



How Farming Changes Sparked the Industrial Revolution

KS4 HISTORY

Ages 11-14 ⌚ 4 min read

Why Farming Mattered So Much

Before the **Industrial Revolution** began around **1760**, most people in **Britain** worked on farms. Families grew crops and raised animals just to survive. But then something changed: new farming methods meant fewer people were needed to grow the same amount of food. This sounds small, but it was massive.

The Agricultural Revolution

Farmers started using clever new ideas. **Jethro Tull** invented a machine called the **seed drill** that planted seeds in neat rows instead of throwing them everywhere. This saved seeds and helped plants grow better. Farmers also began rotating crops—planting different things in different fields each year—which made the soil better instead of wearing it out.

People also started breeding animals more carefully, choosing the biggest and healthiest cows and sheep to have babies together. These improvements meant farms produced more food than ever before.

Think of it like upgrading from riding your bike slowly to riding a super-fast bike—you cover the same distance but use much less energy.

Workers Needed Elsewhere

Here's the clever bit: if one farmer could now feed a whole village using new machines and methods, what happened to all the other farm workers? They didn't have jobs anymore. Thousands of people moved from the countryside to towns looking for work.

This was perfect timing. Factory owners in towns needed workers for their new machines and mills. People who had been farmers became factory workers instead. Without the **Agricultural Revolution** freeing up this workforce, there wouldn't have been enough hands to power the **Industrial Revolution**.

Think of it like a relay race where one runner finishes early and passes the baton to the next runner—farming success handed over to factory success.

More Food, More People

Better farming also meant better food supplies. Families were healthier and had more children who survived into adulthood. **Britain's population grew from about 5 million in 1700 to 9 million by 1800.** More people meant more customers for factory products and more workers to make them.

So the **Agricultural Revolution** wasn't just about better turnips and happier cows—it completely changed Britain's future, making the **Industrial Revolution** possible.