

# **Industrial Revolution**

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## **Life in English Factories**

# English Factory System

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- First adopted in England in the 1750s, as a method for manufacturing
- Involved mass producing goods by machines usually run by water or steam
- Featured low and unskilled workers running machines, or moving materials
- Lowered costs of goods



*Power Looms in English Cotton Mill (circa 1830)*

# Factory Reform Legislation

- Between 1800 and 1850, Parliament passed a series of laws to regulate factory work.
- Many of these laws focused on protecting children working in factories, and set limits on the amount of hours that children could work in factories.
- The Factory Act of 1850, for example, limited the weekly hours that children could work to 60 and daily hours to 10.5.



Political Cartoon: "English Factory Slaves."  
Robert Cruikshank

# Factory Reform Legislation

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- Throughout this period, several commissions investigated working conditions in factories.
- Politicians, academics, doctors, and other public figures wrote books, pamphlets, speeches, and newspaper articles *in support of or against* regulating the country's growing factory system.

# Central Historical Question

*Were textile factories bad for the health of English workers?*