall Wash themselves at least twice every week, Monday Morning and Thursday morning; and any found not washed will be fined for each offence.

17. The Grinders, Drawers, Slubbers and Rovers shall sweep at least eight times in the day as follows, in the Morning at 7½, 9½, 11 and 12; and in the Afternoon at 1½, 2½, 3½, 4½ and 5½ o'clock; and to notice the Board hung up, when the side is turned that is the time to sweep, and only quarter of an hour will be allowed for sweeping. The Spinning sweep as follows, in the Morning at 7½, 10 and 12; in the Afternoon at 3 and 5½ o'clock. Any neglecting to sweep at the time will be fined 2d for each offence.

18. Any persons found Smoking on the premises will be instantly dismissed.

19. Any person found away from their usual place of work, except for necessary purposes, or Talking with any other person, or their own Alley will be fined 2d for each offence.

20. Any person bringing dirty Bobbins will be fined 1d for each Bobbin.

21. Any person wilfully damaging this Notice will be dismissed.

The Overlookers are strictly enjoined to attend to these Rules, and they will be responsible to the Masters for Workpeople observing them.

WATER-FOOT MILL, NEAR HASLINGDEN,  
SEPTEMBER, 1851.

J. Read, Printer, and Bookbinder, Haslingden.

## Questions

- 1) Who is to be at work first and last? (Why do you think this is important?)
- 2) What would be the fine if you were 10 minutes late?
- 3) What punishment is there for dropping rubbish on the floor?
- 4) What would happen if you were to call your boss names?
- 5) Why do you think there is a fine for hanging things on the gas pendants?
- 6) Notice how there is a rule about washing (number 16) - do you think this would be used today?
- 7) How many times a day did the mill have to be swept? At what times? How long was allowed for this?
- 8) What was the penalty for smoking?

## Further Activities

1

### Warehouses

*Teachers : This activity could involve a trip to Manchester, looking at the buildings that were once warehouses, otherwise some photographs of Manchester today could be used.*

Take a look at the Britannia Hotel (opposite Piccadilly bus station in Manchester) and India House (now converted into flats - you can find pictures on the internet).

- 1) Think about modern warehouses and factories. What differences can you see between a modern warehouse and these buildings?
- 2) Look at the grand staircases and entrance halls. Why do you think that so much money was spent on these buildings?
- 3) What do you think the side entrances would have been used for?

## 2

### Cotton Production

*This activity could be integrated with textiles lessons, especially for younger children.*

*For the second activity you might like to use the website <http://www.handspinning.com/lollipops/spinninst.htm>*

- 1) Think about the way in which cotton was produced in the nineteenth century. How was it manufactured before the invention of spinning and weaving machines?
- 2) Have a go at spinning wool, and imagine how much more difficult it would be to spin cotton because it is so much thinner.



## Teacher's Notes

This pack has been designed to be used with Key Stages 1,2 and 3, in order to enhance the national curriculum and encourage the use of original source material in the study of history from a young age. It is appropriate to be used as part of unit 11a (Victorian Britain) and unit 7 (Local History). It is hoped that as well as contributing to national curriculum requirements, the pack will promote a keen interest and understanding of history and development of the area.

The sources should be downloaded and printed, so that the children can all see them.

Each source has a set of questions to go with it, and children should be encouraged to analyse the source as far as they are able. The questions are divided up into key stages, so it is best if only the source is printed for the class, and the questions written on the black board.

Key stage 1 questions are mainly concerned with looking at the sources and understanding the differences

There are also two additional activities at the end of the pack, which could be incorporated into school trips, and textile lessons.

## Suggested Answers to Questions

### Source 1

#### **1) Clothes**

- Today people have to wear overalls and uniforms to work in factories, there are health and safety regulations that ensure a certain standard of clothing.
- His clothes are worn out, and ragged, showing that he could not afford to buy new clothes
- He is barefoot, as piecers were not normally provided with footwear, this shows a lack of concern over their safety.

#### **2) Machinery**

- Factories today have to be safe and clean, whereas the machinery in the picture is open and dangerous.

#### **3) Workers**

- Today workers in factories clock in for a certain number of hours, and get regular breaks, this boy would have worked constantly, possibly after a morning at school (see source 2)
- This boy is clearly quite young, as were most piecers, but it is illegal today in this country to work under the age of 16.

#### **4) The Importance of the Cotton Industry**

- The cotton industry was the main trade of Lancashire, and was especially lucrative because of the links to Liverpool that opened up during the nineteenth century (Manchester Ship Canal, Manchester-Liverpool Railway).
- Entrepreneurs would buy and sell cotton, and people always had a job to go to because new factories and warehouses were springing up everywhere.
- Cotton would have been imported from America, then India and Egypt in later years.

## 5) The Decline of the Cotton Industry

- The cotton industry remained prominent into the twentieth century, but in the 1930s it declined rapidly.
- It suffered from competition from the Far East
- The Greater Manchester area became specialised in producing man-made fibres, because of a strong base in the chemical industry (you could try asking the children to name man-made fibres here, and identify those that they are wearing)
- The textile industry still functions in Greater Manchester, but its prominence is much reduced.
- This can be seen by the other uses to which cotton mills have been put:

- Greater Manchester record Office
- Manchester Cotton Exchange used as a theatre

And by those that have been demolished to make way for new development.

## 6) Child Workers

- Today it is illegal to work under the age of sixteen, and you are given a National Insurance number at that age to regulate work
- In the nineteenth century children were employed because they were cheap, and nimble (useful for "piecing" because they could squeeze between the machines)
- Children would go to school for some of the day, and then to work, but because they worked such long hours, it is doubtful that they paid much attention to their school work. Teachers would have been working simply to teach them the basics of reading and writing.

## 7) Apprenticeships

- The modern equivalent of an indenture would be a contract, that is signed upon acceptance of a

job. The contract details pay, holiday, type of work etc., but does not venture into the employees personal life.

- The indenture was used so that the master would not pay wages and provide accommodation only to have the apprentice give up after a few months, and so that the apprentice would get his fair pay and conditions according to the indenture.
- Joseph Gartside is not allowed to :  
Commit adultery or fornication,  
Hurt his master  
Visit pubs  
Play gambling games  
Waste or lend his master's goods  
Get married  
Be absent from work

## 8) Pros and Cons of Cotton Mills/factories

### Pros

- They bring work to the area (especially applicable to the "cotton towns" outside Manchester)
- They raise the profile of the area and increase the amount of money in the area

### Cons

- They ruin the landscape, and pollute the air  
Conditions are often terrible in the factories

## 9) Rules in cotton mills

### Answers

- 1) The overlooker – they would have made sure that everything was locked up, and switched off.
- 2) 4d – you might like to talk about how money has changed at this point.
- 3) Fine of 2d
- 4) You would be fined 3d, and if it was repeated you would be dismissed.
- 5) This would be dangerous and could cause a fire
- 6) No – today people are expected to look after themselves, at this time they would have been spending most of their waking hours in the mill, and so cleanliness was very important.
- 7) At least eight times – at 7.30am, 9.30, 11, 12pm, 1.30, 2.30, 3.30, 4.30, and 5.30. 15 minutes was allowed for sweeping each time.
- 8) Dismissal



## More Sources

Greater Manchester County Record Office has an extensive collection of photographs of the cotton industry, as well as trade directories, and various business records of the textile industry.

In addition to this, the record office building used to be a cotton warehouse, as can be seen from the architecture.

To find out more about the cotton industry in Greater Manchester see :

Mike Williams with D. A. Farnie *Cotton Mills in Greater Manchester*, Carnegie Publishing Ltd., 1992

A. P. Wadsworth & J. De Lacy Mann *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire 1600 – 1780*, Manchester University Press, 1965

George Watkins *The Textile Mill Engine*, Landmark Publishing Ltd., 1999

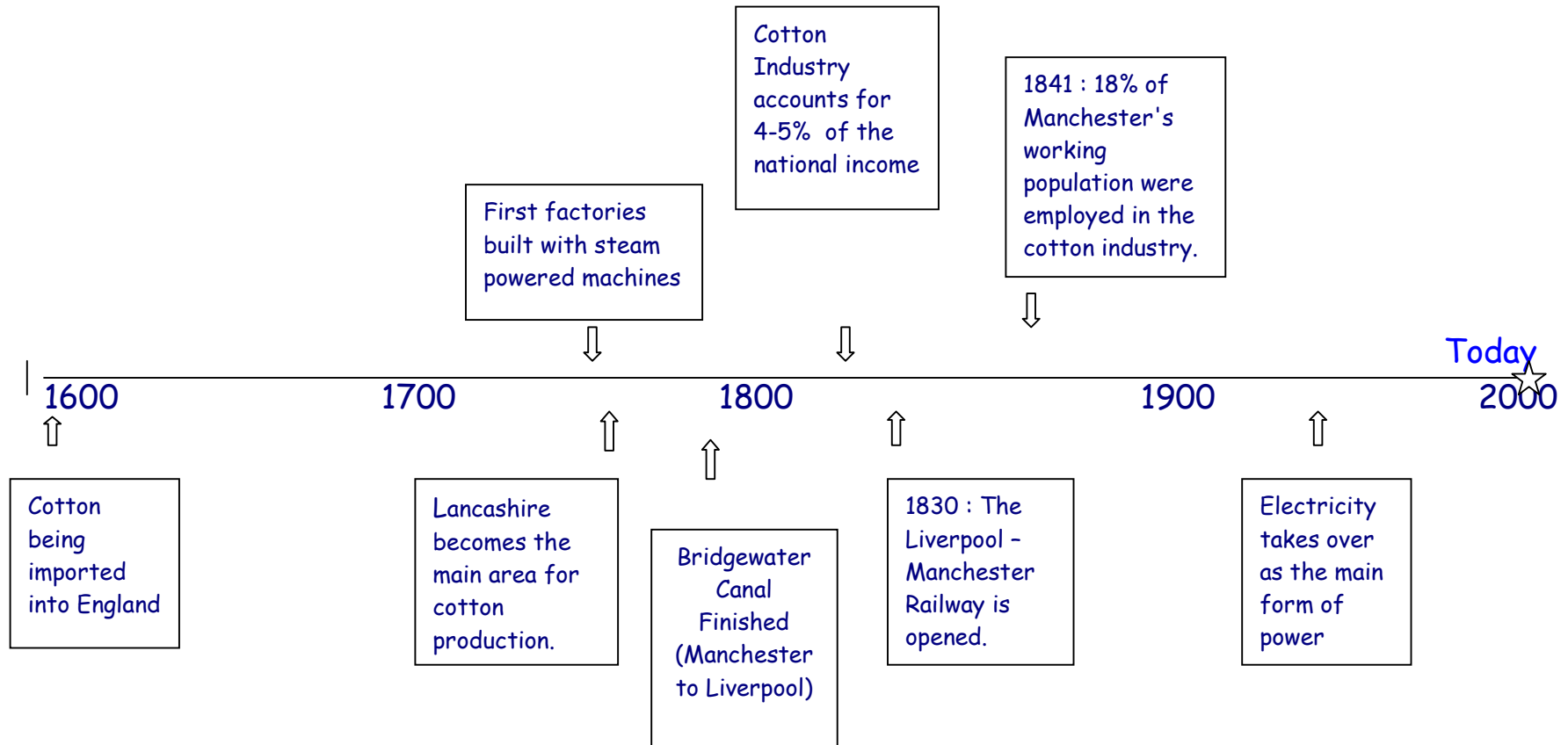
<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/Textiles.htm>



## Appendix 1 - Timeline

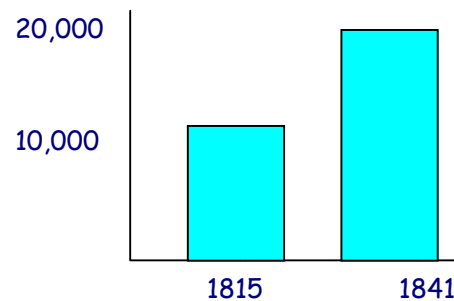
*This timeline covers the period of the industrial revolution, and points out major developments in the local area.*

1. What do you think is the significance of the opening of the Bridgewater Canal and the Liverpool - Manchester Railway?
2. Why was the cotton industry so important to the Industrial Revolution?
3. Why do you think cotton production moved to the smaller towns outside of Manchester?



## Statistics

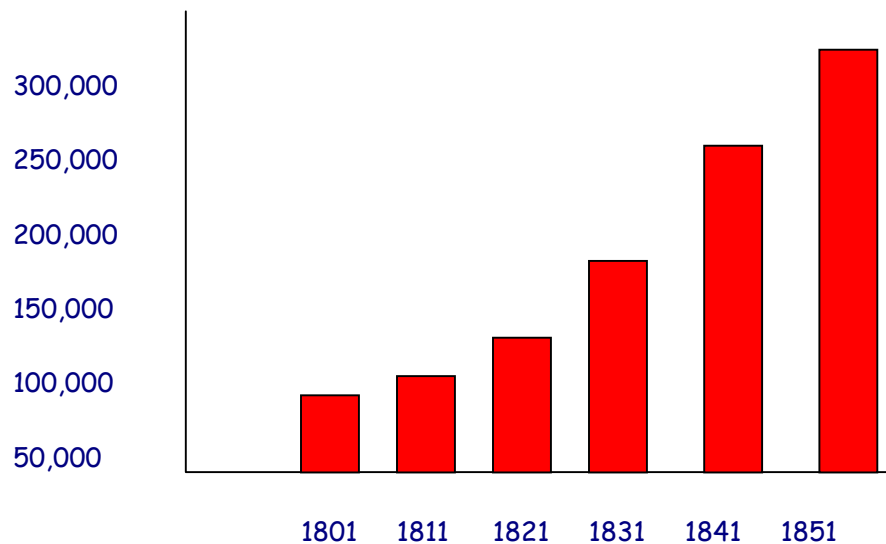
### Appendix 2 - The Growth of the Cotton Industry



This chart shows the amount of people in Manchester working in the Cotton Industry between 1815 and 1841. In 1841 cotton employed 18% of Manchester's work force.

### Appendix 3 - Population Growth

With the growth of the cotton industry, more and more people came to work in Manchester.



This chart shows the amount of people living in Manchester in the first half of the nineteenth century.