

# Industrializing the United States



Heather Price-Wright



# Reader's Guide

1. How did Henry Ford's assembly line lower the cost of his cars?
2. How did labor unions change what it meant to be a worker in the United States?
3. What major industry do you think had the largest impact on people's lives at the turn of the century? Why?
4. Explain what life was like for children during this time.
5. How did new technology impact work in the Second Industrial Revolution? How does technology impact work today?
6. Write a movie script about an immigrant's experiences moving to the United States to find work during the Second Industrial Revolution.

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A sepia-toned historical photograph of a busy city street. In the foreground, a streetcar (trolley) is moving along tracks. The street is filled with pedestrians, some wearing hats and coats. In the background, there are multi-story buildings with many windows. The overall scene depicts a bustling urban environment from the late 19th or early 20th century.

# Table of Contents

As the Century Turns .....	4
The Big Industries .....	6
Rights for Workers .....	12
Making Moves.....	20
Policies and Politics.....	24
A Time of Change.....	26
Organize It! .....	28
Glossary .....	30
Index .....	31
Your Turn! .....	32



# As the Century Turns

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a time of great change in the United States. New technology changed how Americans worked. Machines and tools made it possible for people to work faster. Jobs moved out of people's homes and into large factories. This shift helped people in many ways. Goods were cheaper. Crops could be harvested at a faster rate, which meant more food for more people. New industries created jobs for people.

However, these changes had some negative consequences. Skills that helped people before were less useful. Instead of working with their hands, people were expected to learn how to operate machines. Working conditions were often bad. People worked long hours in small, hot spaces. Some children were expected to work dangerous jobs to help their families.

This period of change and growth reshaped the nation. People moved into cities to find jobs. The country as a whole was changing, and everyone was changing with it.



▲ A farmer uses a steam-powered tractor to plow his field in 1907.

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