

Cobblestone™

THE MILL GIRLS: FROM FARM TO FACTORY

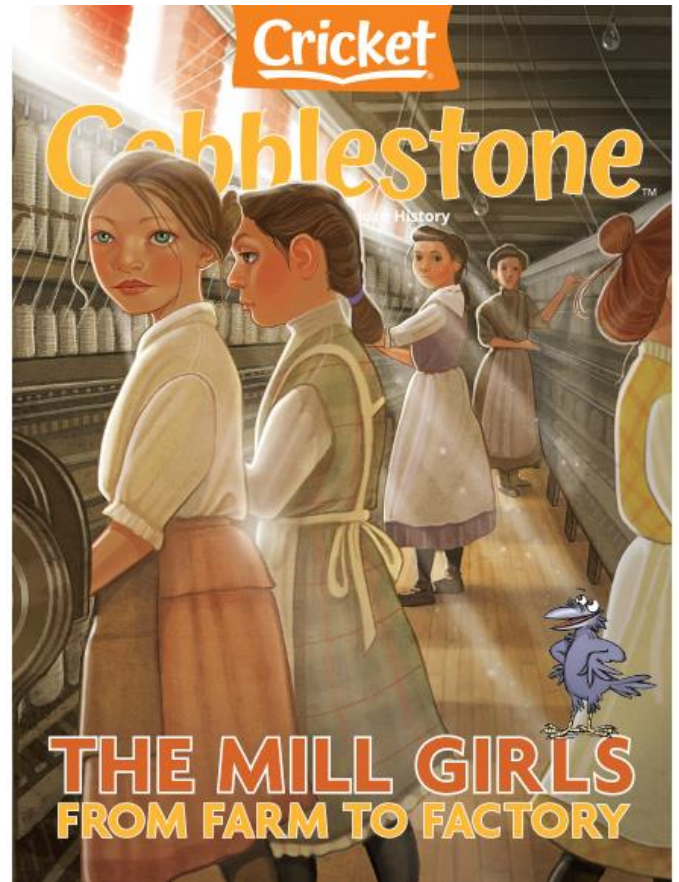
Use the articles, lessons, and activities in this Teacher Guide to help students learn about the development of the Lowell Mills and how it relates to the Industrial Revolution in the United States.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How does the development of the Lowell Mills reflect the development of the Industrial Revolution in America?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will explore the invention of machines that made it possible to manufacture cloth in factories.
- Students will learn about the role of families in creating cloth at home.
- Students will compare the development of mills in New England to the Industrial Revolution as a whole.
- Students will create a timeline.
- Students will explore the process of making cloth in a textile mill.
- Students will learn about the daily lives of the girls who worked in the mills.
- Students will write and perform a skit.
- Students will participate in a debate.
- Students will learn about the reasons for labor reform.
- Students will explore the actions and motivations of mill owners.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core Social Studies skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

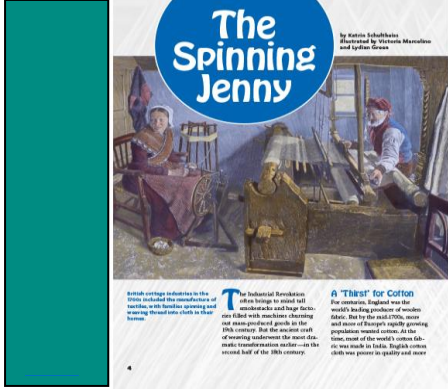
- **The Spinning Jenny**
Expository Nonfiction
- **A Day in the Factory**
Expository Nonfiction
- **The Fight for Reform**
Expository Nonfiction

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The Spinning Jenny

pp. 4–7, Expository Nonfiction

Use this article about the invention of the Spinning Jenny to learn about the process of spinning wool in factories.



RESOURCES

- Sequence of Events

OBJECTIVES

- Students will explore the invention of machines that made it possible to manufacture cloth in factories.
- Students will learn about the role of families in creating cloth at home.
- Students will compare the development of mills in New England to the Industrial Revolution as a whole.
- Students will create a timeline.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **bottleneck (p. 5)** a point of congestion in a production system that slows or stops progress
- **spinning wheel (p. 5)** a wooden machine that people used in their homes to make thread from wool
- **fibers (p. 6)** long, thin strands or threads of material that can be knit or woven into a fabric

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How does the development of the Lowell Mills reflect the development of the Industrial Revolution in America?

Ask students what the difference is between something that is made by hand, and the same thing that is made by a machine, such as knitted or sewn items. Which one do they think is faster to make? Then discuss how people in America used to have to make all their cloth by hand, and why it might have become necessary to start producing it in a factory.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Define each word with students. Then arrange students in small groups and have them practice using two or even three of the words in a single sentence. Finally, tell students to look for these words as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article. Then use these questions for discussion:

1. What was the “bottleneck” in the production of cloth before the spinning jenny was invented?
2. Why was the British cotton industry trying to compete with India? Why was it important for their economy?
3. Why did the water frame have to be used in a factory rather than in homes? How did this change home production of yarn?
4. What were the advantages to building factories where all the parts of cloth production were done under one roof?
5. How was the development of textile mills an example of changes in the U.S. because of the Industrial Revolution?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Understanding Sequence

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that this article describes the sequence of events that led from home production of yarn and cloth to the construction of large factories. After reviewing the process, have students fill in the *Sequence of Events* graphic organizer listing specific events from the article in order.

ASSESS: Have students compare their organizer with the rest of the class and discuss any differences, especially how each student organized the information sequentially.

EXTEND

Engineering: Invite students to use print and digital sources to research one of the inventions used in the textile factories. Then have students choose an invention and construct a model of it, using materials of their choice.

Sequence of Events

Understanding the sequence of events helps to see how a historical event often develops from a series of smaller events over time. The development of the successful textile mills in Lowell, Massachusetts were the result of many small and large inventions that made the process possible. Look at the chart below. Starting with the invention of the spinning jenny, create a timeline of the inventions that made factory cloth production possible.

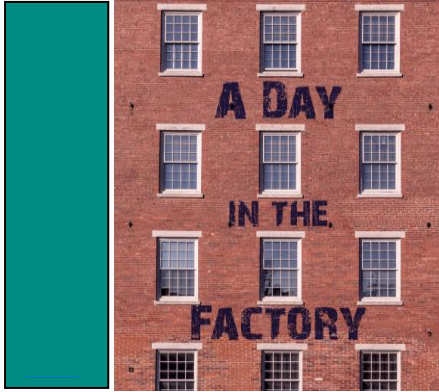
Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1764–1767• James Hargreaves invents the spinning jenny.
Event	
Event	
Event	
Event	
Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1823• Lowell's first mills open.

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A Day in the Factory

pp. 12–15, Expository Nonfiction

Use this article about an average day in the mills to understand the process of making cloth in a mill.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will explore the process of making cloth in a textile mill.
- Students will learn about the daily lives of the girls who worked at the mills.
- Students will write and perform a skit.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **current** (p. 13) a flow of air moving from one area to another
- **racket** (p. 14) a loud noise, especially one that is disturbing or confusing
- **shuttle** (p. 15) a wooden device with two pointed ends that holds a bobbin, used for carrying threads in weaving

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How does the development of the Lowell Mills reflect the development of the Industrial Revolution in America?

Ask students what an average day in their lives is like. Besides going to school, what other routines do they have for meals, chores, and leisure time? Now ask them to think about what it would be like to be the same age they are right now, but go to a job every day, all day, a job that requires close attention. Introduce the lives of the mill girls (and boys), who worked in textile mills for long hours, doing work that was often dangerous, and ask students to compare their own lives to those of these mill workers.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Define each word with students. Then have students work in small groups to create a word search puzzle using the vocabulary words plus at least five other words. Have groups trade and complete each other's puzzles. Finally, tell students to look for these words as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article. Then use these questions for discussion:

1. Why were young women and men required to work 13 hours a day every day? Why might young girls be good at the weaving process? (Think about small fingers and bodies to get into tight spaces.) Mention that there were no child labor laws at this time to limit the hours young people could work.
2. What does the article teach students about the process of weaving cloth? Can they explain the sequence?
3. What were some of the most dangerous things about working in the mills?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Understanding Point of View

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that this article describes mill work from the point of view of a girl who works there, and who earns money for her work. At this time, many girls were isolated on family farms, doing chores, with no money of their own. What might a farm girl want to learn about mill life?

ASSESS: Divide the class into small groups, and then have them write a skit where farm girls are asking mill girls what their lives are like to see if they too want to work in the mills. Discuss the pros and cons of mill life. Have each group perform their skit for the class.

EXTEND

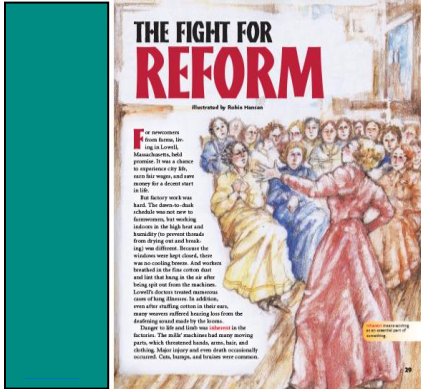
English: Invite students to use print and digital sources to research mill life, then write an imaginary letter from a mill girl to her family at home.

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The Fight for Reform

pp. 29–31, Expository Nonfiction

Use this article about the mill workers and their struggle to achieve reforms in the mills to discuss women's roles in creating changes in industry.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the reasons for labor reform.
- Students will explore the actions and motivations of mill owners.
- Students will participate in a debate.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **confrontation** (p. 30) a situation in which people or groups with opposite ideas or opinions disagree angrily
- **petition** (p. 30) a formal message that is submitted to an authority, requesting something
- **testify** (p. 31) to speak seriously about something, especially to tell what you know in a court of law

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How does the development of the Lowell Mills reflect the development of the Industrial Revolution in America?

Ask students if they have read about strikes or seen them taking place on the news. If so, what are some of the issues that people strike or protest about? Mention that strikes are often about working conditions, pay rates, or benefits like insurance. Then ask students if they think strikes and protests are an effective way to bring attention to an issue and create change. In what kinds of circumstances are strikes the last chance for getting something done?

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Define each word with students. Then ask each student to write a sentence in dialogue form (as if they are speaking to someone) that defines or illustrates the word. Have students share their sentences. Finally, tell students to look for these words as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article. Then use these questions for discussion:

1. What kinds of issues forced the mill workers to strike?
2. What were the reasons why some mill workers did not join the protests?
3. Why specifically was the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association formed?
4. What was unusual about young women speaking out and protesting? How did the public usually react to their actions?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Compare and Contrast

INSTRUCT: Discuss with students that this article describes the struggles of the mill girls for fairer working hours, conditions, and pay. Their strikes and protests were responding to the actions of the mill owners. Divide the class into two groups: one group will be mill workers, and the other group will be mill owners.

ASSESS: Have students engage in a debate between the two groups, over the need for better working conditions versus the need of mill owners to maintain their profits. Assess groups on the accuracy of their information and arguments.

EXTEND

Social Studies: Invite students to use print and digital sources to research other famous labor strikes or protests that specifically involved women, and choose one. Then have them create a poster that would have persuaded women to join in that protest.