

# Summary: The Industrial Revolution

## The Industrial Revolution Begins

The Industrial Revolution began with textile machines. These machines turned cotton into yarn. Cotton spinning mills increased the demand for cotton. In 1793, Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, a machine that cleaned cotton quickly. The cotton gin helped southern farmers increase the supply of cotton. Cotton became America's biggest export.

A few years later, the government hired Whitney to make thousands of guns. At that time guns were made by hand. Whitney thought of a way to make them quickly and cheaply. He used interchangeable parts and mass production. Soon factories began using his ideas. The nation's productivity increased.

## Machines Bring Change

Business leaders used machines to change how people worked. Francis Lowell built a mill that turned cotton into cloth. Soon other factories opened. New inventions, like reapers and steel plows made farm work easier and faster. Before the Industrial Revolution, people worked on farms or in workshops. Now many people worked in factories and did the same task all day long.

## Changes in Transportation

In the 1800s, dirt paths were narrow and difficult to travel. Then the government built a road from Maryland to Ohio. Shipping goods by water was easier. Robert Fulton invented a steamboat that could travel without wind or currents. Soon there were many steamboats. Canals made water travel possible to more cities and towns. In 1825, the Erie Canal opened linking Lake Erie and the Hudson River.

Steam locomotive trains were even faster than steamboats and could run on hills or in bad weather. By 1850, the United States had 9,000 miles of railroad track. As more cities were connected by railroads, people could send their goods to places all over the country.



### Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

**textile** *noun*, cloth or fabric

**demand** *noun*, the amount of something people want to buy at a given price

**supply** *noun*, the amount of something people want to sell at a given price

**mass production** *noun*, making many products at once

**productivity** *noun*, the amount of goods and services produced by workers in a certain amount of time



### After You Read

**REVIEW** How did Whitney's cotton gin affect the supply of cotton? Circle the sentence that tells the answer.

**REVIEW** In what ways did people's workday change during the Industrial Revolution? Draw a box around the two sentences that tell where and how they worked.

**REVIEW** Why were steam locomotives better than other forms of transportation? Highlight the sentence that describes how they were better.