

Year 8 Homework 3- Reading on children and work during the Industrial Revolution

Children from very poor families were almost always forced to work from a very young age in a variety of jobs to help their family survive. There were many different jobs including working in the mines, cleaning chimneys or working in the factories.

Coal Mines:

The coal mines were dangerous places where roofs sometimes caved in, explosions happened and workers got all sorts of injuries. There were very few safety rules.

The younger children often worked as "*trappers*" who worked trap doors. They sat in a hole hollowed out for them and held a string which was fastened to the door. When they heard the coal wagons coming they had to open the door by pulling a string. This job was one of the easiest down the mine but it was very lonely.

Older children might be employed as "*coal bearers*" carrying loads of coal on their backs in big baskets.

The *Mines Act* was passed by the Government in 1842 forbidding the employment of women and girls and all boys under the age of ten down mines. Later it became illegal for a boy under 12 to work down a mine.

Pauper Apprentice:

Pauper apprentices were often orphans who were sent to work in a factory by the authorities (people in charge) of the town. In return for working, children would get food and a bed. Very often, the conditions were awful including being woken up at 4am and having to carry very heavy equipment for years on end. Some would suffer from being hit and their bosses would sometimes hammer a nail through ears of naughty children. Paupers did not earn a wage (money) and were owned by the factory until they were 21 years old.

Match Girls:

Match girls produced matches to light a fire. This was a very dangerous job as the matches contained explosive chemicals which would burn their hands. Some of the girls lost their hair, others even shone in the dark due to working with the chemicals, whilst others lost their teeth! The wages were very poor for match girls, around 20p a week for a girl, and 40p a week for a woman.

Climbing Boys:

Young boys would work for an adult chimney sweep who would clean chimneys, generally for rich people. Many of the boys were orphans, and would be forced to climb up the chimneys as they were small. Some of the climbing boys could be as young as four. Most of the climbing boys developed a "stoop" in their back as they would hunch (bend) over in the chimney. Over the years of hard work, many would develop illnesses linked to breathing in soot. If a climbing boy took too long to clean the chimney, his master would stick pins in his feet as punishment, or in extreme cases light a fire beneath him.

- 1: Why did children have to go out to work during the Industrial Revolution?
- 2: List two types of jobs children could do in the coal mines
- 3: What were the dangers of children working in the coal mines?
- 4: Who could be a pauper's apprentice?
- 5: What type of work did a pauper's apprentice do?
- 6: What did paupers get instead of wages?
- 7: Why was being a match girl such a dangerous job?
- 8: What was a climbing boy?
- 9: What were the dangers of being a climbing boy?