The Immigrant Learning Center®
Public Education Institute

Grades 5-12
Social Studies

Teacher Resource

Teaching U.S. Immigration Series:

Immigrant Women and the Industrial Revolution

The Immigrant Learning Center

www.ilctr.org

Teaching U.S. Immigration Series

Humans have been migrating throughout every place and time in our history, so in this series we give you the tools to explore immigration through the lens of the history and social studies curriculum already being taught. Explore lessons that uncover overlooked narratives, such as why immigrants chose to fight in the Civil War, and delve deeper into periods of high immigration with compelling questions that encourage students to move beyond the traditional push/pull narrative of immigration. Each lesson connects the past to the present, encouraging students to consider how history informs contemporary issues. Find the series at https://www.ilctr.org/for-teachers/teaching-us-immigration-series/

This resource is sponsored in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.

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Cover image: The 1910 Chicago Garment Workers' Strike. Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chicago_garment_workers%27_strike.jpg

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Introduction

The Industrial Revolution was a period of rapid innovation and urbanization. Manufacturing and immigration dramatically increased, resulting in a new social class of laboring immigrants living in close conditions. Immigrant women, in particular, found themselves at the crossroads of class, gender and the changing nature of work. With this bundle, we have chosen to focus on immigrant women, the particular challenges they faced and the strength they brought to their chosen home.

Each of the two lesson plans, "The Social Question" and "Immigrant Women on Strike," is designed to be flexible and adaptable based on the needs of your class by offering options such as multiple leveled texts and by supporting both in-person and online class activities. Each can be taught as a standalone lesson in one or two class periods or could be used together as fits into the existing scope and sequence of your course.

"The Social Question" centers on a text, *Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution*, which is offered in three text complexity levels. Students are asked to consider changes in gender roles over time and how immigrant women's dual identities placed them at the heart of what some U.S.-born Americans believed was a moral breakdown of society: increasing numbers of women working outside the home to support their families.

The Industrial Revolution was also a time of intense labor organizing, with the many hardships faced by factory workers sparking strikes and unionization. Women were often underpaid, overworked and made to endure difficult conditions. Immigrant women such as Clara Lemlich, leader of the Uprising of 20,000 strike following the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, were at the forefront of many of the efforts to demand basic rights and protections for workers. In lesson two "Immigrant Women on Strike," students research five different strikes led by immigrant women, both during and after the Industrial Revolution, to consider the legacy of these leaders fighting for workers' rights.

Both lesson plans incorporate primary sources and ask students to make connections to their own lives or to modern society, bringing history into the present. A supplemental resource, “Seven Foreign-Born Heroines of the Second Industrial Revolution,” profiles seven historical figures who fought for workers’ rights, equality for women and the health of their communities.

How many industrial revolutions are there?

While many resources for middle and high school students refer to “the Industrial Revolution,” historians use more specific terminology. The First Industrial Revolution, lasting from around 1760 to the mid-1800s was characterized by a transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy and largely took place in Britain. The Second Industrial Revolution, from approximately 1870 to 1945, was a period of rapid innovation and urbanization and took place in Britain, continental Europe, North America and Japan. Some argue that the rise of digital communications technology and the internet led to a Third Industrial Revolution, and with the rise of artificial intelligence, we are entering a Fourth Industrial Revolution. In this bundle, we align with most middle and high school resources and use the term "the Industrial Revolution" to refer to the Second Industrial Revolution.

Lesson One

The Social Question

Educator Notes

This lesson assumes prior knowledge of the Industrial Revolution. Students will be asked to activate background knowledge using primary sources before digging into a text about the part immigrant women played in the Industrial Revolution. The lesson centers on the "social question" of the time period, which is understood to be all the various societal changes and conflicts brought about by industrialization. It may be worth clarifying with students that the "social question," a term coined in Europe during the 19th century for this purpose, is not actually a question in the form they might be expecting, but rather a problem that needs to be addressed.

The central text for this lesson plan is *Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution*. We offer it here in three text complexity levels: middle school, high school and college. Any of the versions will work with the lesson, including different selections for different students in the same class. For the reading itself, students can read independently, work with a partner or listen to a teacher read-aloud.

Lesson Plan:
The Social Question

Objectives

- Students will use a text to analyze and discuss how immigrant women were perceived to be part of the "social question" in the United States.

Guiding Questions

- How did immigrant women's identities as both women and immigrants contribute to society perceiving them as part of the "social question" in the United States during the Second Industrial Revolution?

Common Core Standards

Grade 6-8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.10
By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

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Common Core Standards (continued)

Grade 9-10

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.10
By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Grade 11-12

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.10
By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Materials

Printable versions of these images are provided at the end of this lesson plan. There is also a printable handout with QR codes for these images in the Print-Friendly Guide to Resources section at the end of this resource.

- Primary Sources (Library of Congress, American Social History Project).
  - Solvay Process Co.'s works
  - Breaker boys, Woodward Coal Mines
  - Assembly
  - Inspecting Catsup
  - West elevation - Lippitt Mill
  - Tenement, New York City, 1910

- Text: *Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution*
  - Version I: Middle school
  - Version II: High school
  - Version III: College

- Note Catcher: Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution
  - Note Catcher for Version I
  - Note Catcher for Versions II and III

Activities

Opening:

In a Quick Write or Think-Pair-Share format, ask students to respond to the question: How have gender roles changed over time?

Activating Background Knowledge

Share with students the set of primary source images, either in a printed gallery walk or an online slideshow. Give students a few minutes to examine the images and recall what they've learned about the Industrial Revolution.

Ask students: What changed about American society when it transitioned from mostly rural/agrarian to more urban/industrialized? Create a broad list as a class. Guide students to consider daily life, living conditions, work, technological advancements, population changes, etc.

When ideas have been exhausted, examine the list with students. Highlight for them that there are some things on this list that are objectively negative (examples: pollution, disease, child labor) and there are others that some people perceived to be negative (examples: women working outside the home, labor organizing, an influx of immigrants). Together, these dramatic changes and problems became known as the "social question" of the time period.

Share with students the guiding question for the day and that the class will be investigating it through readings, discussions and writing.

Reading

Individually, in pairs or as a whole-class read-aloud, have students read a version of the text, *Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution*. (See educator notes.)

Encourage students to highlight vocabulary words. To answer the focus questions embedded within the text, students can take notes directly on the text, on a blank sheet of paper or on one of the provided note catchers.

Activities (continued)

Discussion

Have students form groups of four or five. They should partner up and discuss each question with a different person each time. Read each question, then give students about a minute to silently re-read and jot notes before turning to discuss with their current partner. End with a whole-class discussion.

1. How were immigrant women perceived to be part of the "social question" as **women**?

2. How were immigrant women perceived to be part of the "social question" as **immigrants**?

3. How did these two identities combine to make this group even more susceptible to harsh judgment from the established society?

Response

Choose one or both of the questions below for more group discussion or written response.

A. Can you think of another example of immigrants being blamed for a problem or change in society? Why do you think this is a recurring theme in American history?

B. Is there a parallel "social question" that concerns Americans now? Is there a particular social group that tends to be associated with or blamed for this? Why?

Additional Resources

Remembering the 1911 Triangle Factory Fire
(Cornell University Library)
Online exhibit including original documents, interviews of survivors and witnesses, photographs and illustrations, and a timeline of events

The Mansion of Happiness
(New York Historical)
Resource about a board game produced in the late 1800s that reinforced moral values of the dominant society of the time period

Depicting Domestics
(New York Historical Society)
Two primary source images illustrating conflicting attitudes toward Irish domestic servants, with background, vocabulary and discussion questions

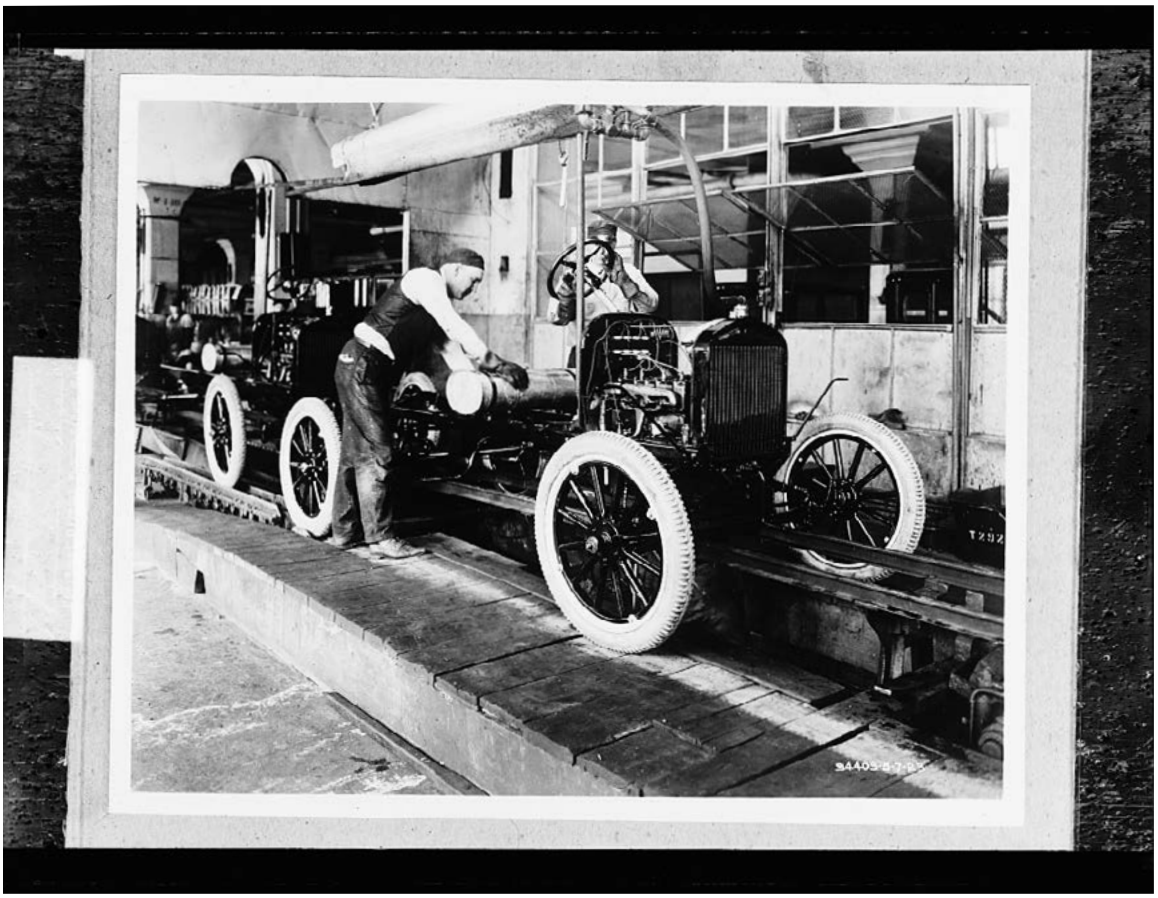
The Impact of Immigrant Women on America's Labor Force
(American Immigration Council)
Fact sheet published in 2017 detailing the spectrum of immigrant women's roles in the modern workforce

A Profile of Immigrant Women in the Workforce
(Center for American Progress)
Article from 2021 sharing statistics and stories of immigrant women working in the current economy and during the COVID-19 pandemic

Women and Industrialization
(The Remedial Herstory Project)
Podcast, article, lesson plans, primary sources and more about women and the Industrial Revolution

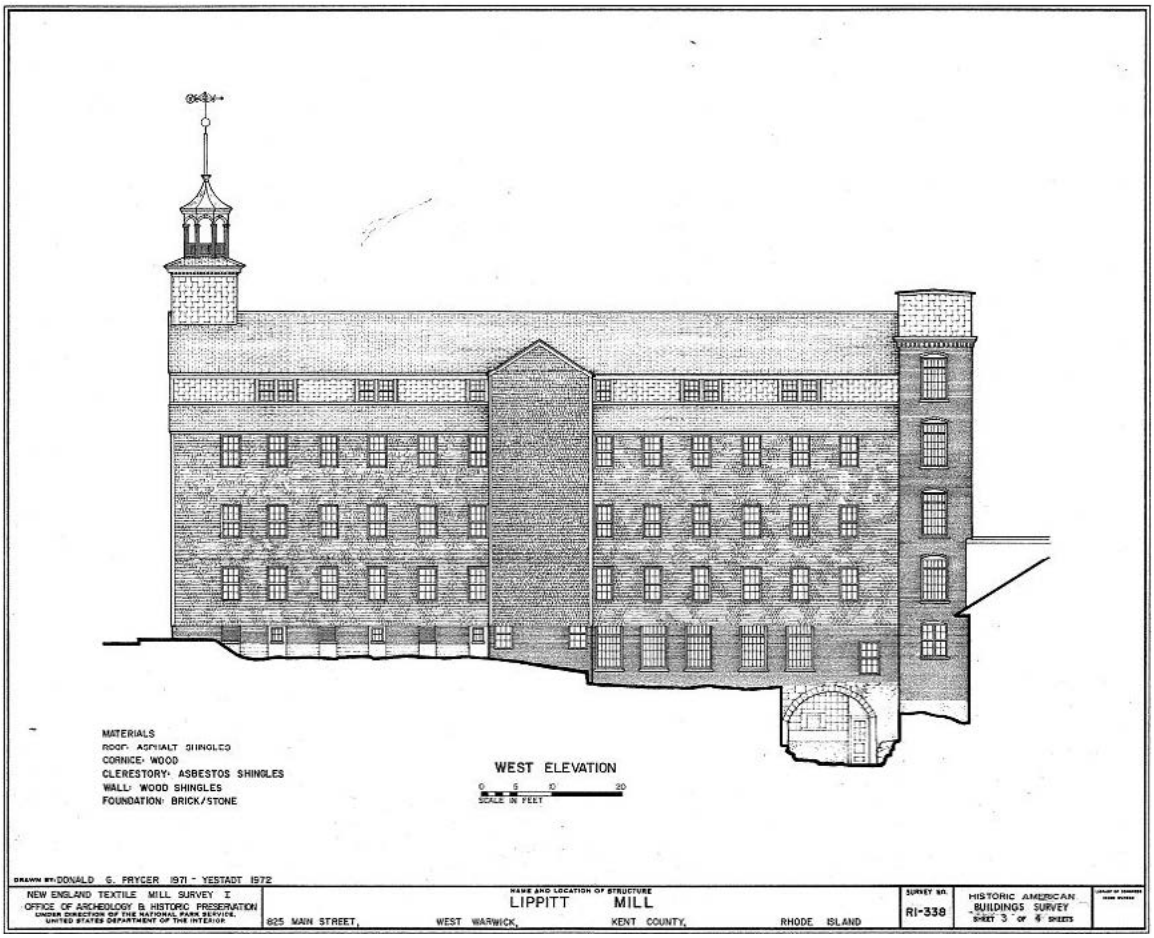
Detroit Publishing Co. *Solvay Process Co.'s works, Syracuse*, between 1890 and 1901, retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2016801688/

Detroit Publishing Co. *Breaker boys, Woodward Coal Mines, Kingston, Pa.*, ca. 1900, retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2016801353/



Detroit Publishing Co. *Assembly*, ca. 1923, retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2016797152/

Detroit Publishing Co. *Inspecting Catsup*, between 1910 and 1930, retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2016797146/



Historic American Buildings Survey. *West elevation - Lippitt Mill, 825 Main Street, West Warwick, Kent County, RI,* drawings from survey HABS RI-338, retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/resource/hhh.ri0025.sheet/?sp=3

Hine, L. W. *Tenement, New York City, 1910*, retrieved from SHEC: Resources for Teachers: https://shec.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/1044

Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution

Version I*

By Tiffany Thompson

How did the Industrial Revolution affect immigration?

The Second Industrial Revolution, which took place from 1870 to 1914, had a significant impact on the United States. During this time, factories replaced handmade production, leading to the development of new technologies and increased efficiency in **manufacturing**. The Northeast and Midwest regions of the United States became hubs for factories, with numerous mills and factories popping up in cities like Boston, New York City and Chicago. As a result, there was a high demand for workers.

To meet this demand, many people from Europe immigrated to the United States between 1850 and 1913. Most of these immigrants came from Germany, Ireland, Italy, and Central and Eastern Europe. They played a crucial role in factory work, with over half of the factory workers being immigrants or their children by 1920. Even though more men moved to the United States than women during this time, immigrant women played an important role as workers.

What kinds of work did immigrant women find in the United States?

Irish immigrants, in particular, made up a significant portion of the immigrant population. In fact, more than one-third of all immigrants between 1820 and 1860 were Irish, and by the end of the 19th century, more than half of these Irish immigrants were young, single women. Many sought employment as **domestic** workers in the homes of wealthy families, performing household tasks like cooking and cleaning. By 1912, 87 percent of Irish women who immigrated to New York found jobs as domestic workers. Although they weren't working in factories, they were still living in cities and working outside of their homes to earn money. This was quite different from what most Americans considered to be the traditional way of life, in which women worked in their own homes.

Immigrant women also found work in **textile** mills and **garment** factories. The factory owners preferred to hire women and children because their smaller hands were better suited for working the machines. They also believed that women and children were more obedient and could be paid less than men. On average, women earned only one-third to one-half of what men made. Additionally, these factories were very dangerous places to work. Employees had to endure long hours, often working 10 to 12 hours a day in dark and dirty rooms.

Despite the challenges they faced, many immigrant women organized themselves to fight for better conditions. They joined labor unions, fought for women's right to vote, and worked together on social and political issues.

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Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution.

Version I (continued)

Why did some people feel that immigrant women didn't "fit" into society?

While the Second Industrial Revolution brought economic growth, it also created social problems. Cities became overcrowded and polluted, and there was a lack of adequate housing. Workers in factories were mistreated and underpaid, and traditional family structures and societal norms began to change. Blame was often placed on the working class, especially immigrant women, for these changes that together became known as the "social question."

Immigrant women faced additional challenges due to societal expectations. Many Americans believed that men and women should have different roles, with women primarily responsible for the home and family. However, for working-class families, meeting society's expectations of being respectable was difficult or impossible. Women needed to work to support themselves and their families, whether they were in the United States or abroad.

The increasing number of working women caused concern and worry about motherhood and traditional family structures. Middle-class reformers attempted to address this issue by teaching immigrant women how to be "respectable" according to their standards. However, many working-class women, both immigrants and U.S.-born, **resisted** these efforts, feeling scared and angry about attempts to control their lives.

During the Second Industrial Revolution, immigrant women played a vital role in the growth of factories and mass production. Their hard work contributed to the success of the factory system and led to advancements in manufacturing. These women also fought for better working and living conditions through the labor movement. Studying the history of immigrant women during this time is important because it highlights their unique experiences and contributions to society.

Tiffany Thompson is a doctoral candidate in the Boston College history department studying modern Irish and British history with a focus on gender and migration. Her research explores the impact of Northern Ireland's Troubles on displaced and refugee women during the 1970s.

*This essay was leveled with support from AI. For the original version, please read *Version III: Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution*.

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Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution.

Version I (continued)

Vocabulary

manufacturing (noun)
Definition: the process of making things using machines, tools and chemicals
Example: The manufacturing industry creates jobs and produces everyday products.

domestic (adjective)
Definition: relating to the running of a home or to family relations
Example: Irish women sought employment as domestic workers in the homes of wealthy individuals.

textile (noun)
Definition: a type of cloth or woven fabric
Example: Immigrant women found jobs in textile mills and garment factories.

garment (noun)
Definition: an item of clothing
Example: Immigrant women found jobs in textile mills and garment factories.

resist (verb)
Definition: to refuse to accept or comply with something
Example: Many working-class women resisted attempts to control their lives.

Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution Version II*

By Tiffany Thompson

How did the Industrial Revolution affect immigration?

The Second Industrial Revolution, which occurred from 1870 to 1914, was a time of rapid **industrialization** and **urbanization** in the United States. Factories began producing machine-made products on a large scale, leading to advancements in **mass production** and innovations in power, transportation and communication methods. This revolution mainly took place in the Northeast and Midwest regions of the country, with cities like Boston, New York City and Chicago experiencing the rise of new mills and factories.

The increase in industrialization created a high demand for workers in the United States. Millions of people migrated to the United States from Europe, escaping problems like failed crops, job shortages, high taxes and famine. Between 1850 and 1913, around 30 million Europeans immigrated to the United States, with many becoming factory workers. Immigrant women played a crucial role in fueling the Second Industrial Revolution by providing labor, even though more men than women immigrated during this time.

What kinds of work did immigrant women find in the United States?

The economic prosperity brought about by the Second Industrial Revolution created a new middle class who sought to employ **domestic** workers to perform household tasks. Irish immigrant women, in particular, found this kind of employment. Between 1820 and 1860, over one-third of all immigrants to the United States were Irish, and by 1912, 87 percent of Irish women who immigrated to New York found jobs as domestic workers. Although they weren't working in factories, this represented a significant change in traditional family life and domestic labor.

During this time, immigrant women also found jobs in textile mills and garment factories. They were preferred by factory owners because of their smaller hands and perceived obedience. Unfortunately, they were paid only one-third to one-half of what men made on average. Working conditions in these factories were extremely poor and dangerous, with 10 to 12 work days, dark and dirty rooms, and unsafe machines. Tragic incidents like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911 highlighted the dangers faced by these workers.

What societal expectations and pressures did immigrant women face?

Despite the challenges they faced, many immigrant women organized themselves to fight for better conditions. They joined labor unions, fought for women's right to vote, and worked together on social and political issues. The Second Industrial Revolution brought about significant changes

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Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution. Version II (continued)

in the American economy but also caused societal problems, such as crowded cities, poor housing, mistreatment of workers and pollution. All of the social problems caused by the Second Industrial Revolution, including the breakdown of traditional family structures and gender roles, became known as the "social question."

Many Americans perceived immigrant women as part of this "social question." This idea stemmed from the belief that men and women should have different roles in society. Men were expected to work outside the home and provide for their families, while women were supposed to stay at home and take care of the family. If women worked outside the home, it was seen as going against these traditional gender roles. People thought that if women had jobs, they wouldn't be able to focus on their homes and families.

During the Second Industrial Revolution, more and more women began working outside the home, and by 1900, more than 20 percent of women were doing so. This increase in the number of women working made them more visible in society. However, for working-class families, meeting society's expectations of being respectable was difficult. Women needed to work to support themselves and their families, whether they were in the United States or abroad.

The changing roles of men and women during the Industrial Revolution caused concern and worry about femininity, motherhood and morality. Most immigrant women who worked in factories were unmarried teenagers and young adults, and single motherhood was common among immigrant women who had lost their husbands or never married. Middle-class **reformers** tried to teach immigrant women their own idea of what it meant to be a respectable woman, emphasizing managing a household and discouraging behaviors seen as "immoral." However, many working-class women didn't agree with these efforts and felt scared and angry about the reformers passing judgment on their lives and families.

Immigrant women played a significant role in shaping the Second Industrial Revolution and fought for improved working and living conditions. Their hard work supported the growth of factories and mass production, while they advocated for better working and living conditions for themselves and their communities. Studying the history of immigrant women during this time is important because it has its own special significance in understanding the impact of the Industrial Revolution on different groups of people.

Tiffany Thompson is a doctoral candidate in the Boston College history department studying modern Irish and British history with a focus on gender and migration. Her research explores the impact of Northern Ireland's Troubles on displaced and refugee women during the 1970s.

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Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution. Version II (continued)

Vocabulary

industrialization (noun)
Definition: the development of industries in a country or region on a large scale
Example: The process of industrialization transformed the economy and society.

urbanization (noun)
Definition: the process of making an area more urban with the growth of cities and towns
Example: Rapid urbanization led to overcrowding and increased pollution in the city.

mass production (noun)
Definition: the production of goods in large quantities using standardized methods
Example: The introduction of assembly lines revolutionized mass production in factories.

domestic (adjective)
Definition: relating to the running of a home or to family relations
Example: Irish women sought employment as domestic workers in the homes of wealthy individuals.

reformers (noun)
Definition: people who work to improve or change something for the better
Example: The reformers fought for social justice and equality in society.

Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution

Version III

By Tiffany Thompson

How did the Second Industrial Revolution affect immigration?

The Second Industrial Revolution (1870-1914) was a period of rapid **industrialization** and **urbanization** that saw large-scale increases in **mass production** and innovations in methods of power, transportation and communication. Underlying all of this was a major transition from handmade goods to machine-made products produced in factories. In the United States, industrialization was concentrated in the Northeast and Midwest where new mills and factories sprung up in cities like Boston, Lowell, New York City, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago. This revolution in manufacturing and labor practices significantly intensified the need for workers in the United States.

At the same time, political and economic turmoil in Europe spurred the mass migration of millions of people. Fleeing crop failure, job shortages, rising taxes and famine, many came to the United States because they saw it as the land of economic opportunity. This was the age of mass migration, and nearly 30 million Europeans immigrated to the United States between 1850 and 1913. The largest groups of immigrants during this period came from Germany, Ireland, Italy, and Central and Eastern Europe. These immigrants supplied much of the labor needed to make factory systems viable, and by 1920, immigrants and their children comprised over half of factory workers. Although more men immigrated to the United States than women during this period, immigrant women were an important source of labor that fueled the Second Industrial Revolution.

What kinds of work did immigrant women find in the United States?

Between 1820 and 1860, over one-third of all immigrants to the United States were Irish. By the end of the 19th century, more than half of these Irish immigrants were young, single women looking for work. In fact, the Irish were the only immigrant group in which women outnumbered men. The economic prosperity of the Second Industrial Revolution created a new middle-class who employed domestic workers to do their household labor. Most of the **domestic** workers at this time were Irish immigrant women. In 1912, 87 percent of Irish women who immigrated to New York found jobs as domestic workers. Although these women were not working in factories, they were living in urban areas and working outside the home to earn a wage. This was a major change in what many Americans perceived as traditional family life and domestic labor.

Immigrant women also found work as in textile mills and garment factories. Factory owners preferred to hire women and children because they had smaller hands to operate intricate machinery, were seen as docile and submissive, and could be paid less than men. On average, women were paid from one-third to one-half of a man's salary. Poor working conditions made these factories extremely dangerous places. People were expected to work 10 to 12 hours a day in dark, dirty rooms full of loud, unsafe machines, and accidents were common. For example, the

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Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution. Version III (continued)

Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911 remains the deadliest industrial disaster in New York City history and one of the deadliest in U.S. history. The fire caused the deaths of 146 garment workers, 123 of whom were women and girls. Most of the victims were Italian and Jewish immigrant women and girls aged 14 to 23.

About two-thirds of women factory workers were first- or second-generation immigrants. Beyond the garment industry, immigrant women also found work in laundries, carpet factories, tobacco factories, canneries, meat-packing plants, candy factories and book binderies. These jobs were seen as characteristic of "women's work" in the home. In other words, these jobs were suitable for women because of popular beliefs about gender roles. Other industrial jobs were reserved only for men, sometimes due to the nature of the work, but often because it threatened male employment. Early on, women were also excluded from labor unions for that same reason.

The first decades of the 1900s saw widespread labor organizing for men, women and children workers. Low wages that barely covered the cost of living, extremely unsafe working conditions and a lack of workers' rights inspired many immigrant women to participate in labor movements. For example, in 1909, Clara Lemlich Shavelson, herself a Russian Jewish immigrant, led an uprising of 20,000 mostly Jewish immigrant women working in New York City's garment factories. Some of these immigrant labor organizers were inspired by anarchist, socialist and communist movements, who endeavored toward working-class solidarity on an international scale. Many more immigrant women were politically active by joining **labor unions**, advocating for women's suffrage and participating in women's clubs, organizations in which women gathered for collective engagement and activism in social and political issues.

What societal expectations and pressures did immigrant women face?

While the Second Industrial Revolution transformed the American economy, it also altered American society. Such rapid changes caused new problems like overcrowded and unsanitary cities, inadequate housing, the exploitation of workers, and environmental pollution. The "social question" of the day was essentially all the social problems caused by the Industrial Revolution. This included the breakdown of traditional hierarchies, family structures and gender roles. To some, it appeared as if American society was falling apart, and many wanted to place some of the blame on the working classes for these problems.

Many Americans perceived immigrant women as part of this "social question." Middle class notions of respectability upheld an ideology of "separate spheres" for men and women. Men were meant for the public sphere of work, politics and society, and were supposed to be the breadwinners of families. Women were relegated to the private sphere of home and family. Women working outside the home was perceived as defying these gender roles. It was assumed that their focus was

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Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution. Version III (continued)

not on the home and their family but on work. The Second Industrial Revolution made working women significantly more visible as more than 20 percent of women worked outside the home by 1900.

Working-class families could never live up to these expectations of respectability because women's wages were necessary to support themselves and their families either in the United States or back in Europe.

Most immigrant women who worked in factories were unmarried teenagers and young adults, and the fact that they were working outside the home provoked major anxieties about femininity, motherhood and morality. In response, middle-class reformers sought to teach immigrant women their version of respectable femininity. They stressed the importance of household management in the forms of health and food safety, cleanliness, thrift and childrearing. They also encouraged values like chastity and self-reliance, and discouraged certain "immoral" behaviors like drinking, gambling, promiscuity and other vices. Single motherhood was common among immigrant women who might have lost their husbands or had children out of wedlock, and single mothers often had their right to parenthood questioned because it was believed they could not properly care for their children if they were working. Many working-class women, immigrant and U.S.-born alike, came to fear and resent the efforts of these reformers.

Immigrant women's lives were profoundly shaped by the economic, political and social changes of the Second Industrial Revolution in the United States. Immigrant women also helped define this period of rapid industrialization and economic prosperity. Their labor sustained the rise of the factory system and a new age of mass production. They also advocated for better working and living conditions for themselves and their communities, particularly through the labor movement. Immigrant women have their own history of life and labor during the Second Industrial Revolution that must be studied for its unique value.

Tiffany Thompson is a doctoral candidate in the Boston College history department studying modern Irish and British history with a focus on gender and migration. Her research explores the impact of Northern Ireland's Troubles on displaced and refugee women during the 1970s.

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Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution. Version III (continued)

Vocabulary

industrialization (noun)
Definition: the process of developing industries in a country or region on a large scale
Example: The rapid industrialization of the United States during the Second Industrial Revolution led to significant economic growth.

urbanization (noun)
Definition: the process of making an area more urban, typically by increasing the number of buildings and population
Example: The Second Industrial Revolution brought about extensive urbanization as people moved to cities in search of employment.

mass production (noun)
Definition: the production of goods in large quantities, usually through the use of machinery and assembly lines
Example: Mass production techniques revolutionized manufacturing during the Second Industrial Revolution, allowing for increased efficiency and lower costs.

domestic (adjective)
Definition: relating to the running of a home or to family relation
Example: Irish women sought employment as domestic workers in the homes of wealthy individuals.

labor unions (noun)
Definition: organizations formed by workers to protect their rights and improve working conditions
Example: During the Industrial Revolution, labor unions played a crucial role in advocating for fair wages and safe working environments.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution
Version I Note Catcher

1. How did the Second Industrial Revolution affect immigration?

2. What kinds of work did immigrant women find in the United States?

3. Why did some people feel that immigrant women didn't "fit" into society?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Immigrant Women, Work and Society During the Second Industrial Revolution Version II and III Note Catcher

1. How did the Second Industrial Revolution affect immigration?

2. What kinds of work did immigrant women find in the United States?

3. What societal expectations and pressures did immigrant women face?

Lesson Two

Immigrant Women on Strike

Educator Notes

This lesson assumes background knowledge of the Industrial Revolution. For the main activity, students will be working in groups to research an immigrant-women-led strike during the 20th century and present it to the rest of the class, with the aim of drawing connections among the five strikes listed in the Activities section below.

Suggested online resources and a note-taking sheet are provided, but research can be structured in any way that works for the class, including differentiated supports for some groups or individuals. Before beginning this lesson, take note of any labor organizing activity that may be happening in students' communities and prepare for how to respond if it comes up in class.

Lesson Plan:
Immigrant Women on Strike

Objectives

- Students will work in groups to conduct research on a workers' strike in the 20th century.
- Students will compare and contrast immigrant women-led workers' strikes throughout the 20th century.

Guiding Questions

- How have immigrant women fought for workers' rights?

Common Core Standards

Grade 6-8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.10
By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Grade 9-10

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9
Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

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Common Core Standards (continued)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.10
By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Grade 11-12

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9
Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.10
By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Materials

Printable versions are provided at the end of this lesson plan. There is also a printable handout with QR codes in the Print-Friendly Guide to Resources section at the end of this resource.

- Political cartoon: *A look ahead—but not so very far ahead, either!* (Library of Congress)
- *Immigrant Women on Strike: Fighting for Workers' Rights* (Versions I—III)
- Resources for Student Research Handout
- Note Catcher: One per student or one full set per student
- Strikes Across the 20th Century Response Sheet
- *Garment Workers, Still Paid By The Piece, Push for Minimum Wage* (NBC News)

Activities

Opening

- Display or share with students the 1899 political cartoon *A look ahead—but not so very far ahead, either!*
- Engage students in a whole group discussion using the Visual Thinking Strategies framework:
  - What's going on in this picture?
  - What do you see that makes you say that?
  - What more can we find?
- When a student responds to the first question (there are no wrong answers!), probe for evidence and reasoning using the second question, and then open it back up for other observations using the third question. Cycle through and allow as many students to respond as possible, together developing an understanding of the image.

Building Background Knowledge

Ask students: What rights and protections are guaranteed to workers in our society? Possible answers: minimum wage, physical safety and workers' compensation. If students have internet-connected devices, give them a few minutes to browse https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/workers (U.S. Department of Labor) and https://www.osha.gov/workers (OSHA) for additional information.

Bring students back together and add context. The government organization that supports and protects workers is the U.S. Department of Labor, created in 1913. It includes a sub-organization, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) that was created in 1970. When the Second Industrial Revolution began around 1870, these protections did not exist, and workers had less protections.

(Continued on next page)

Activities (continued)

Building Background Knowledge (continued)

Ask students: Look back at the cartoon and the list of demands from the woman on the left. How do you think wealthy employers would respond to these demands? Would she be fired? Now what if the other domestic workers, like the one on the right taking off her apron, refused to work until the demands were met? What if all the workers in the area decided they would not work without these guarantees?

When workers come together like this to pressure their employers, it is called **collective action**. Some forms this can take are **strikes**, which is when all the workers refuse to work so the employer is forced to negotiate or lose business. **Unions** are organizations formed by workers who choose leaders to negotiate with employers on their behalf. Perhaps the woman in the cartoon is a union leader. These tactics are called **labor organizing**, and they were some of the only tactics available to workers at the turn of the 19th century to give workers any measure of voice and power.

These two short videos provide additional multimedia background information:

- *A Brief History of Unions* (Pennsylvania AFL-CIO)
- *The Rise of Labor Unions* (NBC News Learn)

Group Work: Strikes Jigsaw

Let students know that they'll be working in groups to learn about some important strikes led by immigrant women workers, several during the early 1900s and some later in the century. Activism by immigrant women has been and continues to be a major way that all workers gain rights and protections in the United States.

Divide students into small groups and assign them one of the strikes. Give them time to research and answer the questions. The Resources for Student Research Handout has recommended resources. For more advanced students, a more open-ended short research project could be assigned without the worksheet.

Once the groups have finished, have each group present their findings to the class, with each individual student responsible for having completed notes on all five strikes.

The five strikes are:

- The Uprising of 20,000 (1909)
- The Chicago Garment Workers' Strike (1910)
- El Paso Laundry Strike (1919)
- Pecan Shellers Strike (1938)
- New York City Garment Strike (1982)

(Continued on next page)

Activities (continued)

Group Work: Strikes Jigsaw (continued)

Research questions:

- Historical facts about this strike:
  - When and where did it take place?
  - Who went on strike? What was the industry and the workers' country/countries of origin?
- Were there strike leaders? Who were they?
- What work conditions were the workers protesting, or what changes were they demanding?
- What action did they take to get their demands heard?
- What did the employers or others do to try and stop the strike? What negative consequences did the strikers suffer?
- What were the effects of the strikers' efforts in the end?

Suggested internet resources for students can be found in the next section.

Reflection and Response

Thank all the groups for their research and presentations, and let students know that the final piece of this lesson is to see what connections they draw across all five strikes. This can be done as a turn-and-talk, whole-class discussion, individual written response or any combination of the three. The following questions are also on the student handout "Strikes Across the 20th Century."

- What similarities do you see in these strikes across time? What elements are common to all or most of these strikes?
- What has changed over time? What elements are different between the early and later parts of the 20th century, and into the 21st century?

For a closing modern-day connection, this five-minute video from NBC News from 2020 shares the voices of immigrant workers and their supporters in pushing for change in the California garment industry: *Garment Workers, Still Paid By The Piece, Push for Minimum Wage.*

(Continued on next page)

Activities (continued)

Resources for Student Research

A print-friendly version of this list is available at the end of this lesson.

The Uprising of 20,000 (1909)

- *Clara Lemlich and the Uprising of the 20,000* (PBS)
- *Uprising of 20,000 (1909)* (Jewish Women's Archive)

The Chicago Garment Workers' Strike (1910)

- *Women of the 1910 Chicago Garment Workers' Strike* (National Park Service)
- *And the women shall lead: Female laborers led the charge in Chicago's massive garment workers strike of 1910* (*Chicago Tribune*)

El Paso Laundry Strike (1919)

- *Teaching Women's History: The El Paso Laundry Strike of 1919* (The New York Historical)
- *Mexican Women Unionize* (Women & the American Story)

Pecan Shellers Strike (1938)

- *1938: Pecan Shellers Strike* (Library of Congress)
- *Pecan-Shellers' Strike* (Texas State Historical Association)
- *Pecan Shellers Carved a Path For Workers Rights In San Antonio* (Texas Public Radio)

New York City Garment Strike (1982)

- *When 20,000 Asian Americans Demanded Garment Workers' Rights—And Won* (History)
- *We Are One: Honoring Immigrant Garment Workers* (LaborArts)
- *How Chinese American Women Changed U.S. Labor History* (Asian American Writers' Workshop)
- *1982 NYC Chinatown Garment Workers Strike* (YouTube video by Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition)

Additional Resources

The Uprising of 20,000: The NY Shirtwaist Workers Go on Strike
(PBS LearningMedia)
Video and lesson plan for grades 9 to 12 about Clara Lemlich and the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City

'Mother' Jones, "Speech at a Public Meeting on the Steps of the Capitol Charleston, West Virginia," 15 August 1912 (Voices of Democracy)
High school lesson plan analyzing a famous speech for workers' rights

Heaven Will Protect the Working Girl: Immigrant Women in the Turn-of-the-Century City (American Social History Project)
A 30-minute video depicting the lives of two representative young immigrant women and their participation in the Uprising of the 20,000 and a supplementary viewer's guide with historical context and primary sources

An African-American Newspaper Defends the Shirtwaist Strikebreakers
(American Social History Project)
Primary source excerpt from an editorial on the 1909 New York City strike in *The New York Age* that targeted the hypocrisy of labor unions seeking solidarity from Black workers it previously excluded

Ehrhart, S. D. (1899) *A look ahead; - but not so very far ahead, either!*, 1899, published by Keppler & Schwarzmann, retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2012647463/

Resources for Student Research

The Uprising of 20,000 (1909)

- *Clara Lemlich and the Uprising of the 20,000* (PBS)

- *Uprising of 20,000 (1909)* (Jewish Women's Archive)

The Chicago Garment Workers' Strike (1910)

- *Women of the 1910 Chicago Garment Workers' Strike* (National Park Service)

- *And the women shall lead: Female laborers led the charge in Chicago's massive garment workers strike of 1910* (Chicago *Tribune*)

El Paso Laundry Strike (1919)

- *Teaching Women's History: The El Paso Laundry Strike of 1919* (The New York Historical)

- *Mexican Women Unionize* (Women & the American Story)

Resources for Student Research (continued)

Pecan Shellers Strike (1938)

- *1938: Pecan Shellers Strike*
  (Library of Congress)

- *Pecan-Shellers' Strike*
  (Texas State Historical Association)

- *Pecan Shellers Carved a Path For Workers Rights In San Antonio*
  (Texas Public Radio)

New York City Garment Strike (1982)

- *When 20,000 Asian Americans Demanded Garment Workers' Rights—And Won*
  (History)

- *We Are One: Honoring Immigrant Garment Workers*
  (LaborArts)

- *How Chinese American Women Changed U.S. Labor History*
  (Asian American Writers' Workshop)

- *1982 NYC Chinatown Garment Workers Strike*
  (YouTube video by Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition)

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Immigrant Women on Strike: Fighting for Workers' Rights
The Uprising of 20,000 (1909)

Bain News Service. *Strike Pickets*, 1910, retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2014684502/

1. Historical facts about this strike:
   a. When and where did it take place?

   b. Who went on strike? What was the industry or group of workers?

2. What work conditions were the workers protesting, or what changes were they demanding?

3. What action did they take to get their demands heard?

4. What did the employers or others do to try and stop the strike? What negative consequences did the strikers suffer?

5. What were the effects of the strikers' efforts in the end?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Immigrant Women on Strike: Fighting for Workers' Rights
The Chicago Garment Workers' Strike (1910)

Marchers during the Chicago Garment Workers' Strike (Wikimedia Commons)

1. Historical facts about this strike:
   a. When and where did it take place?

   b. Who went on strike? What was the industry or group of workers?

2. What work conditions were the workers protesting, or what changes were they demanding?

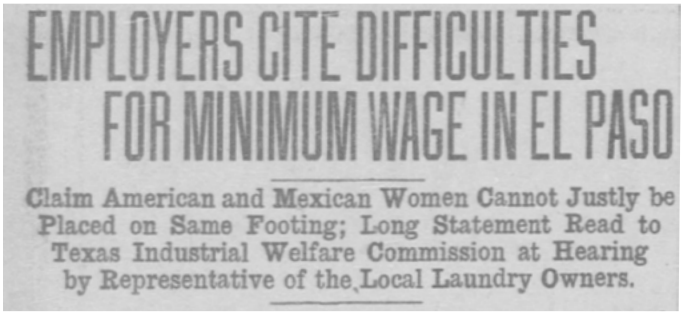
3. What action did they take to get their demands heard?

4. What did the employers or others do to try and stop the strike? What negative consequences did the strikers suffer?

5. What were the effects of the strikers' efforts in the end?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Immigrant Women on Strike: Fighting for Workers' Rights
El Paso Laundry Strike (1919)



EMPLOYERS CITE DIFFICULTIES FOR MINIMUM WAGE IN EL PASO

Claim American and Mexican Women Cannot Justly be Placed on Same Footing; Long Statement Read to Texas Industrial Welfare Commission at Hearing by Representative of the Local Laundry Owners.

El Paso Herald, November 20, 1919

Female cigar packers of Mexican descent at Kohlberg Factory, El Paso in 1915. (latinamericanstudies.org)

1. Historical facts about this strike:
   a. When and where did it take place?

   b. Who went on strike? What was the industry or group of workers?

2. What work conditions were the workers protesting, or what changes were they demanding?

3. What action did they take to get their demands heard?

4. What did the employers or others do to try and stop the strike? What negative consequences did the strikers suffer?

5. What were the effects of the strikers' efforts in the end?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Immigrant Women on Strike: Fighting for Workers' Rights
Pecan Shellers Strike (1938)

Lee, R. *Removing the meats from cracked pecans. Non-union pecan shelling plant. San Antonio, Texas*, 1939, retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017782714/

1. Historical facts about this strike:
   a. When and where did it take place?

   b. Who went on strike? What was the industry or group of workers?

2. What work conditions were the workers protesting, or what changes were they demanding?

3. What action did they take to get their demands heard?

4. What did the employers or others do to try and stop the strike? What negative consequences did the strikers suffer?

5. What were the effects of the strikers' efforts in the end?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Immigrant Women on Strike: Fighting for Workers' Rights
New York City Garment Strike (1982)

1. Historical facts about this strike:
   a. When and where did it take place?

   b. Who went on strike? What was the industry or group of workers?

2. What work conditions were the workers protesting, or what changes were they demanding?

3. What action did they take to get their demands heard?

4. What did the employers or others do to try and stop the strike? What negative consequences did the strikers suffer?

5. What were the effects of the strikers' efforts in the end?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Immigrant Women on Strike: Fighting for Workers' Rights
Strikes Across the 20th Century

Now that you've learned from your research and your classmates about immigrant-women-led workers' strikes between 1909 and 1982, reflect on your own or with a partner and answer the following questions about trends you see:

1. What similarities do you see in these strikes across time? What elements are common to all or most of these strikes?

2. What has changed over time? What elements are different between the early and later parts of the 20th century, and into the 21st century?

Supplement

Seven Foreign-Born Heroines of the Industrial Revolution

Educator Notes

This student-friendly resource summarizes the contributions of seven foreign-born figures during the Industrial Revolution. It is designed to be easily distributed directly to students, but could also inspire a short research project in the form of a written response or a digital or oral presentation. Regardless of how these heroes' stories are explored, we encourage the use of the discussion questions for a more dynamic and a deeper engagement with the history.

Discussion Questions

For each entry:

a. How did this person contribute to her community at the local and/or national level? How might her activism still have effects today?
b. What challenges did this person face? Which challenges were related to aspects of her identity, like gender, immigrant status or country of origin?
c. Compare the challenges this person faced to the challenges faced by immigrant women today. Which are the same and which may be different?

Discussion:

a. Which of these women inspires you? Why?
b. Why is it important to include immigrant women in our understanding of the Industrial Revolution?
c. Who is still left out from the history of the Industrial Revolution? Why might that be?

Handout

Seven Foreign-Born Heroines of the Industrial Revolution

Leonora Kearney Barry (Ireland)

Leonora Kearney immigrated to the United States from County Cork, Ireland, with her parents at the age of three, settling in Pierrepont, New York. After her mother died when she was 16, Kearney became a teacher, and after teaching for six years, she married another Irish immigrant, an artist named William Barry. Ten years later, William and one of their three children passed away, leaving her a widow with two children. Unable to return to teaching since only unmarried women were hired as teachers, Kearney Barry found a job in a hosiery mill, leaving her children with a neighbor during the day while she worked. After working for a full week, Barry earned less than a dollar, so she joined the Knights of Labor, a union that was open to any and all workers. She quickly became an active member and rose to high levels in the union.

Norton, G.H. (n.d.) *Leonora Barry*, Special Collections, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC. https://guides.lib.cua.edu/c.php?g=1400974&p=10375629

In 1886, she was elected to be the first paid female labor investigator in the United States. Kearney Barry traveled around the country reporting on working conditions for female laborers. She found that most women worked in unacceptable conditions, enduring low wages, long hours, unnecessarily strict workplace rules and fines, and sexual harassment. Kearney Barry advocated for better treatment and equal pay, encouraging women to join unions and the Knights of Labor to support fair working conditions by purchasing only union-made goods.

Keaney Barry represented the Knights of Labor and the interests of women workers at local meetings and international congresses of women's rights activists. Her "Reports of the General Investigator for Woman's Work", circulated through the Knights of Labor across North America and were some of the first national collections of statistics on working women. They remain an invaluable historical source for understanding women's lives and labor during the time period, cataloguing the huge range of ways employers took advantage of women and giving voice to those who feared speaking out.

Emma Goldman (Lithuania)

Emma Goldman was born in Lithuania, where restrictions on Jewish citizens like Goldman's family made life difficult. She moved with her family to Germany and Russia, where she first got a taste of a radical liberal movement that envisioned a society of free equals.

Van Vechten, C. *Portrait of Emma Goldman*, 1934, retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2004662941/

In 1885, she immigrated to the United States with her sister, and found work in a garment factory in Rochester, New York. There she saw long hours, unequal pay and mistreatment of workers, fueling her passion to work for change and justice. Goldman moved to New York City, becoming an advocate for women's rights and for anarchism, believing that people were inherently good and would organize themselves fairly and equally if government systems were removed.

In 1892, Goldman helped her partner attempt the political assassination of Henry Clay Frick, an industrialist who mistreated steel mill workers in Pennsylvania. Frick survived and though Goldman and her partner were arrested, she avoided jail time.

She built up her career and reputation by speaking out on her ideologies, including launching the magazine *Mother Earth*. Goldman was known as an eloquent and inspiring speaker, winning both followers and enemies with her radical ideas. She was later arrested and served two years in prison for organizing against World War I and the draft. A few months later, in 1919, she was exiled to the Soviet Union. She continued her activism across Europe, returning to the United States only after her death in 1940 to be buried in Chicago.

Margaret Gaffney Haughery (Ireland)

Margaret Gaffney was born in 1813 in County Leitrim, Ireland, into a farming family. In 1818, the farm fell on hard times and her parents made the difficult decision to move to the United States. In 1822, when Gaffney was nine, she was orphaned by a yellow fever epidemic and taken in by a neighbor who expected her to perform the duties of a domestic servant to earn her keep.

Margaret Haughery brooch, 1885 (The Historic New Orleans Collection, Gift of Leila Wilkinson Scheyd, 1988.50.2.), retrieved from Women & the American Story, https://wams.nyhistory.org/expansions-and-inequalities/industry-and-immigration/margaret-haughery/

In 1835, she married Charles Haughery and settled in New Orleans, only to lose her husband and young child to illness. Alone once more, Gaffney Haughery found a home with the Sisters of Charity, a community of Catholic nuns who helped her find a job as a laundress. When not working, Gaffney Haughery helped with the orphans in the Sisters' care, donating any money she had and eventually buying two cows to provide the children with milk. Though uneducated, Gaffney Haughery was a savvy entrepreneur, and selling extra milk from the cows to purchase more cows led to the development of a successful dairy business and later a bakery.

She continued to support the orphans of New Orleans, building more orphanages around the city and becoming a pillar of her community through the Civil War and the continuing yellow fever crisis. When she died, the city mourned her loss and made plans to erect a statue to commemorate her contributions. She became the second woman in the United States to have a statue erected in her honor.

Mary Harris "Mother" Jones (Ireland)

After immigrating to Canada and then the United States from Ireland at a young age, Mary Harris began her career as a teacher and seamstress in Michigan. In 1861, she married George Jones, and within 10 years two tragedies struck. In 1867, George and all of the couple's four children died in a yellow fever epidemic. In 1871, Mother Jones lost her Chicago dressmaking shop in the Great Chicago Fire.

"Mother" Jones no. 3, ca. 1902, retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2005690040/

Mother Jones attended Knights of Labor union meetings and soon began traveling around the country finding ways to support the working poor. Industrialization was changing the nature of work, and there were few regulations or protections for workers. She supported and led hundreds of strikes for men, women and child workers in many industries, including railway workers, coal miners, textile workers and steelworkers. She was given the nickname "Mother Jones" by the workers she organized.

Mother Jones was banished from towns, arrested and jailed, and even convicted of conspiracy to commit murder after a violent strike in West Virginia. She was especially concerned about child workers, and in 1903, she led a children's march from the textile mills of Philadelphia all the way to President Theodore Roosevelt's Long Island home.

Unlike many organizers of her time, she did not support women's suffrage, saying, "You don't need a vote to raise hell," and that focusing on the vote only played into class warfare rather than fighting it. Mother Jones continued organizing into her 90s, and she is buried in the Union Miners Cemetery in Illinois

Ernestine Louise Potowski Rose (Poland)

Ernestine Louise Potowski was born in Poland and moved to the United States as an adult after marrying William Rose. From a young age, she was used to doing things that were not normally done by girls and women at the time. Although it was forbidden for girls, her father, a rabbi, taught her to read Hebrew and study the Torah. When she was 15, her mother died, and she inherited substantial property. As was the custom, her father arranged a marriage without asking her and offered all her inheritance to the fiancé. She could not change her father's mind, so she took her case to court and won authority over her own property.

Ernestine Rose, half-length portrait, retrieved from Women and the American Story, https://wams.nyhistory.org/expansions-and-inequalities/industry-and-immigration/ernestine-rose/

Potowski left Poland to travel across Europe, learning from freethought movements* in Germany, France and England. Although it was unheard of for women at the time, English factory owner and workers' rights activist Robert Owen encouraged her to start speaking at meetings, and people took notice. This is where her reputation as a powerful speaker began.

England is also where she met her future husband. Her marriage to Rose was also unconventional. They chose to forgo a traditional ceremony and instead signed a marriage contract they wrote themselves with the intention of preserving the legal and economic rights most women lost after marriage. Soon after, they emigrated from England to New York City, where she continued to speak out about the freethought movement, abolition and women's right to own property.

Through her activism, Potowski Rose became close friends with other notables, such as American social reformer, abolitionist and statesman Frederick Douglass and women's rights organizer Elizabeth Cady Stanton. She toured all over the United States and earned the nickname "Queen of the Platform" and was one of the organizers of the first National Women's Rights Convention in 1850, where she introduced a resolution calling for "political, legal and social equality with man."

* Freethought movements were philosophical and political movements that encouraged people to use reason and science instead of authority, tradition or religion to form their ideas.

Rose Schneiderman (Poland)

Rose Schneiderman was eight years old when her Orthodox Jewish family immigrated to New York from Poland. Her parents placed great importance on education, and Schneiderman could read and write in Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian and English.

Mrs. Rose Schneiderman, head-and-shoulders portrait, facing slightly right, retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/95502386

When her father died, she was forced to quit school and find work to support her family at the age of 13. After entering the retail industry and then the garment industry, she soon realized that women were only able to access the lowest-paying jobs. In 1903, she co-organized Local 23 of the Jewish Socialist United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers' Union.

Still in her twenties, she led a successful strike and soon became a full-time labor organizer in the women's garment industry. She served as president of first the New York Women's Trade Union League and then the national chapter from 1917 to 1950. In a powerful and famous speech after the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911, she said, "What the woman who labors wants is the right to live, not simply exist … the worker must have bread, but she must have roses, too."

Schneiderman worked to enact labor laws to protect workers, especially female workers, who often worked under different laws and regulations. After meeting First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, Schneiderman became a trusted advisor to the Roosevelts, helping to shape the National Labor Relations Act, the Social Security Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act. She continued to champion workers' rights and women's rights as well as Jewish causes until her death in 1972, using her public platform to mobilize the labor movement to aid Jewish refugees in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s.

Clara Lemlich Shavelson (Ukraine)

Clara Lemlich was born in Horodok, Ukraine, where she was not able to go to school because the local schools did not admit Jewish children. She collected books and educated herself, especially about revolutionary Russian ideas concerning the challenges of working-class people. When she was 17, her family moved to the United States to escape antisemitism and violence in Europe. Lemlich quickly began supporting her family by working in a New York City garment factory with long hours, low pay, and draconian restrictions and fines. Infuriated by the working conditions, Lemlich began organizing women into what became the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

Portrait of Clara Lemlich, leader of the Shirtwaist Strike of 1909-1910, retrieved from The Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives, https://www.flickr.com/photos kheelcenter/5279886332/in/photolist-93yNfY-93y5u5

She organized meetings and led strikes against the resistance of male workers who didn't want women involved in unions. She was repeatedly fired from jobs and arrested for strikes but got new jobs and kept organizing. In 1909, she insisted on speaking at a massive meeting of garment workers. Her speech, delivered in Yiddish, galvanized the largest organized strike in United States history to date, and included tens of thousands of young women who refused to work. Afterwards, Lemlich was blacklisted from the New York garment industry. She turned to being a full-time organizer for the women's suffrage movement while continuing to speak out for working conditions and education.

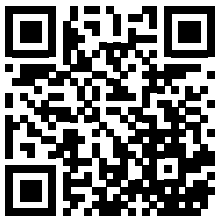
In 1913, she married Joe Shavelson and eventually had three children. She began organizing housewives and mothers for everything from rent strikes to food boycotts to marches on Washington. She was a co-founder and president of the Progressive Women's Council, organizing movements that spread to cities across the country and supporting working-class families during the Great Depression. Lemlich Shavelson died at the age of 96 in a nursing home, where she had helped the staff form a union and organized residents to boycott businesses with unfair labor practices.

Handout

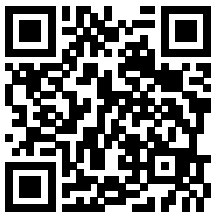
Print-Friendly Guide to Resources

Lesson One: Lesson Plan – Materials (page 6)

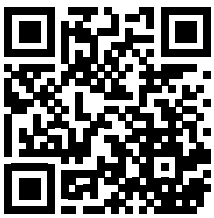
Solvay Process Co.'s works



Breaker boys, Woodward Coal Mines



Assembly



Inspecting Catsup

West elevation - Lippitt Mill

Tenement, New York City, 1910

Lesson Two: Lesson Plan – Materials (page 31)

A look ahead – but not so very far ahead, either!

Garment Workers, Still Paid By The Piece, Push for Minimum Wage

Lesson Two: Lesson Plan – Opening (page 31)

Visual Thinking Strategies

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U.S. Department of Labor

OSHA

A Brief History of Unions

The Rise of Labor Unions

The Immigrant Learning Center

About The Immigrant Learning Center

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways. The English Language Program provides free, year-round ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes to help immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston become successful workers, parents and community members. The Public Education Institute informs Americans about immigrants and immigration in the United States, and the Institute for Immigration Research, a joint venture with George Mason University, produces valid, reliable and objective multidisciplinary research on immigrants and immigration to the United States. For more information, visit the website http://www.ilctr.org.

About the Writer Meghan Rosenberg

Meghan Rosenberg wrote and provided guidance for this resource. She is an instructional coach, curriculum developer and educational consultant. Her teaching experience includes being the founding middle school humanities teacher at a Boston K-12 charter school. Meghan holds a Bachelor of Arts in education and linguistics from Brown University and a Master's in teaching secondary English from Tufts University.

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