

UNIT VII

Female Mill Workers in England and Japan: How Similar Were Their Experiences?

A Document Based Exercise

Introductory Note for Teachers

As with each of the document based exercises in this series, teachers have the option of using a shorter and easier version of student materials or a somewhat longer and more complex

version. Each version contains a background essay, a document list, and the documents themselves. Accompanying teacher materials provide direction and support for each version.

Table of Contents

Female Mill Workers – Longer Version (LV) 428 - 461

Teacher Materials

Female Mill Workers Lesson Plan	428
Teacher Document List	430
Teacher Document Notes	438

Student Materials

Cover page	429
Student Guide Sheet	431
Female Mill Workers Background Essay	433
Document Set (16)	439

Female Mill Workers – Shorter Version (SV) 462 - 486

Teacher Materials

Female Mill Workers Lesson Plan	462
Teacher Document List	464
Teacher Document Notes	470

Student Materials

Cover page	463
Student Guide Sheet	465
Female Mill Workers Background Essay	468
Document Set (11)	471

Female Mill Workers DBQ Lesson Plan – Longer Version (LV)

DAY 1

**BACKGROUND
ESSAY/THE
HOOK**
45 min.

Have students read the Background Essay. Be sure they are oriented in place and time (see Timeline). The essay presents a brief history of industrialization in England and Japan and discusses historians' optimistic and pessimistic perspectives on the change. Next do the Hook Exercise, which asks students to consider the challenges of working a 70-hour week in a 19th-century English mill.

Homework

For homework, ask students to skim the documents quickly. Then, using the document list in their Student Guide Sheet, ask them to organize the documents tentatively into workable analytical categories. The question asks students to compare the experiences of female textile workers in England and Japan. Around what analytical categories might they expect the documents to be organized? Documents may be organized around labor divisions like wages, hours, working conditions, and status in the family and society. Outlines of document groupings are due before the Day 2 lesson.

DAY 2

DISCUSSION
10 min.

Discuss outlines. Drawing from students' homework, create an outline that approaches the categories in the Teacher's Document List or some viable alternative.

**DOCUMENT
ANALYSIS**
35 min.

Examine one or more documents together as a class. Again, review with students what they are looking for – information for making comparisons between women who worked in English and Japanese textile mills. On a Document Analysis Sheet, model the level of analytical notation you expect for each document. (See Teacher's Toolkit for samples.) Then, in pairs or small groups, have students work through the documents. You may want to divide up the documents, assigning an analytical cluster (e.g. Wages and Hours, Working Conditions) to each group.

Homework

Students complete their document analysis.

DAY 3

DISCUSSION
45 min.

When students have finished their analytical notes, conduct a full class discussion. Different individuals or groups might be invited to come forward to describe a document or cluster of documents and assess the documents and data they feel are most important to comparing the English and Japanese experience. Use the Content Notes and Teaching Tips in the Teacher Document Notes to guide your discussion.

DAY 4 (optional)

THE ESSAY
45 min.

If the lesson is to culminate in an essay, unless the skill level of your class is high, one day for a writing workshop is suggested. Students can write their introductory paragraphs in class complete with title, "grabber," thesis, and "road map" for how their paper will be developed. See Writing Guidelines in the Teacher's Toolkit for detailed suggestions.

Homework

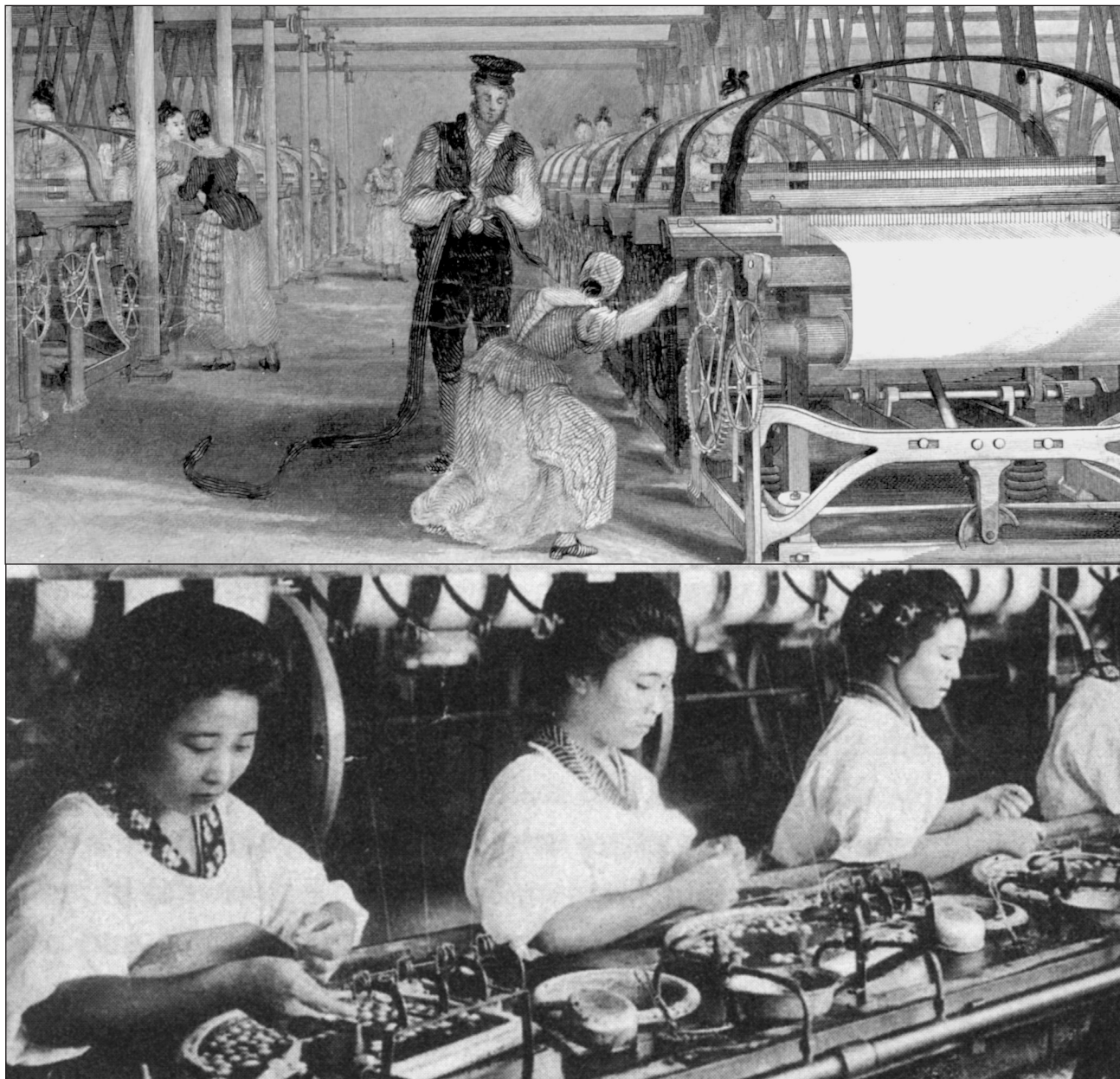
Write essay.

Pressed for Time?

If only two days available. Day One: Have students read the Background Essay the night before. 1. In class, briefly review the content of the Essay. 2. Review the analytical question. 3. Divide the class into five Analytical Category Teams. (See Teacher Document List.) Ask each team to spend the rest of the class period analyzing the documents in their category, filling out a Document Analysis Sheet for each document and writing a summary statement which discusses the English and the Japanese experience. **Day Two:** Give teams five minutes to organize their thoughts and then ask each team to present its findings to the class. After all Category Teams have presented, hold a class discussion which summarizes the findings: Did the female textile workers of England and Japan share a common experience? What was similar? What was different?

Female Mill Workers in England and Japan: How Similar Were Their Experiences?

LV



A Document Based Question (DBQ)
World History

TEACHER DOCUMENT LIST (LV)

There are 16 documents in the Longer Version of this exercise. The documents are grouped into five analytical categories, one providing students with context, the others dealing with four aspects of the mill workers' experience. An uncategorized list of documents appears at the beginning of the student materials. An important part of student analysis is to create analytical categories that may or may not be the same as those below.

Context

Document A: England and Japan (maps)

Document B: Mill Workers: Two Visuals

Gender and Age

Document C: Gender and Age in the English Mills (chart)

Document D: Gender and Age in the Nagano Silk Factories (chart)

Wages and Hours

Document E: Working Hours of Textile Workers in England and Japan

Document F: Mrs. Smith: "We complain of nothing but short wages."

Document G: Mill Wages in Hyde, England (chart)

Document H: Mill Wages in Japan (chart)

Document I: A Bowl of Oatmeal / A Bowl of Rice (chart)

Working Conditions in the Mills

Document J: Hannah Goode: "It has gone on this six years and more."

Document K: Comparing Japanese Mills to the West (chart)

Document L: Am I Happy I Worked in the Mills? A Japanese Survey (chart)

Status in the Family and Society

Document M: Protest of an English Union Official

Document N: The English "Factory Girl"

Document O: A Diary, a Contract, and a Recollection

Document P: Abuse in the Japanese Mills

STUDENT GUIDE SHEET

Female Mill Workers in England and Japan: How Similar Were Their Experiences?

LV

Directions: This DBQ compares the experience of girls and women in the textile mills of 19th century England with their female counterparts in industrial Japan. Your job is to analyze the documents and identify similarities and differences experienced by female mill workers in these two countries.

It is suggested that you follow these steps:

1. Read the Background Essay.
2. Skim through the documents to get a sense of what they are about.
3. Read the documents slowly. In the margin or on a Document Analysis Sheet, record the main idea of each document.
4. Organize the documents by analytical category. The first few may be context documents. Other categories might deal with economic concerns like wages or work conditions.
5. Within each category, gather information about the English and Japanese mill experiences, noting similarities and differences.
6. Develop a summary answer to the question.

The Documents:

- Document A: England and Japan (maps)
- Document B: Mill Workers: Two Visuals
- Document C: Gender and Age in the English Mills (chart)
- Document D: Gender and Age in the Nagano Silk Factories (chart)
- Document E: Working Hours of Textile Workers in England and Japan
- Document F: Mrs. Smith: “We complain of nothing but short wages.”
- Document G: Mill Wages in Hyde, England (chart)
- Document H: Mill Wages in Japan (chart)
- Document I: A Bowl of Oatmeal / A Bowl of Rice (chart)
- Document J: Hannah Goode: “It has gone on this six years and more.”
- Document K: Comparing Japanese Mills to the West (chart)
- Document L: Am I Happy I Worked in the Mills? A Japanese Survey
- Document M: Protest of an English Union Official
- Document N: The English “Factory Girl”
- Document O: A Diary, a Contract, and a Recollection
- Document P: Abuse in the Japanese Mills

Teacher Notes

Female Mill Workers in England and Japan: How Similar Were Their Experiences?

LV

Introduction

The human story can be divided into three eras – a very long period of hunting and gathering, a 10,000-year period of agriculture and animal raising, and then what was undoubtedly the greatest transforming event in human history, the **industrial revolution**. This revolution arrived quietly, almost inconspicuously – the lever, the wheel, the tiller, the moldboard plow. Then it grew more noisy – the catapult, the printing press, the steam engine, the cotton gin. By the 19th century in Europe there was an all-out ruckus – the bobbin-whirling, gear-grinding presence of the industrial revolution. The world would never be the same.

Our mental picture of the industrial revolution is often filled with smokestacks and big steel, railroads and telegraph wires. What is sometimes missing from this picture are the human figures – an exhausted laborer puddling molten steel, or an eight-year-old child partly hidden behind a bottling machine. This DBQ will look at one segment of the industrial worker population – women and young girls in the **textile** industry in England and Japan.

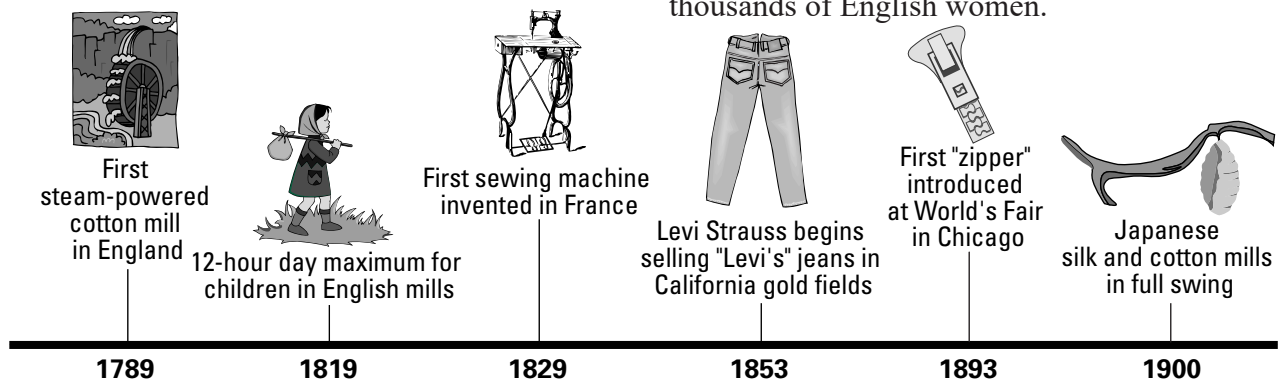
Textile Production

Textiles is simply another word for cloth. To produce textiles, two things need to be done. First, thread must be made from raw materials such as wool, cotton and silk in a process called **spinning**. Next, that thread must be woven on looms into textile material. For centuries

spinning and **weaving** were done in homes and small shops where people sat at spinning wheels making thread and then wove that thread into cloth at handlooms. A monumental change in human history took place when the processes of spinning and weaving were moved to factories and done by machine. The mills that spun and wove this cloth were remarkable for the brilliant changes they brought to technology. For reasons that included nimble fingers, it was women, often young girls, who tended the spinning and weaving machines.

England

The textile revolution began in England around 1760 when a series of inventions radically changed the way cloth was made. Among them was James Hargreaves's **spinning jenny**. Invented in the 1760s, the spinning jenny turned several spindles at one time, sharply increasing the amount of thread that one person could produce. This was soon followed by Richard Arkwright's invention of the **water frame** that could spin thread in great quantities by the use of waterpower – moving water that turned the wheels that drove the machinery. This invention moved the work of spinning from the home to the factory. Next, the **power loom**, invented around 1786 by Edmund Cartwright, replaced the handloom, and the weaving process also moved into factories. As textile manufacture went from the home to the factory, so did thousands of English women.



Teacher Notes

Japan

On the other side of the world in Japan, the industrial revolution and the revolution in cloth-making came later. Japan's industrial revolution was the outcome of a political revolution. From 1603 to 1868 Japan was ruled by a **shogun**, a kind of military field marshal, who controlled military and police power and managed civil matters as well. For these 265 years, the shogun position was held by a member of the Tokugawa family. During that period, Japan attempted to keep itself closed off from the influence of the West – specifically Europe and the United States. But on January 3, 1868, this changed. A teenage emperor named Mutsuhito announced that imperial rule had returned. He adopted Meiji, meaning “enlightened rule,” as the name for the era in which he would be emperor.

Japan's new government set off on a campaign to make Japan an equal to Western nations. To accomplish this end, they began to build Japan both militarily and economically. The government invested in coal mines, textile mills, shipyards and many other modern enterprises in an effort to put Japan on an equal economic footing with the West.

Much of the technology needed for Japan's industrial leap already existed in the late 19th century. To develop a textile industry, it was not necessary to invent the water frame and the power loom; it was more a question of seeking advice and foreign investment. Japanese government and business officials traveled to Europe to study European technology, and European experts were invited to Japan to advise how to establish industry there. A number of these experts were British. It was not long before Japanese mills were humming.

And so, two island nations experienced an industrial revolution, England becoming an industrial giant in the 19th century and Japan following in the 20th. In both nations the manufacture of textiles was critical in their rise to power. And in both nations women and girls provided much of the labor that made the textile

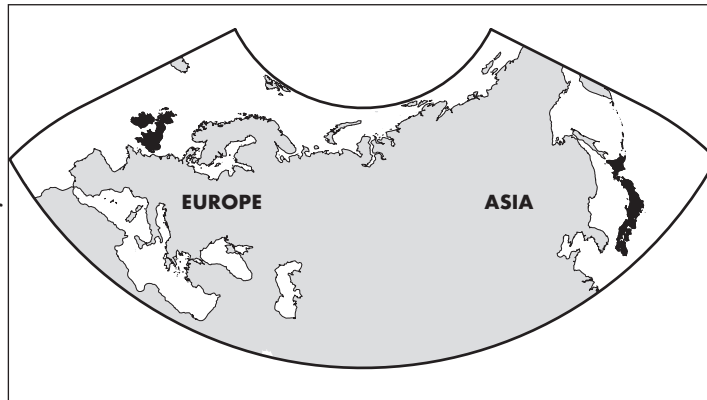
factories run.

The Optimists and the Pessimists

Women in the textile labor force had a big effect on the industrial revolution, but what effect did the industrial revolution have on women?

Historians who have studied this question are often divided into two groups – the optimists and the pessimists. The optimists tend to look at the positive side of what women and girls experienced when they left their homes to work in the factories. They look at these women as independent wage earners with all the advantages of someone who has her own money in her pocket. With British pounds and Japanese yen to spend, they were no longer dependent on their families for economic support; in fact, their families might depend on them. The absolute power of the father in a traditional, agriculture-based family broke down, giving women a greater say in how they would live. Some historians note that in the move to the factories, for the first time women received payment for their work. Optimists suggest that this was an early step toward such achievements as the right to vote and other women's rights.

While optimists see the industrial revolution as the beginning of liberation for women, the pessimists look at it as one cause for women's loss of status in society. They argue that women had more power and better lives before they went to work in the factories.



Teacher Notes

On farms and in household shops, they had worked alongside their husbands and played an important economic role in the family. When they took over such jobs as tending the power looms, they replaced men, often leaving their husbands unemployed or working at lesser jobs, and were paid lower wages simply because they were women. Rather than liberating women, the hiring of women for factory work put stress on the whole family.

A pessimist might also argue that leaving the relative safety of the home for a large, impersonal factory was a dangerous thing for a woman, especially a young girl. In Japan, the factory girl might be far away, living in a dormitory and returning home only a few times a year. In both England and Japan, factory girls were prey to factory owners and the managers who controlled their livelihood. There might be danger, too, in working at the powerful and relentless machines that were designed to produce as much as possible as quickly as possible.

Another pessimistic view was that female factory workers did not really control the wealth they produced. Young women and girls turned over most of their wages to their families and thus were not all that independent.

Here another interesting question is raised: If women and girls are available at low wages, didn't that help the nation's overall economy? Low wages made it possible to sell cloth at home and around the world at lower prices, thereby helping consumers and making both Japan's and England's textile industries very successful. But England's mills, and later Japan's, were owned by large companies whose owners in turn became quite wealthy. Was this simply a way to exploit women to make money?

The Question

The argument between optimists and pessimists goes on, and it is a fascinating discussion. This DBQ, however, pulls back to ask a related but different question. We don't ask whether the experience of the women textile workers in England and Japan was good for them or for their countries. We simply ask if the experiences of these women were similar. They were, after all, separated by more than half a century and two continents. But on matters like wages and hours, working conditions and status, was the experience of women in the textile mills of Japan very different from the experience of women in the mills of England?

We invite you to examine the documents that follow. Over the last two and one-half centuries, several million English and Japanese women have worked in textile mills, and 16 documents cannot tell the whole story. However, they can begin the story and can provide the basis for making some tentative judgments. Read the documents that follow, establish some categories of comparison, and answer the DBQ question: *Female mill workers in England and Japan: How similar were their experiences?*

Teacher Document Notes – Longer Version (LV)

Document A: England and Japan (maps)

Content Notes:

- The maps are simply intended to provide students with several geographic understandings:
 1. England and Japan are at either end of the Eurasian landmass.
 2. They are both islands.
 3. They are similar in area, although Japan is 142,000 square miles compared to the United Kingdom's 94,000 square miles.
- We hope the geographical note will straighten out any confusion about the composition of the United Kingdom.

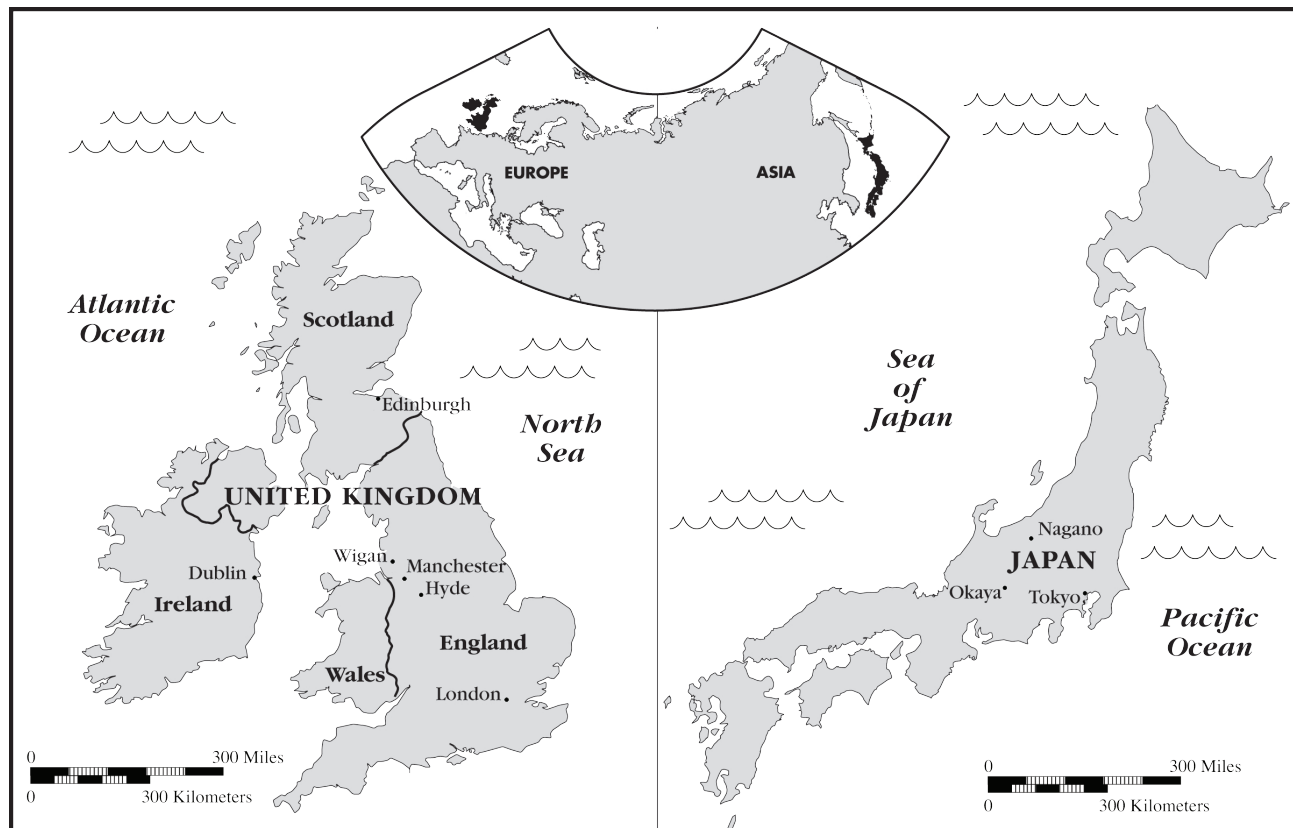
Teaching Tips:

- Ask students to examine the maps, read the geographical note, and make as many factual statements as they can:
 1. Both countries are islands.
 2. They are at opposite ends of the Eastern Hemisphere.
 3. They are roughly the same size.
 4. Japan is one country, while the British Isles are made up of two countries – the United Kingdom and Ireland.
 5. The United Kingdom is made up of four parts – England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
 6. Explain that people often refer to the United Kingdom as “England.” This is similar to using “America” to refer to the United States. “America” is a vague term that could encompass most of the Western Hemisphere.
- To give students a frame of reference, tell them Japan has about the same area as California; the United Kingdom is about two-thirds that size.
- Mention that a number of place names on the maps – Wigan, Hyde, Nagano, Okaya – are mentioned in the upcoming documents.

Document A

Source: Map created from various sources.

LV



Note: The British Isles consist of two countries linked by history but now separate and independent. These are the United Kingdom (the UK) and Ireland. The United Kingdom is in turn made up of four parts – England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Document B: Mill Workers: Two Visuals

Content Notes:

- This document provides two images of textile workers, one a photograph from Japan and the other a lithograph of a Samuel Slater-designed mill. Slater, an English citizen, took his mill ideas to the United States in the early 1800s. He is credited with igniting the industrial revolution in the US by replicating English technology from memory. His actions were considered treasonous by the British government.
- Because photography had not yet developed adequately, it would have been difficult to acquire a photograph of workers at a power loom in 1840.

Teaching Tips:

- Ask students to look at each image. Create a list (on paper or on the board) of observations and impressions. These might include:
 1. With the exception of a male supervisor in the top visual, all the workers are female.
 2. The women appear well dressed in both images.
 3. The facilities look clean.
 4. The factories seem to be well-lit.
- Do the images shed any light on the process of making textiles? (See especially the silk hread note.)
- Discuss the value and the limitations of each image as an indicator of working conditions. (Both images give a sense of being almost too good to be true. We do not know who created the lithograph and for whom it was done. Was it, for example, used as a company recruitment poster to attract workers?)
- The Japanese photo looks staged. (As indeed it was. On the other hand, textile mills have a bad historical reputation, and it is important to enter into this DBQ without preconceived notions. In fact, we know that in silk mills especially, lighting had to be good because the work was so fine.)
- Ask students to comment on the appropriateness of dress in the Slater-designed mill. What were possible drawbacks? (Clothing looks heavy and too warm, especially in summer; loose-fitting garments could get caught up in the machinery.)

Document B

Source: A lithograph of a Samuel Slater-designed power-loom weaving mill, circa 1840. Slater, an English-American manufacturer, took his mill ideas to the United States.



LV

Source: Textile workers in a silk-reeling factory in Japan's Nagano district, circa 1910.



Note:

The women are pulling threads off silkworm cocoons that are floating in hot-water basins in front of them.

Document C: Gender and Age in the English Mills

Content Notes:

- This document sheds light on the extent to which women and young girls were engaged in the production of textiles in England during the industrial revolution. A high percentage of the female workers was made up of young girls. This is important information because the youth of these workers raises other questions, such as the vulnerability of young girls and effects on family structure, i.e. young girls being the breadwinners in the family.

Teaching Tips:

- Ask students to examine the first chart. What statements can they make about workers in five English silk factory towns?
 - The workers were mostly female, from 63% to 96%.
 - In three of the towns, over half the female workers were 16 or under.
- Ask students to examine the second chart. What statements can they make about the data?
 - Unlike the first document, this one provides age information about the cotton, lace, and woolen industries as well as the silk mills.
- The data is for all of England, not just for five towns.
- The age categories are different from the first chart.
- While many female textile workers were teenagers, most (57% in 1841) were 20 or older.
- The percentage of under-20 workers was about the same in all four textile industries.
- Ask students to consider the two English charts together. Based on the data, which of these generalizations can be supported?
 - Most female textile workers in 19th-century England were under 20? (No.)
 - Most textile workers in 19th-century England were female. (No. Data is insufficient, although the silk worker figures from the first chart suggest this may be true.)

Document D: Gender and Age in the Nagano Silk Factories

Content Notes:

- This document sheds light on the extent to which women and young girls were engaged in the production of textiles in Nagano, Japan, during what was in effect Japan's industrial revolution. Like England, a high percentage of the female silk workers in Nagano were young girls.

Teaching Tips:

- Have students turn to Document A and find Nagano on the map. Nagano was the site of the 1998 Winter Olympics and had a population of about 369,000 in 2022. It is both a city and a prefecture (district). The mills in this chart were located throughout the prefecture.
- Ask students to examine the chart data. What statements can they make about workers in the silk factories of Nagano?
 - There were 205 silk mills in the district in 1901. That's a lot.
 - 92% of the silk mill workers were female.
 - 66% of the female workers were 20 or under.
 - Almost one in five of the female workers was under 15.
- Ask students which of the following generalizations are supported either by the data or the note below the Nagano charts.
 - Most silk textile workers in Nagano in 1901 were female. (Yes.)
 - Most textile workers in Japan at this time were female. (The data and the note strongly lean in this direction, though we are not given hard numbers.)
 - Most textile workers in 1901 Japan were in the silk industry. (Yes. See note.)
 - Most female textile workers in Japan in 1901 were 20 or under. (If the Nagano numbers are a representative sample, the answer is a strong yes.)
- Finally, and most importantly, ask students to compare Documents C and D. Regarding female textile workers in England and Japan, what are the key similarities and the key differences?

Document C

LV

Source: Adapted from D. C. Coleman, *Courtaulds: An Economic History*, 1969.

Gender and Age of Silk Factory Workers in Five English Towns (1833)			
	Percent Female	Percent Male	Percent of Females Under 16 Years of Age
Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex	96	4	53
Somerset	80	20	39
Derbyshire	63	37	35

Source: Adapted from Ivy Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*, 1981.

Ages of Female Workers in Four English Textile Industries (1841)		
	Under 20	20 and Older
Cotton Manufacturing	48,000	65,000
Silk Manufacturing	13,000	18,000
Lace Manufacturing	7,000	13,000
Woolen Manufacturing	6,000	11,000
Totals	74,000 (43%)	97,000 (57%)

Document D

Source: Adapted from E. Patricia Tsurumi, *Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan*, 1990.

Gender and Age in the Silk Factories, Nagano, Japan (1901)					
Gender of Workers in 205 Mills			Ages of Female Workers in 205 Mills		
Male:	1,109	(8%)	14 and under	2,184	(18%)
Female:	12,519	(92%)	15-20	5,999	(48%)
			Over 20	4,235	(34%)
			Totals	12,519	(100%)

Note: According to Tsurumi:

1. In 1902 there were 25 million people gainfully employed in Japan, mostly in farming.
2. 499,000 of these people worked in industry.
3. 269,000 worked in the textile industry.
4. The silk mill workers constituted a majority of the textile workers.

Document E: Working Hours of the Textile Workers in England and Japan

Content Notes:

- These readings deal with the hours of work in English and Japanese textile mills. The average workday was 12 to 14 hours in both countries. During busy periods, however, the number of hours was usually increased for both English and Japanese workers.
- Document M suggests that Japanese women who worked in the silk mills were generally satisfied with their jobs, and Mrs. Smith tells her interviewer in Document F that she does not want her hours cut. What appears to be a terrible situation might not have always appeared so to working girls and women. These feelings might have resulted from financial need and what they had experienced in life outside the factories.

Teaching Tips:

- Ask students how the length of the average working day of a Japanese and an English textile worker compare. (They are similar – around 14 hours after break times were subtracted.)
- Ask students to calculate the hours worked in a non-holiday, seven-day week, by a factory girl in Okaya and a factory girl in Wigan. (Okaya: 13 hours X 7 days = 91 hours. Wigan: 13 hours X 5 days = 65 hours + 9 hours on Saturday = 74 hours.)
- Display a two-column chart with the headings “Advantages” and “Disadvantages.” Ask students to brainstorm the advantages and disadvantages of working a 14-hour day. (Advantages: income from “regular” hours was not enough to make ends meet; increased income helped the family; other jobs for women were worse; they enjoyed the company of fellow workers. Disadvantages: there was no time for education; the girl was away from her family for long periods of time; long hours threatened her health; it was dangerous for young girls and children to be out of their homes so early and so late.)

Document E

LV

Source: Douglas A. Galbi, "Through Eyes in the Storm," *Social History*, Vol. 21, No. 2, May 1966.

Note: Ellen Hooton was nine years old. She worked the same hours as adult workers. Sunday was an off-day.

Wigan, England (c. 1840)

While Ellen's potential earnings were relatively high, her conditions of work were horrendous. On weekdays she began work in the factory at 5:30 a.m. and finished at 8 p.m. Included in this period were a thirty-five minute break for breakfast and a fifty-five minute break for dinner. On Saturdays she worked another nine hours.

Source: Noshomusho Shokokyoku and Shokko Jijo, *Condition of the Factory Workers*, 1967.

Note: In the late 1800s, a Japanese textile worker averaged one holiday off every two weeks. The Western-style weekend did not exist.

Okaya, Japan (1900)

A study by the government in 1900 revealed that a normal working day in a plant in Okaya was thirteen to fourteen hours. During the busy season, the workers were roused from their beds at 4:05 A.M., sent to work from 4:30 to 6, given fifteen minutes for breakfast, and sent back to work by 6:15. They were allowed fifteen minutes for lunch, between 10:30 and 10:45, and a ten-minute break from 3:30 to 3:40. Otherwise they were kept on the job till 7:30 for a total of fourteen hours and twenty minutes. When the plant was particularly busy, the workers were kept until 10 P.M.

Document F: Mrs. Smith: “We complain of nothing but short wages.”

Content Notes:

- The British Parliament passed the Factory Act of 1833 that prohibited small children from working in textile mills and set a maximum of eight hours a day for children over ten. The Factory Act was the result of interviews conducted throughout the country, including the cotton mill towns of Leeds and Nottingham.
- The depositions collected described some difficult conditions (see Documents J and K) but also revealed some surprises, like Mrs. Smith’s overriding concern for lost wages, not excessive hours. It became clear that many families desperately needed full family employment and long hours to make ends meet. The elimination of the youngest children from the workforce, and the reduced hours for pre-teens, often meant more pressure on mid-teen and late-teen girls to work longer hours in the mills and to remain at it for more years.

Teaching Tips:

- Ask students how Mrs. Smith feels about the hours she, her husband, and her three children work in Wilson’s cotton mill. (She doesn’t complain about them.)
- What is Mrs. Smith’s big concern? (A reduction in total family income if legislation forces owners to “drop the hours”)
- Does Mrs. Smith give much hope to wages being raised to compensate for lost hours? (No. She simply says, “I suppose they’ll take off the wages as well as the hours.”)
- Is there any indication in the document that a worker’s union exists to protect the workers? (No.)

Document G: Mill Wages in Hyde, England

Content Notes:

- This document can address several issues in the analysis of wages of the factory women in England during the industrial revolution. It presents a picture of the earnings of the men and women in 119 families working in the textile industry in the town of Hyde. It also notes that a major factor in family income was the extent to which women and children were at work in a family. The specific wages of children are not mentioned in this document and we do not know what percentage of children was female. The document shows a difference in the earnings of adult men and women over 21, the latter earning a bit more than half of what their male counterparts earned. Equally important is the proportion of men to women – one to four.

Teaching Tips:

- Ask students how the earnings of women compared to the earnings of men in the factory in Hyde. (Women earned about two-thirds of what men earned.)
- Refer students to Document H and ask them to compare the differences in wages between women and men in Japan and in Hyde, England. (The gender wage gap is greater in Japan, but women make significantly less in both places.)
- Refer students to Documents C and D. Then ask them if this document supports the notion that women workers constituted a large majority of the workforce in textile mills. (The ratio of one male worker to four women and children supports the idea, but it does not say what percentage of this figure is children. On the other hand, about half of those who were children were most likely girls.)

Document F

Source: Witness testimony given to the Factory Inquiry Commission and submitted to the English Parliament, 1833.

Mrs. Smith: I have three children working in Wilson's mill; one eleven, one thirteen, and the other fourteen. They work regular hours there. We don't complain. If they go to drop the hours, I don't know what poor people will do. I suppose they'll take off the wages as well as the hours. I'd rather it continue as now. We have hard work to live as it is.... My husband earns 12s. a week, I earn 2s., the eldest child 4s. 6d.,* second child 3s. 6d., third child 2s. 6d.: total 24s. 6d. Out of this we have to pay house rent, fire [fuel], and clothes, and food, for six of us.... I am sure taking two hours from the twelve we now work would much distress us, if, as I expect, our wages was reduced according; my husband thinks so; and we were talking about it today at dinner.... We don't feel the number of hours too much now. We complain of nothing but short wages.

*4s. 6d. = 4 shillings, 6 pence

LV

Document G

Source: Neil McKendrick, editor, "First Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners for England and Wales, 1835," *Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society*, 1974.

Note: At the Hyde mill the proportion of adult men to women and children was about one to four. The low-income families were those in which the wife did not work and in which a high proportion of the children were still too young to contribute to the family income.

Average Incomes of 119 Families Employed by Thomas Ashton, Hyde, England

Occupation	Gender	Average Daily Wage
Loom Operator	Male (21 and over)	40 pence
Loom Operator	Female (21 and over)	26 pence

1 pound = 20 shillings (s)
1 shilling = 12 pence (d)

Document H: Mill Wages in Japan

Content Notes:

- This document will help students compare the wages of men and women in comparable areas of work. This data tells us that a more skilled female worker earned more than a less skilled female worker, but that an overall ratio of two to one existed between the wages of men and women. This document will help students examine the motivation behind employing so many women in the Japanese textile factories.

Teaching Tips:

- Ask students if they are familiar with the term “wage gap.” (The condition in which women receive less pay than men for work that calls for similar skills) Ask students why this practice might have been more acceptable in the 18th and 19th centuries. (Men were considered the “breadwinners” of their families, justifying their need to earn more money than women.)
- Ask students what the ratio was between the pay of a female and a male worker in a similar occupation. (As a cotton mill operative or a seasonal worker, women earned a little more than half of what men

earned.) Ask students if the difference in earnings also existed in the more skilled occupations of carpenter and silk worker. (Yes. A carpenter earned a little more than double what a silk operative earned.)

- Explain that Japanese textile factory account books show that factory girls were charged for items such as the following:
 - Payment to father
 - Shopping
 - Payment to doctor
 - Medicine for TB (tuberculosis) cough

It was possible for her to have nothing left at the end of the year. (Tsurumi, pp. 79-82)

- Ask students what the relationship is between the practice of paying women less money than men and the income of factory owners. (Hiring women allows products to be made at a lower cost, leaving more profit for the factory owners.)

Document I: A Bowl of Oatmeal / A Bowl of Rice

Content Notes:

- The value of money is relative. The most useful way to establish what money is worth is to determine what can be bought for the unit of currency that is being used in any given time or place. Comparison of the currency of two countries at different times in history is especially difficult. This document attempts to do that by relating hourly wages in Japan and England to the price of two basic foods in the diets of the Japanese and the English – rice and oats. The years 1895 and 1833 place the data in the industrial revolutions of each country.

Teaching Tips:

- Show students a dollar bill and ask them what it is worth. (They most likely will say it is worth a dollar.) Ask them what other way the value of a dollar can be measured. (What can be bought for a dollar at any given time is one way to determine its value.)
- Using Document G, ask students how many servings of oats one hour’s wages of a female textile worker in Hyde could buy. (The female worker earns 26 pence per day, or figuring a 13-

hour day, two pence per hour. Her two pence [2d] would buy 2 pounds of oats or 24 servings.)

- Using Document H, ask students how many servings of rice one hour’s wages of a female cotton mill operative in Japan could buy. (The female operative earns 9 sen per day, or figuring a 13-hour day, two-thirds of a sen per hour. Her two-thirds sen would buy 2/3 of a quart or about 10 servings of rice.)
- Ask students how the wages of the Japanese and English women compare according to this method of measuring them. (In terms of servings of a basic foodstuff, the English worker was doing better, 24 servings of oats to 10 servings of rice for one hour’s work.)
- Ask students what the pros and cons of this kind of analysis are. (Pro: 1. It compares the value of a basic need. 2. It gives a sense of the value of work and of currency. Con: 1. Our means of measuring “servings” is from a different time in history; we do not know what people ate at an average meal. 2. We don’t know if the nutritional values of a bowl of rice and a bowl of oats are the same.)

Document H

Source: Adapted from James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, 2002.

Average Daily Wages for Selected Occupations (Japan, 1892)

Occupation	Gender	Average Daily Wage
Carpenter	Male	27 sen
Cotton mill worker	Male Female	17 sen 9 sen
Seasonal agricultural worker	Male Female	16 sen 9 sen
Silk factory worker	Female	13 sen

Note: In 1900, 1 yen = 100 sen = 50 US cents

- a pair of ladies' indoor sandals cost 7 sen
- a bunch of radishes also cost 7 sen
- one pound of sugar cost about 15 sen

Document I

Source: Douglas A. Galbi, "Through Eyes in the Storm," *Social History*, Vol. 21, No. 2, May 1966.

Oatmeal in Wigan, England, c. 1833

1 pound of oatmeal cost 1 penny (pence)

1 pound made about 12 servings

Source: E. Patricia Tsurumi, *Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan*, 1990.

Rice in Nagano, Japan, c. 1895

1 quart of rice cost 1 sen

1 quart made about 15 servings

Document J: Hannah Goode: “It has gone on this six years and more.”

Content Notes:

- Like Mrs. Smith’s interview in Document F, this is a deposition taken just prior to Parliament’s passing of the 1833 Factory Act. The document is rich in detail about conditions in an 1830s English cotton mill. Reading through Goode’s testimony, one begins to feel that she’s been working in the mill for years, and she has. It is only in the last line that we learn she is sixteen.

Teaching Tips:

- Close analysis of a document involves building a big picture by picking out individual details. Ask students to underline or list five specific details that together give a picture of what working conditions were like at Wilson’s cotton mill.
 1. Work is from 5:30 AM to 7 PM.
 2. Youngest child is seven.
 3. Only two males are in the workforce.
 4. Twenty children are under nine.
 5. One meal break during the 13 1/2 hours
 6. Overlooker beats children who fall asleep.
 7. The little kids sometimes play in the street after work.
 8. Goode goes home and works additional time “picking the spinner’s waste.”
 9. Goode attended school before she started work in the mill.
 10. Goode can read a little but can’t write.
 11. Goode is sixteen and started working in the mill at least six years prior.
- The Factory Act of 1833 prohibited children under nine from working and limited children over nine to eight hours a day. What specific changes would that have brought to Wilson’s mill? (Twenty children under nine would have been let go and many others would have had their hours greatly reduced.) How would Mrs. Smith in Document F have felt about this? (She would have worried about the families’ lost wages.)
- How does Goode’s account square with the power-loom lithograph in Document B?

Document J

Source: Testimony given by a worker named Hannah Goode to the Factory Inquiry Commission, 1833.

I work at Mr. Wilson's mill. I attend the drawinghead [a machine that draws out wool thread].... It is about half past five by our clock at home when we go in.... We come out at seven by the mill [clock].... I think the youngest child is about seven. There are only two males in the mill. I dare say there are twenty under nine years. They go in when we do and come out when we do. The smallest children work at the cards, and doffing the spinning bobbins.* I work in that room. We never stop to take our meals, except at dinner. It has gone on this six years and more....

*Carding involved feeding the wool through leather-covered rollers studded with pointed wires to comb or clean it. A doffer removed the full bobbins or spindles of wool, which were then taken to other machines to be processed into thread.

William Crookes is overlooker in our room; he is cross-tempered sometimes. He does not beat me; he beats the little children if they do not do their work right.... I have sometimes seen the little children drop asleep or so, but not lately. If they are caught asleep they get the strap.... Sometimes they play about the street when they come out; sometimes they go home. The girls often go home and sew. I sit up often till nine or ten o'clock at home, picking the spinner's waste. I get paid 2 1/2d. a pound for that.... I can read a little; I can't write. I used to go to school before I went to the mill;... I am sixteen.

LV

Document K: Comparing Japanese Mills to the West

Content Notes:

- The author of this selection believes that when comparing the working conditions of women in Japan with those of the West, Japanese women are better off despite their long working hours. He suggests that because they are young and vigorous and because they generally leave the factories at a young age to marry, they will not be harmed by the difficult experience.
- Part two of this document lists the reasons that were given to explain why Japanese mill girls left their jobs at the Dekasegi factory. Explain that this chart represents the experience of almost 7,000 workers.

Teaching Tips:

- Read the excerpt from the report aloud or ask a student to do so. Ask students what the main points of the statement are. (Japanese girls were young and strong and could deal with long hours. They generally left their jobs to be married before ill effects of their work occurred.)
- Ask students what facts would need to be ascertained before accepting the report's contention that the reason most Japanese girls leave the factory is to be wed. (Did many girls actually stop working to get married? Did they often become ill while on the job?)
- Ask students to write down their answers to the two questions above. Call on students to give their responses and explain their reasoning. (Only 438 of 6,946 left their jobs to be married. Quite a large number – 1,677 – left their jobs because of illness. The note suggests that the number is even higher.)
- Drawing from this document, how do students compare conditions in the Japanese and English mills?

Document K

LV

Source: Japanese government report, 1909.

Excerpt from a Government Report on Mill Workers, 1909

When making comparisons with factories in Western countries, one must take into consideration certain unique facts regarding the extremely long working hours in factories in our country. In our country's factories, many women are employed. Single, they stay at the factories several years before marriage; but when they wed they leave the factories. Thus for them factory labor is only temporary employment; it is not work done throughout their lives. Moreover, since they do it while in the lusty vigor of their youth, they can endure what by comparison are extremely long working hours. In the countries of the West, however, since factory labor is a lifetime job done both before and after marriage, they [female workers] cannot possibly endure the extremely long hours of labor.

Source: Adapted from E. Patricia Tsurumi, *Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan*, 1990.

Note: "Illness" includes those who died of serious illness after they returned home.
"Released from employment" probably includes some who were let go because they were too ill to work.

Reasons Dekasegi* Female Mill Workers Left Their Jobs Japan, 1909

	Number	Percent
Illness	1,677	24
Related to work	393	5
Released from employment	1,001	15
Family reasons	2,041	29
Marriage	438	6
Blood relation's illness	413	6
Other reasons	983	15
Total	6,946	100

*Dekasegi is a Japanese district, equivalent to a US state.

Document L: Am I Happy I Worked in the Mills? A Japanese Survey

Content Notes:

- This document is a survey of workers from a silk filature plant (a plant for putting silk on reels after removing it from cocoons). It evidently was taken when the workers interviewed were much older, after their factory years were well over. The survey indicates that the workers were quite happy they had worked in the plant; 90% were positive. The survey also suggests that workers were under pressure to produce at a high rate and maintain quality, and that the most unpleasant part of their job was the overseer who was leading the “inspection.”
- The data is followed by the author’s comments on the survey. He has reservations about the accuracy of the data contained in Shigemi’s survey, indicating that the passing years and the death of many victims of bad treatment might have tilted the survey toward a more positive view of their work in the silk filature.

Teaching Tips:

- Ask students to write down three significant statements that can be made about work in the silk factory as the women interviewed saw it. (90% were glad they had worked there. 90% felt that inspections were very stressful. 70% felt that they were well paid and none felt that the pay was poor. 97% thought that the nature of the work was average or good.)
- Ask two students to each state a reason given by the author as to why the data might not be accurate. (People tend to forget the bad times as they age. Many of those who were harmed by the work had died or killed themselves.) Ask students which of these explanations they think is more likely. (It is easier to prove the second statement. The first is debatable. One could argue that older people tend to remember the bad times very clearly, i.e., the Great Depression in the United States.)
- Ask students to consider the subtitle of the book, *The Underside of Modern Japan*, and relate it to the author’s skeptical comments on the survey data. (One might suggest that the generally positive data contradicts the author’s thesis, leading him to look for reasons why the survey may be flawed.)
- Ask students to refer to the comments of Mrs. Smith in Document F. As an older woman, how might she have responded to a questionnaire like this? Would her responses have been largely positive? What about Hannah Goode in Document J?
- How much weight do students give this survey?

Document L

Source: Mikoso Hane, *Peasants, Rebels and Outcasts: The Underside of Modern Japan*, 1982.

Japanese Silk Worker Survey

The following table is from a survey of 580 older women who had been silk-filature workers in their younger years. The survey was conducted by Yamamoto Shigemi.

	poor	average	good
Food	0%	10%	90%
Nature of Work	3%	75%	22%
Pay	0%	30%	70%
Treatment When Sick	40%	50%	10%
	harrowing	average	easy
Inspection	90%	10%	0%
	positive	average	negative
Overall*	90%	10%	0%

*The women were asked if they were glad that they had gone to work in the silk filatures.

Author's comments on the survey:

Yamamoto Shigemi, who studied the lives of these girls who came out of the mountain villages of Hida, found that none of them, as old women, complained about the food or pay in the mills. Of the several hundred women that he interviewed, only 3% complained about the long hours they had worked. Most of them said that factory work was easier than farm work. Time makes bad memories fade away, so his survey may not be a true representation of how these women had felt at the time they were working in the plants. Moreover, a weeding-out process had already taken place. These people had already survived the ordeal. Many who were less hardy had fallen by the wayside, dying of tuberculosis or even [dying by] suicide.

Document M: Protest of an English Union Official

Content Notes:

- This document is the response of a union official when male workers were accused of wanting to maintain a monopoly on spinning jobs in their factory. He argues that his union is not against the idea of women working, but he resents the fact that women are paid less and therefore displace men; that young girls are exposed to appalling behavior on the part of older women who work in the mills; that young girls are no longer supervised by their parents; and that fathers often become dependent on daughters who have taken their jobs.

Teaching Tips:

- Because of the language and style of this document, it might be approached as an exercise in “translation.”
- Ask students what the official means when he notes that women have only themselves to support while men have families. (He is suggesting that women are not heads of families, so they can work for less. The result of this situation is that they take jobs away from men.)
- According to the official, what would inhabitants of Manchester see if they observed the women who worked in the mills? (They would see behavior that is “disgusting” and “appalling.”)
- Ask students whether the phrase “the reins of government are broken” is referring to the British government. (No. The author is referring to the “government” or supervision of children by their parents.)
- What is the union official’s bottom-line point? (Mill girls being exposed to immorality as they take the jobs of male breadwinners.)

Document N: The English “Factory Girl”

Content Notes:

- This historical commentary says a great deal about the social status of the women and girls who worked in the mills. The author makes a direct connection between poverty and work in the mills and then goes on to note that “factory girl” was a disparaging term, and that being so designated ruined a young woman’s reputation to the degree that she was unemployable elsewhere.

Teaching Tips:

- Refer students to Document M. Ask students what the author of that document thought happened to women and girls when they worked in the mills. Before they answer, point out the use of the phrase “Girls, many of the interesting ones...” (The author is saying that grown women behaved badly in the mills and that young girls were especially susceptible to being influenced by them. He also suggests that the pretty [“interesting”] girls had no one to protect them from “unprincipled” employers.)
- Ask students how, in this article, economic status is related to social status. (Letting a family member become a factory worker was a last resort, often the result of poverty level wages being paid to the male family members.)
- Ask students to compare what is implied in this article to what is directly stated about Japan’s mills in Document P. (The documents, taken together, imply that factory women in both countries were subject to sexual abuse, and that there was little they could do about it. They also suggest that women are in the mills because they come from poor families.)

Document M

LV

Source: Testimony of a British union official, as recorded in *The History of Trade Unionism* by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, 1894.

... [An English] union official responded passionately with an appeal to preserve the position of the head of the family.

... We do not stand opposed to women working, but we do enter our protest against the principle on which they are employed. The women, in nine cases out of ten, have only themselves to support, – while the men, generally have families. This the employers know, and of this the unprincipled take advantage.... We do not wish to come forward as moralists, but if we could call on the inhabitants of Manchester, the parents of children, especially, to view the character and conduct of females in a cotton-mill, we think we could present them with an exhibition at once disgusting and appalling. Girls, many of the interesting ones, from 14 to 20 years of age, are thus rendered independent of their natural guardians, who in many cases, indeed, become dependent on their children. In this unwholesome state of things, the reins of government are broken, and the excited feeling of youth and inexperience let loose upon the world, a prey too often to pride, vice, and infamy.

Document N

Source: Edwin Hopwood, *A History of the Lancashire Cotton Industry and the Amalgamated Weavers' Association*, Amalgamated Weavers Association, 1969.

... When factories were first built there was a strong repugnance on the part of parents who had been accustomed to the old family life under the domestic system to send their children into these factories. It was ... considered a disgrace so to do: the epithet of “factory girl” was the most insulting that could be applied to a young woman, and the girls who had once been in a factory could never find employment elsewhere. It was not until the wages of the workman had been reduced to a starvation level that they consented to their children and wives being employed in the mills.

Document O: A Diary, a Contract, and a Recollection

Content Notes:

- This three-part document consists of a diary entry from a landlord, a typical contract for employment of a female silk worker, and the recollection of a woman who worked in the Kawagishi silk mill at the turn of the 20th century. Together they depict the situation that many poor families were in and the role of daughters in helping families deal with poverty.
- The landlord's diary entry makes clear that families needed their daughter's mill wages to make ends meet. The money was often used to pay off family debts, or, in better times, to make an important purchase, even a home. In terms of the social status of the young woman, it was a mixed blessing. Because of her earning capacity, she became important to the family's economic health. Because of the terms of the contract she became, for all purposes, an indentured servant.
- The contract states the amount of "earnest money"—a large cash advance—given to the family of a factory girl in exchange for the promise that she would work for a stated period of time, sometimes five to seven years.

Teaching Tips:

- As an introduction, read aloud the excerpt from the diary of a landlord kept by the Nezu family of landlords in Yamana prefecture in Japan.
- Read the terms of the contract with students and list what this contract binds the young girl to do. (She must appear for work at a certain date and work until the plant stops operating. She will not work for any other silk manufacturer. She and her family will pay 20 times the earnest money if she stops working for any reason.)
- Ask students their opinion of the factory girl's status in Japanese society. (It might be high because of the value of her earnings. On the other hand, it might be low because she was in a state of servitude.)
- Ask students what feelings – positive and negative – they might have if they were working under these conditions. List them in a two-column chart. (Some positive feelings might be: pride in doing something important for the family; the adventure of leaving your home and living free from family supervision; the pleasure of earning money on your own. Some negative feelings might be: the fear of doing something wrong and being sent home; the sense that you are a prisoner in your job; fear that your supervisors might be abusive.)
- Ask students to speculate on how the family might be affected by a daughter's employment in the mills. (The family might worry about the daughter's vulnerability to abuse. The parents' authority might be lessened when a daughter has the economic power to earn enough money to build a home. On the other hand, they might be positively affected by the daughter's wages improving the family's buying power. Also, the family won't have to provide for the daughter's upkeep at home.)

Document O

Source: Excerpt from a Japanese landlord's diary, 1911.

A Landlord's Diary, 28 December, 1911:

It rained and was very cold. On this day I demanded the rents in Kuwado. At Oki Nobuhei's place he was out and I pressed his wife hard to pay off everything.... Sekimatsu Taro was also out and I gave a severe warning to his wife. Furuya Teizo was also out and I got nowhere. I left a stern warning with his family and told them to pay off some within the year. Motegi Heijiro was out. I warned his wife who said, "On the 30th we will receive wages from the silk factory where our daughter works and as soon as we get them we will pay you some."

LV

Source: A standard Japanese factory worker contract.

Contract for Employment of Young Silk Worker with Girl's Parents

Amount _____, being the earnest money for the employment of _____ (Name), silk worker (born _____ year _____ month)

We confirm that in return for contracting the above person employed as a female operative at your filature in the _____ year of the Meiji, we have received the said earnest money in full. Moreover, she shall commence work from the coming spring in _____ month, _____ day, or the coming summer in _____ month, _____ day without further notice and shall work without lapse until the cessation of plant operations. And no matter what unforeseen circumstances may arise, during this term we will not have her work for any other silk manufacturer. *If there should be any infringement of this contract whatsoever, as reparations we will pay without question a sum of (20x) the said earnest money.* In witness whereof we set our seals to this contract, accepting joint responsibility.

Prefecture _____ District _____ Hamlet _____ Number _____

Meiji _____ Year, _____ month, _____ day.

Name _____

Source: Mikoso Hane, *Peasants, Rebels and Outcasts: The Underside of Modern Japan*, 1982.

When such a long-term contract was signed, the company turned over a considerable sum of money as an advance payment to the father.... "My father got an advance of 200 yen and sent me and my younger sister to work in a plant in Kawagishi," an old retired silk reeler in Nagano recalled. "He then built a house with the money." Around 1906, 100 yen could finance construction of a two-story house or two one-story houses.

Document P: Abuse in the Japanese Mills

Content Notes:

- This document contains a commentary from a Japanese historian who contends that in addition to the health risks that the Japanese mill girls faced, there was also the threat of sexual abuse, not surprising in a situation in which male employees and supervisors had a great deal of power over young women. Also included are lyrics appearing regularly in a number of different songs that support the author's contention. As in the case of American slavery, protest is often expressed in song when there is little other recourse to address wrongs.

Teaching Tips:

- After students read both parts of this document, ask them why they think the girls expressed their problem in songs that they probably sang only among themselves. (Given the power that those committing the offenses had, it would have been difficult and perhaps dangerous to say anything openly.) Refer to the similar practice among people enslaved in the United States.
- Ask students if they can make a connection between the girls' economic status and the sexual abuse that they suffered. (A protest against their situation might result in losing their jobs, a development that could be financially disastrous to their families.)
- Explain that social status refers to one's rank in society. It is determined in part by how a person or a group is perceived by people in other social groups. At least two factors lowered the status of these girls – gender and poverty.

Document P

LV

Source: Commentary from a Japanese historian, as quoted in E. Patricia Tsurumi, *Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan*, 1990.

Bodies of mill women and girls were assailed not only by disease and illness. As administrators of fines and punishments on the work floor, male employees had considerable arbitrary power over the young operatives.... The young operatives, single and vulnerable, were open targets for personal whims and sexual abuse by these low-ranking supervisors, and provocations led to constant tension between textile hands and their overseers. Owners and managers were often as abusive as their male subordinates, and unlike ordinary workers these men usually had keys to the women's dormitory rooms. When rape and intimidation resulted in pregnancy, the male employee had little to fear: he would pay the unfortunate woman a small sum, and that would be the end of the matter for him.

Source: Lyrics from a 19th-century Japanese song. Songs like this were popular among silk workers across the country.

*Don't fall in love with male workers.
You'll end up discarded like tea dregs.*

*At parting one is like a fan,
Discarded when a breeze is no longer needed.*

*Meet him often and the factory gets upset.
Don't meet him and the master gets upset.*

This company is like a brothel....

Female Mill Workers DBQ Lesson Plan – Shorter Version (SV)

DAY 1

**BACKGROUND
ESSAY/THE
HOOK**
45 min.

Have students read the Background Essay. Be sure they are oriented in place and time (see Timeline). The essay presents a brief history of industrialization in England and Japan and discusses historians' optimistic and pessimistic perspectives on the change. Next do the Hook Exercise, which asks students to consider the challenges of working a 70-hour week in a 19th-century English mill.

Homework

For homework, ask students to skim the documents quickly. Then, using the document list in their Student Guide Sheet, ask them to organize the documents tentatively into workable analytical categories. The question asks students to compare the experiences of female textile workers in England and Japan. Around what analytical categories might they expect the documents to be organized? Documents may be organized around labor divisions like wages, hours, working conditions, and status in the family and society. Outlines of document groupings are due before the Day 2 lesson.

DAY 2

DISCUSSION
10 min.

Discuss outlines. Drawing from students' homework, create an outline that approaches the categories in the Teacher's Document List or some viable alternative.

**DOCUMENT
ANALYSIS**
35 min.

Examine one or more documents together as a class. Again, review with students what they are looking for – information for making comparisons between women who worked in English and Japanese textile mills. On a Document Analysis Sheet, model the level of analytical notation you expect for each document. (See Teacher's Toolkit for samples.) Then, in pairs or small groups, have students work through the documents. You may want to divide up the documents, assigning an analytical cluster (e.g. Wages and Hours, Working Conditions) to each group.

Homework

Students complete their document analysis.

DAY 3

DISCUSSION
45 min.

When students have finished their analytical notes, conduct a full class discussion. Different individuals or groups might be invited to come forward to describe a document or cluster of documents and assess the documents and data they feel are most important to comparing the English and Japanese experience. Use the Content Notes and Teaching Tips in the Teacher Document Notes to guide your discussion.

DAY 4 (optional)

THE ESSAY
45 min.

If the lesson is to culminate in an essay, unless the skill level of your class is high, one day for a writing workshop is suggested. Students can write their introductory paragraphs in class complete with title, "grabber," thesis, and "road map" for how their paper will be developed. See Writing Guidelines in the Teacher's Toolkit for detailed suggestions.

Homework

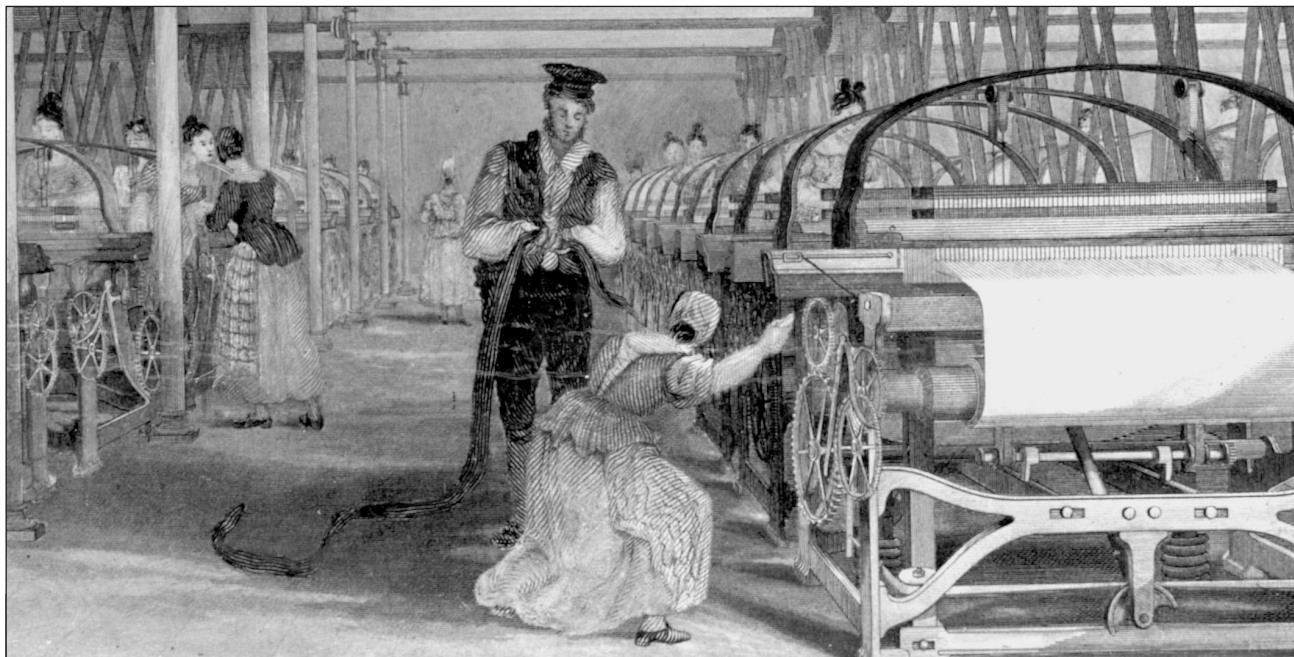
Write essay.

Pressed for Time?

If only two days available. Day One: Have students read the Background Essay the night before. 1. In class, briefly review the content of the Essay. 2. Review the analytical question. 3. Divide the class into five Analytical Category Teams. (See Teacher Document List.) Ask each team to spend the rest of the class period analyzing the documents in their category, filling out a Document Analysis Sheet for each document and writing a summary statement which discusses the English and the Japanese experience. **Day Two:** Give teams five minutes to organize their thoughts and then ask each team to present its findings to the class. After all Category Teams have presented, hold a class discussion which summarizes the findings: Did the female textile workers of England and Japan share a common experience? What was similar? What was different?

Female Mill Workers in England and Japan: How Similar Were Their Experiences?

SV



A Document Based Question (DBQ)
World History

TEACHER DOCUMENT LIST (SV)

There are 11 documents in the Shorter Version of this exercise. The documents are grouped into four analytical categories, one providing students with context, the others dealing with three aspects of the mill workers' experience. An uncategorized list of documents appears at the beginning of the student materials. An important part of student analysis is to create analytical categories that may or may not be the same as those below.

Context

- Document 1: England and Japan (maps)
- Document 2: Mill Workers: Two Visuals

Gender and Age

- Document 3: Gender and Age in the English Mills (chart)
- Document 4: Gender and Age in the Nagano Silk Factories (chart)

Wages and Hours

- Document 5: Working Hours of Textile Workers in England and Japan
- Document 6: Mrs. Smith: "We complain of nothing but short wages."
- Document 7: Mill Wages in Hyde, England (chart)
- Document 8: Mill Wages in Japan (chart)
- Document 9: A Bowl of Oatmeal / A Bowl of Rice (chart)

Working Conditions in the Mills

- Document 10: Hannah Goode: "It has gone on this six years and more."
- Document 11: Am I Happy I Worked in the Mills? A Japanese Survey (chart)

STUDENT GUIDE SHEET

Female Mill Workers in England and Japan: How Similar Were Their Experiences?

Directions: This DBQ compares the experience of girls and women in the textile mills of 19th-century England with their female counterparts in industrial Japan. Your job is to analyze the documents and identify similarities and differences experienced by female mill workers in these two countries.

SV

It is suggested that you follow these steps:

1. Read the Background Essay.
2. Skim through the documents to get a sense of what they are about.
3. Read the documents slowly. In the margin or on a Document Analysis Sheet, record the main idea of each document.
4. Organize the documents by analytical category. The first few may be context documents. Other categories might deal with economic concerns like wages or work conditions.
5. Within each category, gather information about the English and Japanese mill experience, noting similarities and differences.
6. Develop a summary answer to the question.

The Documents:

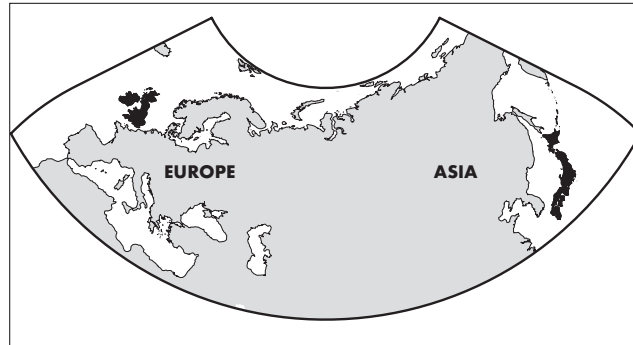
- Document 1: England and Japan (maps)
- Document 2: Mill Workers: Two Visuals
- Document 3: Gender and Age in the English Mills (chart)
- Document 4: Gender and Age in the Nagano Silk Factories (chart)
- Document 5: Working Hours of Textile Workers in England and Japan
- Document 6: Mrs. Smith: "We complain of nothing but short wages."
- Document 7: Mill Wages in Hyde, England (chart)
- Document 8: Mill Wages in Japan (chart)
- Document 9: A Bowl of Oatmeal / A Bowl of Rice (chart)
- Document 10: Hannah Goode: "It has gone on this six years or more."
- Document 11: Am I Happy I Worked in the Mills? A Japanese Survey

Teacher Notes

Female Mill Workers in England and Japan: How Similar Were Their Experiences?

Introduction

The human story can be divided into three eras – a very long period of hunting and gathering, a 10,000 period of agriculture and animal raising, and then what was probably the greatest transforming event in human history, the **industrial revolution**. Our mental picture of the industrial revolution is often filled with smokestacks and big steel, railroads and telegraph wires. What is sometimes missing from this picture are the human figures – the exhausted laborer pouring molten steel, or the eight-year-old child partly hidden behind a bottling machine. This DBQ will look at one segment of the industrial worker population – women and young girls in the **textile** industries of England and Japan.



spinning wheels making thread and then wove the thread into cloth on handlooms. A big change in human history took place when the processes of spinning and weaving were moved to factories and done by machine. The

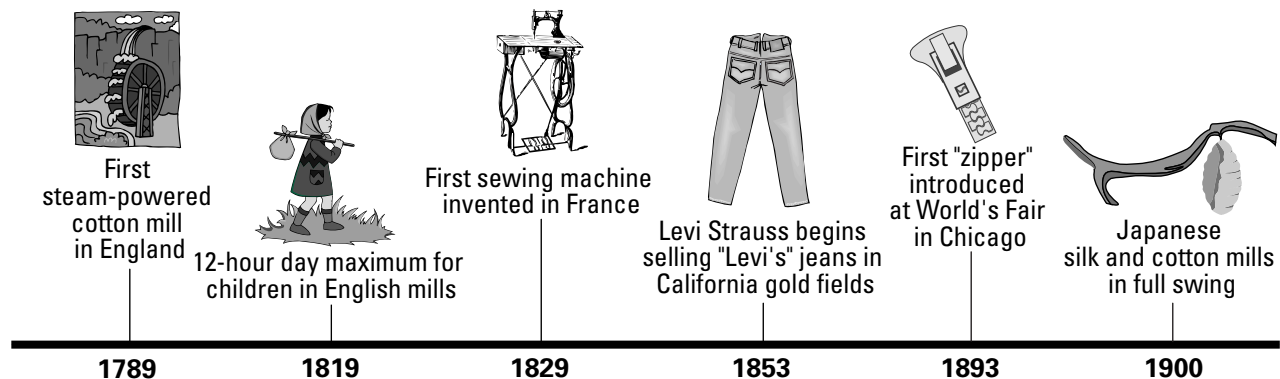
machines that spun and wove this cloth required special skills to operate. Because they had nimble fingers, it was women, often young girls, who tended the spinning and weaving machines.

England

The textile revolution began in England around 1760. A series of inventions greatly changed the way cloth was made. Among them was James Hargreaves's **spinning jenny**. Invented in the 1760s, the spinning jenny turned several spindles at one time, sharply increasing the amount of thread that one person could produce. This was soon followed by Richard Arkwright's invention of the **water frame** that could spin thread in great quantities by the use of waterpower – moving water that turned the wheels that drove the machinery. This invention moved the work of spinning from the home to the factory. The first **power loom**, invented around 1786 by Edmund Cartwright, replaced the handloom. Weaving also moved to the factory.

Textile Production

Textiles is simply another word for cloth. To produce textiles, two things need to be done. First, thread must be made from raw materials such as wool, cotton and silk in a process called **spinning**. Next, the thread must be woven on looms into material that, among other things, provides clothing, one of our basic needs. For centuries spinning and **weaving** were done in homes and small shops where people sat at



Teacher Notes

As textile manufacture went from the home to the factory, so did thousands of English women.

Japan

On the other side of the world in Japan, the industrial revolution and the revolution in cloth-making came later. Throughout the 1600s and 1700s, Japan worked hard to keep itself closed off from the West – specifically Europe and the United States. Contact with Western ideas and Western industry was felt to be a threat to Japanese culture. However, in 1868 all this changed. A teenage emperor named Mutsuhito announced that he was taking on new power, and Japan's new government set off on a campaign to make Japan an equal to Western nations. To accomplish this end, they began to invest in coal mines, textile mills, shipyards and many other modern enterprises.

Much of the technology needed for Japan's industrial leap already existed in the late 19th-century. To develop a textile industry, it was not necessary to invent the water frame and the power loom; it was more a question of seeking out advice and investing. Japanese government and business officials traveled to Europe to study European technology, and European

experts were invited to Japan to advise the Japanese on how to establish industry there. A number of these experts were British. It was not long before Japanese mills were humming.

The Question

And so, two island nations experienced an industrial revolution, England becoming an industrial giant in the 19th century and Japan following in the 20th. In both nations the manufacture of textiles was critical in their rise to power. And in both nations women and girls provided much of the labor that made the textile factories run. In Japan the number of women compared to men was even greater than in England.

We invite you to examine the documents that follow. Our focus is on similarity of worker experience. Begin by finding the categories where comparisons may be made. Then answer the larger DBQ question: *Female mill workers in England and Japan: How similar were their experiences?*

SV

Teacher Document Notes – Shorter Version (SV)

Document 1: England and Japan (maps)

Content Notes:

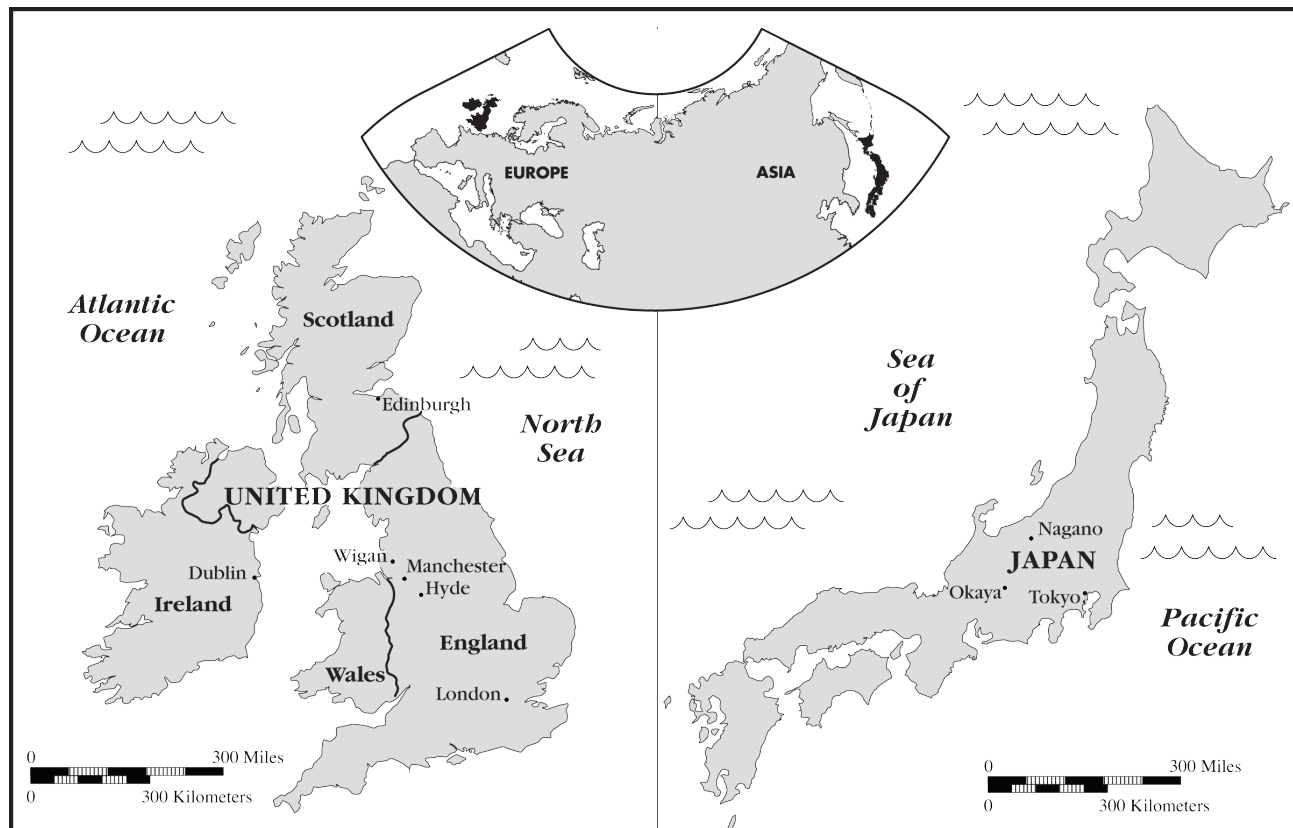
- The maps are simply intended to provide students with several geographic understandings:
 1. England and Japan are at either end of the Eurasian landmass.
 2. They are both islands.
 3. They are similar in area, although Japan is 142,000 square miles compared to the United Kingdom's 94,000 square miles.
- We hope the geographical note will straighten out any confusion about the composition of the United Kingdom.

Teaching Tips:

- Ask students to examine the maps, read the geographical note, and make as many factual statements as they can:
 1. Both countries are islands.
 2. They are at opposite ends of the Eastern Hemisphere.
 3. They are roughly the same size.
 4. Japan is one country, while the British Isles are made up of two countries – the United Kingdom and Ireland.
 5. The United Kingdom is made up of four parts – England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
 6. Explain that people often refer to the United Kingdom as “England.” This is similar to using “America” to refer to the United States. “America” is a vague term that could encompass most of the Western Hemisphere.
- To give students a frame of reference, tell them Japan has about the same area as California; the United Kingdom is about two-thirds that size.
- Mention that a number of place names on the maps – Wigan, Hyde, Nagano, Okaya – are mentioned in the upcoming documents.

Document 1

Source: Map created from various sources.



SV

Source: The British Isles consist of two countries linked by history but now separate and independent. These are the United Kingdom (the UK) and Ireland. The United Kingdom is in turn made up of four parts – England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Document 2: Mill Workers: Two Visuals

Content Notes:

- This document provides two images of textile workers, one a photograph from Japan and the other a lithograph of a Samuel Slater-designed mill. Slater, an English citizen, took his mill ideas to the United States in the early 1800s. He is credited with igniting the industrial revolution in the US by replicating English technology from memory. His actions were considered treasonous by the British government.
- Because photography had not yet developed adequately, it would have been difficult to acquire a photograph of workers at a power loom in 1840.

Teaching Tips:

- Ask students to look at each image. Create a list (on paper or on the board) of observations and impressions. These might include:
 1. With the exception of a male supervisor in the top visual, all the workers are female.
 2. The women appear well dressed in both images.
 3. The facilities look clean.
 4. The factories seem to be well-lit.
- Do the images shed any light on the process of making textiles? (See especially the silk thread note.)
- Discuss the value and the limitations of each image as an indicator of working conditions. (Both images give a sense of being almost too good to be true. We do not know who created the lithograph and for whom it was done. Was it, for example, used as a company recruitment poster to attract workers?)
- The Japanese photo looks staged. (As indeed it was. On the other hand, textile mills have a bad historical reputation, and it is important to enter into this DBQ without preconceived notions. In fact, we know that in silk mills especially, lighting had to be good because the work was so fine.)
- Ask students to comment on the appropriateness of dress in the Slater-designed mill. What were possible drawbacks? (Clothing looks heavy and too warm, especially in summer; loose-fitting garments could get caught up in the machinery.)

Document 2

Source: A lithograph of a Samuel Slater-designed power-loom weaving mill, circa 1840. Slater, an English-American manufacturer, took his mill ideas to the United States.



SV

Source: Textile workers in a silk-reeling factory in Japan's Nagano district, circa 1910.



Note:

The women are pulling threads off silkworm cocoons that are floating in hot-water basins in front of them.

Document 3: Gender and Age in the English Mills

Content Notes:

- This document sheds light on the extent to which women and young girls were engaged in the production of textiles in England during the industrial revolution. A high percentage of the female workers was made up of young girls. This is important information because the youth of these workers raises other questions, such as the vulnerability of young girls and effects on family structure.

Teaching Tips

- Ask students to examine the first chart. What statements can they make about workers in five English silk factory towns?
 - The workers were mostly female, from 63% to 96%.
 - In three of the towns, over half the female workers were 16 or under.
- Ask students to examine the second chart. What statements can they make about the data?
 - Unlike the first document, this one provides age information about the cotton, lace, and woolen industries as well as the silk mills.
- The data is for all of England, not just for five towns.
- The age categories are different from the first chart.
- While many female textile workers were teenagers, most (57% in 1841) were 20 or older.
- The percentage of under-20 workers was about the same in all four textile industries.
- Ask students to consider the two English charts together. Based on the data, which of these generalizations can be supported?
 - Most female textile workers in 19th-century England were under twenty? (No.)
 - Most textile workers in 19th century England were female. (No. Data is insufficient, although the silk worker figures from the first chart suggest this may be true.)

Document 4: Gender and Age in the Nagano Silk Factories

Content Notes:

- This document sheds light on the extent to which women and young girls were engaged in the production of textiles in Nagano, Japan, during what was in effect Japan's industrial revolution. Like England, a high percentage of the female silk workers in Nagano were young girls.

Teaching Tips:

- Have students turn to Document 1 and find Nagano on the map. Nagano was the site of the 1998 Winter Olympics and had a population of about 369,000 in 2022. It is both a city and a prefecture (district). The mills in this chart were located throughout the prefecture.
- Ask students to examine the chart data. What statements can they make about workers in the silk factories of Nagano?
 - There were 205 silk mills in the district in 1901. That's a lot.
 - 92% of the silk mill workers were female.
 - 66% of the female workers were 20 or under.
 - Almost one in five of the female workers was under 15.
- Ask students which of the following generalizations are supported either by the data or the note below the Nagano charts.
 - Most silk textile workers in Nagano in 1901 were female. (Yes.)
 - Most textile workers in Japan at this time were female. (The data and the note strongly lean in this direction, though we are not given hard numbers.)
 - Most textile workers in 1901 Japan were in the silk industry. (Yes. See note.)
 - Most female textile workers in Japan in 1901 were 20 or under. (If the Nagano numbers are a representative sample, the answer is a strong yes.)
- Finally, and most importantly, ask students to compare Documents 3 and 4. Regarding female textile workers in England and Japan, what are the key similarities and the key differences?

Document 3

Source: Adapted from D. C. Coleman, *Courtaulds: An Economic History*, 1969.

Gender and Age of Silk Factory Workers in Five English Towns (1833)			
	Percent Female	Percent Male	Percent of Females Under 16 Years of Age
Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex	96	4	53
Somerset	80	20	39
Derbyshire	63	37	35

SV

Source: Adapted from Ivy Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*, 1981.

Ages of Female Workers in Four English Textile Industries (1841)		
	Under 20	20 and Older
Cotton Manufacturing	48,000	65,000
Silk Manufacturing	13,000	18,000
Lace Manufacturing	7,000	13,000
Woolen Manufacturing	6,000	11,000
Totals	74,000 (43%)	97,000 (57%)

Document 4

Source: Adapted from E. Patricia Tsurumi, *Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan*, 1990.

Gender and Age in the Silk Factories, Nagano, Japan (1901)					
Gender of Workers in 205 Mills			Ages of Female Workers in 205 Mills		
Male:	1,109	(8%)	14 and under	2,184	(18%)
Female:	12,519	(92%)	15-20	5,999	(48%)
			Over 20	4,235	(34%)
			Totals	12,519	(100%)

Note: According to Tsurumi:

1. In 1902 there were 25 million people gainfully employed in Japan, mostly in farming.
2. 499,000 of these people worked in industry.
3. 269,000 worked in the textile industry.
4. The silk mill workers constituted a majority of the textile workers.

Document 5: Working Hours of the Textile Workers in England and Japan

Content Notes:

- These readings deal with the hours of work in English and Japanese textile mills. The average workday was 12 to 14 hours in both countries. During busy periods, however, the number of hours was usually increased for both English and Japanese workers. Mrs. Smith tells her interviewer in Document 6 that she does not want her hours cut. What appears to be a terrible situation might not have always appeared so to working girls and women. These feelings might have resulted from financial need and what they had experienced in life outside the factories.

Teaching Tips:

- Ask students how the length of the average working day of a Japanese and an English textile worker compare. (They are similar – around 14 hours after break times were subtracted.)
- Ask students to calculate the hours worked in a non-holiday, seven-day week, by a factory girl in Okaya and a factory girl in Wigan. (Okaya: 13 hours X 7 days = 91 hours. Wigan: 13 hours X 5 days = 65 hours + 9 hours on Saturday = 74 hours.)
- Display a two-column chart with the headings “Advantages” and “Disadvantages.” Ask students to brainstorm the advantages and disadvantages of working a 14-hour day. (Advantages: income from “regular” hours was not enough to make ends meet; increased income helped the family; other jobs for women were worse; they enjoyed the company of fellow workers. Disadvantages: there was no time for education; the girl was away from her family for long periods of time; long hours threatened her health; it was dangerous for young girls and children to be out of their homes so early and so late.)

Document 5

Source: Douglas A. Galbi, "Through Eyes in the Storm," *Social History*, Vol. 21, No. 2, May 1966.

Note: Ellen Hooton was nine years old. She worked the same hours as adult workers. Sunday was an off-day.

Wigan, England (c. 1840)

While Ellen's potential earnings were relatively high, her conditions of work were horrendous. On weekdays she began work in the factory at 5:30 a.m. and finished at 8 p.m. Included in this period were a thirty-five minute break for breakfast and a fifty-five minute break for dinner. On Saturdays she worked another nine hours.

SV

Source: Noshomusho Shokokyoku and Shokko Jijo, *Condition of the Factory Workers*, 1967.

Note: In the late 1800s, a Japanese textile worker averaged one holiday every two weeks. The Western-style weekend did not exist.

Okaya, Japan (1900)

A study by the government in 1900 revealed that a normal working day in a plant in Okaya was thirteen to fourteen hours. During the busy season, the workers were roused from their beds at 4:05 A.M., sent to work from 4:30 to 6, given fifteen minutes for breakfast, and sent back to work by 6:15. They were allowed fifteen minutes for lunch, between 10:30 and 10:45, and a ten-minute break from 3:30 to 3:40. Otherwise they were kept on the job till 7:30 for a total of fourteen hours and twenty minutes. When the plant was particularly busy, the workers were kept until 10 P.M.

Document 6: Mrs. Smith: “We complain of nothing but short wages.”

Content Notes:

- The British Parliament passed the Factory Act of 1833 that prohibited small children from working in textile mills and set a maximum of eight hours a day for children over ten. The Factory Act was the result of interviews conducted throughout the country, including the cotton mill towns of Leeds and Nottingham.
- The depositions collected described some difficult conditions (see Document 10) but also revealed some surprises, like Mrs. Smith’s overriding concern for lost wages, not excessive hours. It became clear that many families desperately needed full family employment and long hours to make ends meet. The elimination of the youngest children from the workforce, and the reduced hours for pre-teens, often meant more pressure on mid-teen and late-teen girls to work longer hours in the mills and to remain at it for more years.

Teaching Tips:

- Ask students how Mrs. Smith feels about the hours she, her husband, and her three children work in Wilson’s cotton mill. (She doesn’t complain about them.)
- What is Mrs. Smith’s big concern? (A reduction in total family income if legislation forces owners to “drop the hours”)
- Does Mrs. Smith give much hope to wages being raised to compensate for lost hours? (No. She simply says, “I suppose they’ll take off the wages as well as the hours.”)
- Is there any indication in the document that a worker’s union exists to protect the workers? (No.)

Document 7: Mill Wages in Hyde, England

Content Notes:

- This document can address several issues in the analysis of wages of the factory women in England during the industrial revolution. It presents a picture of the earnings of the men and women in 119 families working in the textile industry in the town of Hyde. It also notes that a major factor in family income was the extent to which women and children were at work in a family. The specific wages of children are not mentioned in this document and we do not know what percentage of children was female. The document shows a difference in the earnings of adult men and women over 21, the latter earning a bit more than half of what their male counterparts earned. Equally important is the proportion of men to women – one to four.

Teaching Tips:

- Ask students how the earnings of women compared to the earnings of men in the factory in Hyde. (Women earned about two-thirds of what men earned.)
- Refer students to Document 8 and ask them to compare the differences in wages between women and men in Japan and in Hyde, England. (The gender wage gap is greater in Japan, but women make significantly less in both places.)
- Refer students to Documents 3 and 4. Then ask them if this document supports the notion that women workers constituted a large majority of the workforce in textile mills. (The ratio of one male worker to four women and children supports the idea, but it does not say what percentage of this figure is children. On the other hand, about half of those who were children were most likely girls.)

Document 6

Source: Witness testimony given to the Factory Inquiry Commission and submitted to the English Parliament, 1833.

Mrs. Smith: I have three children working in Wilson's mill; one eleven, one thirteen, and the other fourteen. They work regular hours there. We don't complain. If they go to drop the hours, I don't know what poor people will do. I suppose they'll take off the wages as well as the hours. I'd rather it continue as now. We have hard work to live as it is.... My husband earns 12s. a week, I earn 2s., the eldest child 4s. 6d.,* second child 3s. 6d., third child 2s. 6d.: total 24s. 6d. Out of this we have to pay house-rent, fire [fuel], and clothes, and food, for six of us.... I am sure taking two hours from the twelve we now work would much distress us, if, as I expect, our wages was reduced according; my husband thinks so; and we were talking about it today at dinner.... We don't feel the number of hours too much now. We complain of nothing but short wages.

*4s. 6d. = 4 shillings, 6 pence

SV

Document 7

Source: Neil McKendrick, editor, "First Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners for England and Wales, 1835," *Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society*, 1974.

Note: At the Hyde mill the proportion of adult men to women and children was about one to four. The low-income families were those in which the wife did not work and in which a high proportion of the children were still too young to contribute to the family income.

Average Incomes of 119 Families Employed by Thomas Ashton, Hyde, England

Occupation	Gender	Average Daily Wage
Loom Operator	Male (21 and over)	40 pence
Loom Operator	Female (21 and over)	26 pence

1 pound = 20 shillings (s)

1 shilling = 12 pence (d)

Document 8: Mill Wages in Japan

Content Notes:

- This document will help students compare the wages of men and women in comparable areas of work. This data tells us that a more skilled female worker earned more than a less skilled female worker, but that an overall ratio of two to one existed between the wages of men and women. This document will help students examine the motivation behind employing so many women in the Japanese textile factories.

Teaching Tips:

- Ask students if they are familiar with the term “wage gap.” (The condition in which women receive less pay than men for work that calls for similar skills) Ask students why this practice might have been more acceptable in the 18th and 19th centuries. (Men were considered the “breadwinners” of their families and, justifying their need to earn more money than women.)
- Ask students what the ratio was between the pay of a female and a male worker in a similar occupation. (As a cotton mill operative or a seasonal worker, women earned a little more than half of what men

earned.) Ask students if the difference in earnings also existed in the more skilled occupations of carpenter and silk worker. (Yes. A carpenter earned a little more than double what a silk operative earned.)

- Explain that Japanese textile factory account books show that factory girls were charged for items such as the following:

-Payment to father

-Shopping

-Payment to doctor

-Medicine for TB (tuberculosis) cough

It was possible for her to have nothing left at the end of the year. (Tsurumi, pp. 79-82)

- Ask students what the relationship is between the practice of paying women less money than men and the income of factory owners. (Hiring women allows products to be made at a lower cost, leaving more profit for the factory owners.)

Document 9: A Bowl of Oatmeal / A Bowl of Rice

Content Notes:

- The value of money is relative. The most useful way to establish what money is worth is to determine what can be bought for the unit of currency that is being used in any given time or place. Comparison of the currency of two countries at different times in history is especially difficult. This document attempts to do that by relating hourly wages in Japan and England to the price of two basic foods in the diets of the Japanese and the English – rice and oats. The years 1895 and 1833 place the data in the industrial revolutions of each country.

Teaching Tips:

- Show students a dollar bill and ask them what it is worth. (They most likely will say it is worth a dollar.) Ask them what other way the value of a dollar can be measured. (What can be bought for a dollar at any given time is one way to determine its value.)
- Using Document 7, ask students how many servings of oats one hour’s wages of a female textile worker in Hyde could buy. (The female worker earns 26 pence per day, or figuring a 13-

hour day, two pence per hour. Her two pence [2d] would buy 2 pounds of oats or 24 servings.)

- Using Document 8, ask students how many servings of rice one hour’s wages of a female cotton mill operative in Japan could buy. (The female operative earns 9 sen per day, or figuring a 13-hour day, two-thirds of a sen per hour. Her two-thirds sen would buy 2/3 of a quart or about 10 servings of rice.)
- Ask students how the wages of the Japanese and English women compare according to this method of measuring them. (In terms of servings of a basic foodstuff, the English worker was doing better, 24 servings of oats to 10 servings of rice for one hour’s work.)
- Ask students what the pros and cons of this kind of analysis are. (Pro: 1. It compares the value of a basic need. 2. It gives a sense of the value of work and of currency. Con: 1. Our means of measuring “servings” is from a different time in history; we do not know what people ate at an average meal. 2. We don’t know if the nutritional values of a bowl of rice and a bowl of oats are the same.)

Document 8

Source: Adapted from James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, 2002.

Average Daily Wages for Selected Occupations (Japan, 1892)

Occupation	Gender	Average Daily Wage
Carpenter	Male	27 sen
Cotton mill worker	Male Female	17 sen 9 sen
Seasonal agricultural worker	Male Female	16 sen 9 sen
Silk factory worker	Female	13 sen

SV

Note: In 1900, 1 yen = 100 sen = 50 US cents

- a pair of ladies' indoor sandals cost 7 sen
- a bunch of radishes also cost 7 sen
- one pound of sugar cost about 15 sen

Document 9

Source: Douglas A. Galbi, "Through Eyes in the Storm," *Social History*, Vol. 21, No. 2, May 1966.

Oatmeal in Wigan, England, c. 1833

1 pound of oatmeal cost 1 penny (pence)

1 pound made about 12 servings

Source: E. Patricia Tsurumi, *Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan*, 1990.

Rice in Nagano, Japan, c. 1895

1 quart of rice cost 1 sen

1 quart made about 15 servings

Document 10: Hannah Goode: “It has gone on this six years and more.”

Content Notes:

- Like Mrs. Smith’s interview in Document 6, this is a deposition taken just prior to Parliament’s passing of the 1833 Factory Act. The document is rich in detail about conditions in an 1830s English cotton mill. Reading through Goode’s testimony, one begins to feel that she’s been working in the mill for years, and she has. It is only in the last line that we learn she is sixteen.

Teaching Tips:

- Close analysis of a document involves building a big picture by picking out individual details. Ask students to underline or list five specific details that together give a picture of what working conditions were like at Wilson’s cotton mill.
 1. Work is from 5:30 AM to 7 PM.
 2. Youngest child is seven.
 3. Only two males are in the workforce.
 4. Twenty children are under nine.
 5. One meal break during the 13 1/2 hours
 6. Overlooker beats children who fall asleep.
 7. The little kids sometimes play in the street after work.
 8. Goode goes home and works additional time “picking the spinner’s waste.”
 9. Goode attended school before she started work in the mill.
 10. Goode can read a little but can’t write.
 11. Goode is sixteen and started working in the mill at least six years prior.
- The Factory Act of 1833 prohibited children under nine from working and limited children over nine to eight hours a day. What specific changes would that have brought to Wilson’s mill? (Twenty children under nine would have been let go and many others would have had their hours greatly reduced.) How would Mrs. Smith in Document 6 have felt about this? (She would have worried about the families’ lost wages.)
- How does Goode’s account square with the power-loom lithograph in Document 2?

Document 10

Source: Testimony given by a worker named Hannah Goode to the Factory Inquiry Commission, 1833.

I work at Mr. Wilson's mill. I attend the drawinghead [a machine that draws out wool thread].... It is about half past five by our clock at home when we go in.... We come out at seven by the mill [clock].... I think the youngest child is about seven. There are only two males in the mill. I dare say there are twenty under nine years. They go in when we do and come out when we do. The smallest children work at the cards, and doffing the spinning bobbins.* I work in that room. We never stop to take our meals, except at dinner. It has gone on this six years and more....

*Carding involved feeding the wool through leather-covered rollers studded with pointed wires to comb or clean it. A doffer removed the full bobbins or spindles of wool, which were then taken to other machines to be processed into thread.

William Crookes is overlooker in our room; he is cross-tempered sometimes. He does not beat me; he beats the little children if they do not do their work right.... I have sometimes seen the little children drop asleep or so, but not lately. If they are caught asleep they get the strap.... Sometimes they play about the street when they come out; sometimes they go home. The girls often go home and sew. I sit up often till nine or ten o'clock at home, picking the spinner's waste. I get paid 2 1/2d. a pound for that.... I can read a little; I can't write. I used to go to school before I went to the mill;... I am sixteen.

SV

Document 11: Am I Happy I Worked in the Mills? A Japanese Survey

Content Notes:

- This document is a survey of workers from a silk filature plant (a plant for putting silk on reels after removing it from cocoons). It evidently was taken when the workers interviewed were much older, after their factory years were well over. The survey indicates that the workers were quite happy they had worked in the plant; 90% were positive. The survey also suggests that workers were under pressure to produce at a high rate and maintain quality, and that the most unpleasant part of their job was the overseer who was leading the “inspection.”
- The data is followed by the author’s comments on the survey. He has reservations about the accuracy of the data contained in Shigemi’s survey, indicating that the passing years and the death of many victims of bad treatment might have tilted the survey toward a more positive view of their work in the silk filature.

Teaching Tips:

- Ask students to write down three significant statements that can be made about work in the silk factory as the women interviewed saw it. (90% were glad they had worked there. 90% felt that inspections were very stressful. 70% felt that they were well paid and none felt that the pay was poor. 97% thought that the nature of the work was average or good.)
- Ask two students to each state a reason given by the author as to why the data might not be accurate. (People tend to forget the bad times as they age. Many of those who were harmed by the work had died or killed themselves.) Ask students which of these explanations they think is more likely. (It is easier to prove the second statement. The first is debatable. One could argue that older people tend to remember the bad times very clearly, i.e., the Great Depression in the United States.)
- Ask students to consider the subtitle of the book, *The Underside of Modern Japan*, and relate it to the author’s skeptical comments on the survey data. (One might suggest that the generally positive data contradicts the author’s thesis, leading him to look for reasons why the survey may be flawed.)
- Ask students to refer to the comments of Mrs. Smith in Document 6. As an older woman, how might she have responded to a questionnaire like this? Would her responses have been largely positive? What about Hannah Goode in Document 10?
- How much weight do students give this survey?

Document 11

Source: Mikoso Hane, *Peasants, Rebels and Outcasts: The Underside of Modern Japan*, 1982.

Japanese Silk Worker Survey

The following table is from a survey of 580 older women who had been silk-filature workers in their younger years. The survey was conducted by Yamamoto Shigemi.

	poor	average	good
Food	0%	10%	90%
Nature of Work	3%	75%	22%
Pay	0%	30%	70%
Treatment When Sick	40%	50%	10%
	harrowing	average	easy
Inspection	90%	10%	0%
	positive	average	negative
Overall*	90%	10%	0%

*The women were asked if they were glad that they had gone to work in the silk filatures.

Author's comments on the survey:

Yamamoto Shigemi, who studied the lives of these girls who came out of the mountain villages of Hida, found that none of them, as old women, complained about the food or pay in the mills. Of the several hundred women that he interviewed, only 3% complained about the long hours they had worked. Most of them said that factory work was easier than farm work. Time makes bad memories fade away, so his survey may not be a true representation of how these women had felt at the time they were working in the plants. Moreover, a weeding-out process had already taken place. These people had already survived the ordeal. Many who were less hardy had fallen by the wayside, dying of tuberculosis or even [dying by] suicide.

