

DOCUMENTS

Interpreting Alternative Viewpoints
in Primary Source Documents

Industrialism

Why Was England First?

*England launched the Industrial Revolution in the late 1700s.
Why did it begin there and nowhere else?*



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Debating the DOCUMENTS

Interpreting Alternative Viewpoints
in Primary Source Documents

Industrialism Why Was England First?

The 2017 World History Course and Exam Description of the College Board Advanced Placement Program* lists five themes that it urges teachers to use in organizing their teaching. Each World History *Debating the Documents* booklet focuses on one or two of these five themes.

The Five Themes

- 1. Interaction between humans and the environment.** (demography and disease; migration; patterns of settlement; technology)
- 2. Development and interaction of cultures.** (religions; belief systems, philosophies, and ideologies; science and technology; the arts and architecture)
- 3. State-building, expansion, and conflict.** (political structures and forms of governance; empires; nations and nationalism; revolts and revolutions; regional, transregional, and global structures and organizations)
- 4. Creation, expansion, and interaction of economic systems.** (agricultural and pastoral production; trade and commerce; labor systems; industrialization; capitalism and socialism)
- 5. Development and transformation of social structures.** (gender roles and relations; family and kinship; racial and ethnic constructions; social and economic classes)

This Booklet's Main Theme:

- 4** Creation, expansion, and interaction of economic systems.

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Contents

Teacher Introduction	1
Suggestions to the Student	5
Introductory Essay	6
Why Was England First Time Line	7
First Group of Documents	8
Study the Documents	10
Comparing the Documents	12
Comparison Essay	13
Second Group of Documents	14
Study the Documents	16
Comparing the Documents	18
Comparison Essay	19
Document-Based Question	20
Worksheet Answers and Guidelines	21
Visual Primary Sources	23

Teacher Introduction

★ Using Primary Sources

Primary sources are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past era or historical event. They are the raw materials, or the evidence, on which historians base their “secondary” accounts of the past.

A rapidly growing number of history teachers today are using primary sources. Why? Perhaps it's because primary sources give students a better sense of what history is and what historians do. Such sources also help students see the past from a variety of viewpoints. Moreover, primary sources make history vivid and bring it to life.

However, primary sources are not easy to use. They can be confusing. They can be biased. They rarely all agree. Primary sources must be interpreted and set in context. To do this, students need historical background knowledge. *Debating the Documents* helps students handle such challenges by giving them a useful framework for analyzing sources that conflict with one another.



*“Multiple,
conflicting
perspectives are
among the truths
of history.
No single
objective or
universal account
could ever put an
end to this endless
creative dialogue
within and
between the past
and the present.”*

From the 2011 Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct of the Council of the American Historical Association.

INTRODUCTION

★ *The Debating the Documents Series*

Each *Debating the Documents* booklet includes the same sequence of reproducible worksheets. If students use several booklets over time, they will get regular practice at interpreting and comparing conflicting sources. In this way, they can learn the skills and habits needed to get the most out of primary sources.

Each *Debating the Documents* Booklet Includes

- **Suggestions for the Student and an Introductory Essay.** The student gets instructions and a one-page essay providing background on the booklet's topic. A time line on the topic is also included.
- **Two Groups of Contrasting Primary Source Documents.** In most of the booklets, students get one pair of visual sources and one pair of written sources. In some cases, more than two are provided for each. Background is provided on each source. *Within each group, the sources clash in a very clear way.* (The sources are not always exact opposites, but they do always differ in some obvious way.)
- **Three Worksheets for Each Document Group.** Students use the first two worksheets to take notes on the sources. The third worksheet asks which source the student thinks would be most useful to a historian.
- **One DBQ.** On page 20, a document-based question (DBQ) asks students to write an effective essay using all of the booklet's primary sources.

★ *How to Use This Booklet*

1. Have students read “Suggestions for the Student” and the Introductory Essay.

Give them copies of pages 5–7. Ask them to read the instructions and then read the introductory essay on the topic. The time line gives them additional information on that topic. This reading could be done in class or as a homework assignment.

2. Have students do the worksheets.

Make copies of the worksheets and the pages with the sources. Ask students to study the background information on each source and the source itself. Then have them take notes on the sources using the worksheets. If students have access to a computer, have them review the primary sources digitally.

NOTE: If you are using these materials with an AP world history class, an honors class, or some other group of advanced and/or more knowledgeable students, you may want to make more written sources available to them on this topic. Do a basic Internet search for sources that provide additional perspectives and then add to the sources provided here.

3. “Debate the documents” as a class.

Have students use their worksheet notes to debate the primary source documents as a class. Urge students to follow these ground rules:

- Use your worksheets as a guide for the discussion or debate.
- Try to reach agreement about the main ideas and the significance of each primary source document.
- Look for points of agreement as well as disagreement between the primary sources.
- Listen closely to all points of view about each primary source.
- Focus on the usefulness of each source to the historian, not merely on whether you agree or disagree with that source’s point of view.

4. Have students do the final DBQ.

A DBQ is an essay question about a set of primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, students write essays using evidence from the sources and their own background knowledge of the historical era. (See the next page for a DBQ scoring guide to use in evaluating these essays.)

The DBQ assignment on page 20 includes guidelines for writing a DBQ essay. Here are some additional points to make with students about preparing to write this kind of essay.

The DBQ for this Booklet (see page 20):

Based on these sources and your knowledge of history, explain why you think England was the first nation to launch the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century.

- Analyze the question carefully.
- Use your background knowledge to set sources in their historical context.
- Question and interpret sources actively. Do not accept them at face value.
- Use sources meaningfully to support your essay’s thesis.
- Pay attention to the overall organization of your essay.

INTRODUCTION

★ *Complete DBQ Scoring Guide*

Use this guide in evaluating the DBQ for this booklet. Use this scoring guide with students who are already familiar with using primary sources and writing DBQ essays.

Excellent Essay

- Offers a clear answer or thesis explicitly addressing all aspects of the essay question.
- Does a careful job of interpreting many or most of the documents and relating them clearly to the thesis and the DBQ. Deals with conflicting documents effectively.
- Uses details and examples effectively to support the thesis and other main ideas. Explains the significance of those details and examples well.
- Uses background knowledge and the documents in a balanced way.
- Is well written; clear transitions make the essay easy to follow from point to point. Only a few minor writing errors or errors of fact.

Good Essay

- Offers a reasonable thesis addressing the essential points of the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least some of the documents and relates them to the thesis and the DBQ.
- Usually relates details and examples meaningfully to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some relevant background knowledge.
- May have some writing errors or errors of fact, as long as these do not invalidate the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Fair Essay

- Offers at least a partly developed thesis addressing the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least a few of the documents.
- Relates only a few of the details and examples to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some background knowledge.
- Has several writing errors or errors of fact that make it harder to understand the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Poor Essay

- Offers no clear thesis or answer addressing the DBQ.
- Uses few documents effectively other than referring to them in “laundry list” style, with no meaningful relationship to a thesis or any main point.
- Uses details and examples unrelated to the thesis or other main ideas. Does not explain the significance of these details and examples.
- Is not clearly written, with some major writing errors or errors of fact.

Suggestions to the Student

★ *Using Primary Sources*

A primary source is any record of evidence from the past. Many things are primary sources: letters, diary entries, official documents, photos, cartoons, wills, maps, charts, etc. They are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past event or time period. This *Debating the Documents* lesson is based on two groups of primary source documents. Within each group, the sources conflict with one another. That is, they express different or even opposed points of view. You need to decide which source is more reliable, more useful, or more typical of the time period. This is what historians do all the time. Usually, you will be able to learn something about the past from each source, even when the sources clash with one another in dramatic ways.

★ *How to Use This Booklet*

1. **Read the one-page introductory essay.**

This gives you background information that will help you analyze the primary source documents and do the exercises for this *Debating the Documents* lesson. The time line gives you additional information you will find helpful.



2. **Study the primary source documents for this lesson.**

For this lesson, you get two groups of sources. The sources within each group conflict with one another. Some of these sources are visuals, others are written sources. With visual sources, pay attention not only to the image’s “content” (its subject matter) but also to its artistic style, shading, composition, camera angle, symbols, and other features that add to the image’s meaning. With written sources, notice the writing style, bias, even what the source leaves out or does not talk about. Think about each source’s author, that author’s reasons for writing, and the likely audience for the source. These considerations give you clues as to the source’s historical value.

3. **Use the worksheets to analyze each group of primary source documents.**

For each group of sources, you get three worksheets. Use the “Study the Document” worksheets to take notes on each source. Use the “Comparing the Documents” worksheet to decide which of the sources would be most useful to a historian.

4. **As a class, debate the documents.**

Use your worksheet notes to help you take part in this debate.

5. **Do the final DBQ.**

“DBQ” means “document-based question.” A DBQ is a question along with several primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, write an essay using evidence from the documents and your own background history knowledge.

Why Was England First?

In the late 1700s, a series of inventions in textile manufacturing in England vastly increased the speed at which cotton could be spun into yarn and the yarn woven into fabrics. Textile production soon moved from small shops and homes to factories where the new textile machinery could be housed. At the same time, English inventors perfected the coal-powered steam engine. It produced far more mechanical energy than could human or animal muscle power, or waterwheels and windmills. Soon, steam power and textile production transformed England into the world's first truly industrial nation.

By the 1600s, England was already a powerful commercial society. Its mechanics, artisans, and engineers were increasingly aware of mechanical principles arising out of the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. Its laws protected property and encouraged entrepreneurship. For a long time, historians focused on these factors to help explain why England was the first to launch the Industrial Revolution. Yet several other European countries were also powerful commercial societies. Why weren't they first? More recently, historians have asked this same question even more about another society entirely: China.

Under the Qing Dynasty, China in the eighteenth century was in many ways as dynamic and prosperous a commercial society as England. A long era of internal unity and calm favored it from the mid-1600s to the end of the 1700s. Agriculture thrived, providing a surplus that enabled China's population to mushroom. Taxes on peasants were lower than in past eras. China was of course far larger than England, and not every part of it was as wealthy as England by any means. Yet in certain regions, such as the lower Yangtze River, cities were growing and trade was thriving. Tea, porcelain, and silk were sold all over the world. Ironworks and other large-scale manufacturing existed. Goods were being produced for well-connected national and international markets. Literacy and entrepreneurial activity were spreading.

It is these facts that lead some historians to wonder why England industrialized whereas China did not. It's not possible to explore all the answers they give here, but in general, two broad interpretations have battled one another.

One stresses what it sees as England's unique internal cultural strengths. England was a relatively free and open society. Its growing agricultural productivity gave it surplus capital which its commercially oriented agrarian elites invested in new enterprises. Its artisans and businessmen created a real "machine culture," one aware of and ready to make use of the new scientific and technical knowledge of the age. Its legal system protected private property and gave entrepreneurs confidence that constant innovation and tinkering would be profitable. Historians who stress these things say China's agrarian gentry and Confucian bureaucracy simply did not generate the same interest in scientific advance and industrial innovation as England's merchant and gentry classes did.

However, other historians say England was basically lucky. It had huge deposits of coal near enough to its emerging industries. It had a vast overseas empire based in large part on cheap slave labor, and this generated extra wealth and capital. New foods from the Americas enabled it to feed its growing population and free more of them up for industrial labor. Only these accidents of history gave it an edge over China in launching the industrial age.

Of course, China also had coal. It, too, benefited from America's new foods. Moreover, its Qing Dynasty had carved out its own huge internal empire in the south and in the vast Central Asian interior. And so this debate goes on. It is not likely to be resolved soon.

The sources here will not prove one thesis or the other. What they will do is help you see more clearly what the debate is all about—and this will give you a chance to begin to take part in that debate on your own.

Why Was England First Time Line

1687

Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica* is published. It forms the basis for the modern science of physics. It offers an accurate understanding of mechanical principles that will guide the development of industrial machinery.

1709

Abraham Darby uses coke from coal to smelt iron ore. This replaces wood and charcoal, thereby taking advantage of England's plentiful supplies of coal.

1712

Thomas Newcomen builds the first usable steam engine to pump water out of deep coal mines. The engine cools and condenses steam in a cylinder and relies on atmospheric pressure to drive the cylinder's piston down.

1733

John Kay invents the flying shuttle for looms, making it possible to weave yarn into cloth at a much faster rate. This gives innovators a strong incentive to improve the spinning wheels that turn raw fibers into thread or yarn.

1761

The Duke of Bridgewater commissions engineer James Brindley to build a canal to carry coal from his coal mines to the industrializing city of Manchester. The Bridgewater Canal—the first major British canal—opens in 1761. By 1830 there are about 4000 miles of canals in Britain.

1764-1765

James Hargreaves invents the spinning jenny. Like spinning wheels, it is hand powered. But it uses several spindles at once to produce coarse weft threads. This partially solves the problem of increasing yarn production to keep pace with faster weaving output due to the flying shuttle.

1768

Richard Arkwright patents his spinning frame. (He probably took his ideas from Thomas Highs.) It produces cotton thread thin and strong enough for the warp, or long threads. Arkwright's frame is also called a "water frame" because it is powered by a waterwheel. It speeds up the shift from textile production in homes to production in factories.

1769

James Watt obtains a patent for the separate condenser to his new steam engine. This makes steam engines much more efficient and easier to use.

1776

Adam Smith publishes his *Wealth of Nations*, explaining the free-market economic system that enabled early industrial entrepreneurs to thrive.

1779

Samuel Crompton combines the spinning jenny and the water frame to create his "mule" (so-called because it is a hybrid of these two other devices). It produces strong, thin yarn from various fibers for any kind of textile.

1785

Edmund Cartwright builds a loom powered by a drive shaft. This first power loom produces textiles faster than can be done by hand-powered looms. At first, it relies on water power, and hence factories using it must be located along streams. By the early 1800s, steam engines are powering looms.

1793

Eli Whitney develops his cotton gin to clean raw cotton. This begins to make large amounts of cotton available to the growing industrial textile industry.

1801

Robert Trevithick uses high-pressure steam in a boiler to power the first steam road locomotive. He demonstrates it on Christmas Eve. In 1804, he runs one of his engines on railway lines for the first time.

1825

Engineered by George Stephenson, the Stockton and Darlington Railway opens. It carries coal from the coalfield of South Durham to the port at Stockton-on-Tees.

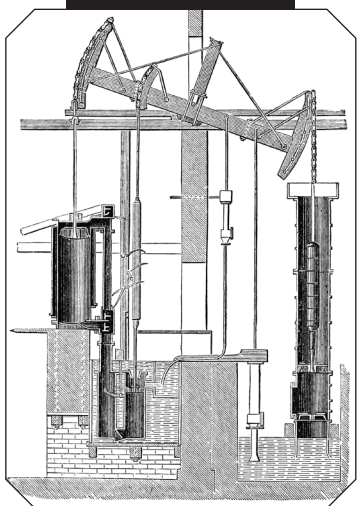
DOCUMENTS 1-3

Primary Source Documents 1-3

Information on Documents 1-3

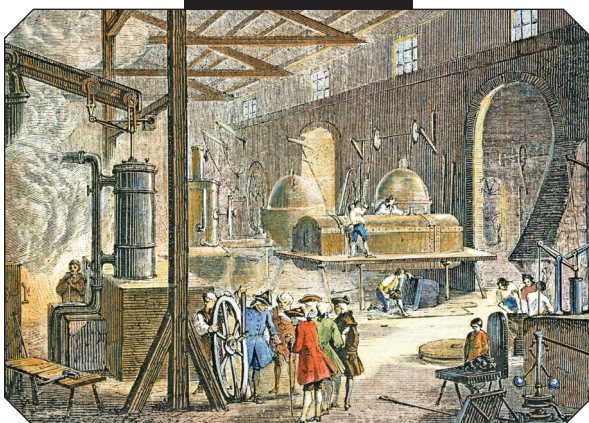
Document 1 is Scottish inventor James Watt's 1769 single-acting pumping steam engine. In earlier steam engines, a piston/cylinder was filled with steam and then cooled, creating a vacuum and using atmospheric pressure to force the piston down. The piston/cylinder had to be heated and cooled repeatedly. Watt's engine used a separate condenser to cool the steam instead, keeping the piston/cylinder hot and efficient. **Document 2** shows the Soho engineering works at Birmingham, England, where James Watt and his partner Matthew Boulton manufactured steam engines from 1775 to 1800. Their engineering skill and profit-seeking drive were given philosophical approval by Adam Smith in his 1776 book *The Wealth of Nations*. **Document 3** is a famous passage from that book in which Smith explains why individual self-interest leads to the general improvement of the economy and society.

Document 1



The Granger Collection, New York

Document 2



The Granger Collection, New York

Document 3

As every individual, therefore, endeavors as much as he can both to employ his capital in the support of domestic industry, and so to direct that industry that its produce may be of the greatest value; every individual necessarily labors to render the annual revenue of the society as great as he can. He generally, indeed, neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. By preferring the support of domestic to that of foreign industry, he intends only his own security; and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was not part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good.