**What were working conditions like during the Industrial Revolution?**

*The Industrial Revolution was a time of great progress. Large factories emerged that could mass produce goods at a low price. People flocked from their farms in the country to the cities to work in factories, mills, and mines. Despite such progress, life was not easy as a worker during the Industrial Revolution. To put it simply, working conditions were poor and sometimes dangerous.*

**Long Days**

Unlike today, workers during the Industrial Revolution were expected to work long hours or they would lose their jobs. Many workers had to work 12-hour days, six days a week. They didn't get time off or holidays. If they got sick or were injured on the job and missed work, they were often fired. Workers could be treated like this because of the amount of people needing work and wanting reliable and regular pay. With more and more factories being built, more workers were required, and as a result, employers could set very low wages. Women received around one-third to one-half the pay of men whilst children received even less.

**Dangerous Work**

A lot of the jobs during the Industrial Revolution were dangerous. Many factory owners put profit above the health and safety of their employees. There weren't any government regulations to help protect workers. Workers sometimes had to work closely with powerful machines that had no safety precautions or features. It was not uncommon to lose a finger or a limb. Workers in mines were subject to tiny tunnels that could easily collapse and trap them underground.

**Unsafe Facilities**

A lot of the facilities where people worked were unsafe and machinery was operated without safety checks. Typically, the lighting was bad making it difficult to see. Many factories and mines were filled with dust that not only made it difficult to breathe but could cause diseases including cancer. Machines spat out smoke which was inhaled by those operating them and the noise from it could be deafening. Other places were fire hazards where they dealt with flammable chemicals. The smallest spark could set off a blaze or explosion.

**Child Labour**

A lot of factories used child labour in unsafe conditions, including children as young as five. Factories hired children because they worked for low wages. Many poor families sent as many members as possible out to work in order to earn money. In some cases, employers hired small children because they could fit into places adults couldn't. Some children worked as chimney sweeps, or in coal mines. Children were subjected to the same long work weeks and poor conditions as adults. Many children were killed or got sick working in factories. Some children developed physical deformities because of the lack of exercise and sunlight.

**Living Conditions**

The living conditions in crowded cities weren't any better than the working conditions. Cities and towns were not prepared for the great increase of people. As more and more people moved into the cities from the countryside, cheap housing was built close to their place of work. Poor quality and cramped housing were built, often in the form of back-to-back terracing. In was common for up to 12 people to share a room. They rarely had access to clean, running water or toilets, and it was common for disease to spread quickly. There were many outbreaks of diseases. An outdoor water pump and toilet were often shared by up to 100 houses.

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