

MOVING FROM AN AGRICULTURAL TO AN INDUSTRIAL WORLD

The Industrial Revolution was not fought between armies and governments—although there were periods of violence. From the late 1700s through the early 1900s, every aspect of day-to-day life in Europe and the United States was affected by the changes in industry, transportation, and manufacturing. People from this era were often shocked by what seemed to be constant changes in their lifestyles, influencing how they viewed the world around them. Writers often reflected on these changes and artists frequently incorporated industrial influences into their creations.

This lesson should be supplemental to a general introduction to the Industrial Revolution, as it focuses on how lifestyles changed as early technology and industry swept across Europe and the United States. It might be best to use this lesson before moving too far into a unit on the Industrial Revolution, since these images represent the period of change from an agricultural society to an industrial society.



Landscape, the Seat of Mr. Featherstonhaugh in the Distance, 1826

Thomas Cole, American

Oil on canvas

33 x 48 inches (83.8 x 121.9 cm)

125th Anniversary Acquisition. Gift of the McNeil

Americana Collection, 2004

2004-115-4

Curricular Areas

History and Art

Grade Level

For grades 7–12, adaptable for late elementary advanced classrooms

Common Core Academic Standards

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.1](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.2](#)

PA Academic Standards for Art

- 8.4.C: History – Influences of Continuity and Change in World History
- 9.2.D: Art – Historical and Cultural Contexts

Art Images Required

Click on the titles below to view high-resolution photographs on the Philadelphia Museum of Art website. Images that are available in the ARTstor Digital Library are indicated by an ID number or search phrase. Entering that number or phrase into the ARTstor search bar will direct you to the corresponding image in that database.

For more information, please contact Division of Education and Public Programs: School and Teacher Programs by phone at 215-684-7580, by fax at 215-236-4063, or by e-mail at educate@philamuseum.org.

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- [Landscape, the Seat of Mr. Featherstonhaugh in the Distance](#), 1826, by Thomas Cole
ARTstor search: 2004-115-4
- [The Bridge at Loosduinen](#), 1872, by Jacob Hendricus Maris
ARTstor search: PMA cat 1030
- [Railroad Bridge, Argenteuil](#), 1874, by Claude Monet
ARTstor search: PMA cat 1050
- [Breaking Home Ties](#), 1890, by Thomas Hovenden
ARTstor search: 1942-60-1
- [Silver Tanks and Moon](#), 1930, by Arthur Garfield Dove
ARTstor search: Not available
- [The City](#), 1919, by Fernand Léger
ARTstor search: 1952-61-58

Lesson Process

PART 1

1. Examine the 1826 painting *Landscape, the Seat of Mr. Featherstonhaugh in the Distance* by the British-born American artist Thomas Cole. Have students describe what they see, either through discussion or in writing. Remind them that every choice an artist makes is deliberate, and with that in mind, have students look again for small details. (Can they see the estate in the distance?) Ask: Does this painting of an agricultural setting evoke positive or negative feelings? Is Cole celebrating nature or industry in this painting?
2. Have students discuss or write about this painting from the point of view of someone who is witnessing and processing the changes in their world as it moves from an agricultural society to an industrial society. How might such a person react to such an ideal (or even ironic) scene?
3. Next, examine the painting *The Bridge at Loosduinen* (1872) by the Dutch painter Jacob Hendricus Maris. Ask students if this painting offers a positive view of agricultural life or a positive view of coming industrialization. What clues do they see in the painting that led them to their conclusions?
4. Look at the 1874 painting *Railroad Bridge, Argenteuil* by the French painter Claude Monet. What aspects of rural or agricultural life do your students see and what images of industrialization? Does Monet seem to be neutral in his feelings about agricultural or industrial life, or does he seem to favor one over the other? Have students identify what details of the painting helped them to form their conclusions.
5. Finally, take a close look at Irish-born American painter Thomas Hovenden's *Breaking Home Ties* (1890). After students discuss what might be happening in this evocative family scene, inform them that a common source of family conflict in the late 1800s involved the young men who were leaving family farms to find work in cities. Discuss Hovenden's view of industrial change in this painting.

PART 2

1. At this point, have students (either individually or in small groups) visit the Museum's website to search the collections. Students should search for works that seem to include either agricultural or industrial details—ideally, both in the same work. (Tip: Several such works can be found by searching for the artist Winslow Homer.)

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2. Either in written form or as a presentation, ask students to describe the details of the artwork they have chosen and explain whether the work seems to be pro-agriculture, pro-industry, or neutral.

Assessment

1. Examine the painting *Silver Tanks and Moon* (1930) by the American artist Arthur Garfield Dove. While this painting seems very simple, remind students that Dove has made many deliberate choices here. Considering as much, can students discern Dove's reaction to industry? Engage in a brief discussion about interpretations of the artist's point of view. Next, assign an analysis of this work as it relates to the topic of man's place in an industrial world.
2. As an alternative, you may opt to examine the 1919 painting *The City* by French painter Fernand Léger. Even though this painting is very abstract, remind students of the title as they look closely. Have them write or discuss any conclusions about an industrial society from this work.

Enrichment

1. Ask students to create a sketch that shows the contrast of agricultural and industrial objects or lifestyles, and challenge them to explain the choices they made and the intended theme their sketch was meant to portray