

Child Labor EPAS

Wages and Hours:

Children as young as six years old during the industrial revolution worked hard hours for little or no pay. Children sometimes worked up to 19 hours a day, with a one-hour total break. This was a little bit on the extreme, but it was not common for children who worked in factories to work 12-14 hours with the same minimal breaks. Not only were these children subject to long hours, but also, they were in horrible conditions. Large, heavy, and dangerous equipment was very common for children to be using or working near. Many accidents occurred injuring or killing children on the job. Not until the Factory Act of 1833 did things improve. Children were paid only a fraction of what an adult would get, and sometimes factory owners would get away with paying them nothing. Orphans were the ones subject to this slave-like labor. The factory owners justified their absence of payroll by saying that they gave the orphans food, shelter, and clothing, all of which were far below par. The children who did get paid were paid very little. One boy explained this payment system:

The treatment of children in factories was often cruel and unusual, and the children's safety was generally neglected. The youngest children, who were not old enough to work the machines, were commonly sent to be assistants to textile workers. The people who the children served would beat them, verbally abuse them, and take no consideration for their safety. Both boys and girls who worked in factories were subject to beatings and other harsh forms of pain infliction. One common punishment for being late or not working up to quota would be to be "weighted." An overseer would tie a heavy weight to worker's neck, and have them walk up and down the factory aisles so the other children could see them and "take example." This could last up to an hour. Weighting could lead to serious injuries in the back and/or neck. Punishments such as this would often be dispensed under stringent rules. Boys were sometimes dragged naked from their beds and sent to the factories only holding their clothes, to be put on there. This was to make sure the boys would not be late, even by a few minutes.

