How do you and your family get most of the things you need to live? Do you make any of these items yourself? If not, then where are most of the items made? Most likely they are manufactured in factories in the United States or in other parts of the world.

Goods we use for everyday living were not always manufactured in factories. Traditionally, most goods were made at home. However, by the late 1700s the way goods were made began to change. This change is known as the Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain, which includes England, Scotland, and Wales. There were several reasons why it started there, but many had to do with Britain’s geography.

Britain had many natural resources. One resource was its fertile land, on which small farms prospered. However, in the 1700s wealthy landowners bought up much of the land, forcing the owners of small farms to move to cities to find work. The wealthy landowners introduced improved farming methods that resulted in greater crop yields. They also introduced improved methods of raising livestock. These changes in farming methods resulted in an agricultural revolution. The increase in farm products helped to feed the growing population in Britain’s urban areas.

Britain had other natural resources that were necessary for industrialization, or the process of developing machines to produce goods. It had abundant supplies of coal, which were needed to fuel machines. A large supply of iron ore, which was used to make machines and tools, was also available. The region’s fast-flowing rivers provided waterpower to factories. Navigable rivers were used to transport goods within the country, while many harbors allowed ships to transport goods overseas.

One of the first industries to develop in Britain was the textile, or cloth-making, industry. Inventors created machinery to do some of the work involved in making cloth, such as spinning. This machinery ran on waterpower. As a result, cloth makers built...
mills along rivers. Many small farmers who had lost their land came to the mills to find work.

As industries in Britain grew, private investors and banks were needed to provide money to build more factories and buy more machines. Soon, wealthy businesspeople called capitalists became as important as manufacturers in the growing process of industrialization.

The Revolution Spreads

By the early 1800s, the Industrial Revolution had spread to other parts of Europe and to North America. In the United States, the Industrial Revolution began on the northeast coast in New England. The soil in New England was poor, making farming difficult. As a result, people had to find other ways of making a living.

Like Britain, New England had many resources that made industrialization possible. Rapid-flowing rivers provided the waterpower necessary to run machines. Resources such as coal and iron were located nearby. Ports were used to ship goods from the factories to markets overseas.

New England also had many investors who could provide capital, or money needed for investment. As in Britain, the capital was needed to build more factories and machines.

Many workers in New England’s factories were New Englanders. However, in the 1820s, many European immigrants arrived in the region looking for greater economic opportunities. Many immigrants took jobs in New England’s growing industries.

Effects of the Revolution

For many centuries, most Europeans lived in rural areas. By the middle of the 1800s, however, more people lived in cities. The increasing number of factories brought people to cities to look for jobs. Look at Figure 6-1. What percent of the population in 1750 was urban? How did the population distribution change by 1850? How did the Industrial Revolution contribute to this change?

The Industrial Revolution was a turning point in history. It changed much of the Western world from a rural, agricultural society to an urban, industrial one. Industrialization provided people with a higher standard of living. However, it also created problems, such as pollution, that challenge the world today.

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**Figure 6-1** Population of Britain From 1750 to 1850

- **Source:** Atlas of World History. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.
A REVIEWING KEY TERMS
Write the meaning of each word.

1. agricultural revolution
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________

2. Industrial Revolution
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________

3. industrialization
   ___________________________________________

4. capital
   ___________________________________________

B RECALLING FACTS
Use the reading and Figure 6-1 on page 206 to answer these questions.

1. How did the ways goods were made change as a result of the Industrial Revolution?
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________

2. Why did the Industrial Revolution start in Great Britain?
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________

3. In the United States, why did the Industrial Revolution start in New England?
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________

4. How did the Industrial Revolution affect population distribution in Britain by the middle of the 1800s?
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________