PROGRESSIVISME

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From 1870 to 1900 the United States became the world’s foremost industrial nation. It emerged as the leader in meatpacking, in production of timber and steel, and in the mining of coal, iron, gold, and silver.

Overall, the nation experienced a stunning explosion in the scale of industry and in the pace of production.

By the turn of the century, industrialization had transformed commerce, business organization, the environment, the workplace, the home, and everyday life.
Early Industrial Plant

- As the Industrial Revolution spread to the United States, plants such as this textile factory appeared. From 1870 to 1900 the United States became the world’s foremost industrial nation. Industrial growth was fueled by abundant resources, cheap labor, and technological advances.

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Many factors fueled industrial growth in the late 19th century: abundant resources, new technology, cheap energy, fast transport, and the availability of capital and labor.

Mines, forests, and livestock in the west provided raw materials for major industries, as did iron in Ohio and oil in Pennsylvania. Railroad expansion enabled businesses to move raw materials to factories and to send products to urban markets. A steady stream of immigrants arrived to work in America’s mines and factories.
Division of Labor in Industry

- Division of labor is a basic tenet of industrialization. In division of labor, each worker is assigned to a different task, or step, in the manufacturing process, and as a result, total production increases. As this illustration shows, one person performing all five steps in the manufacture of a product can make one unit in a day. Five workers, each specializing in one of the five steps, can make 10 units in the same amount of time.
• Technological advances transformed production. The new machine-tool industry, which turned out drilling, cutting, and milling machines, sped up manufacturing. A trail of inventions, including the telephone, typewriter, linotype, phonograph, electric light, cash register, air brake, refrigerator car, and automobile, led to new industries.

• Finally, business leaders learned how to operate and coordinate many different economic activities across broad geographic areas. Businesses were thus able to become larger, and the modern corporation became an important form of business organization. For more information, see Industrial Revolution: The Industrial Revolution in the United States.
In the 19th century, states reduced the requirements for businesses to incorporate. A corporation is a form of business partnership; it is a legal entity that is distinct from the individuals who control it.

The corporation (not the individual partners) is responsible for repaying the corporation’s debts; this is known as limited liability.

The corporate form of business organization made it possible for entrepreneurs to finance large-scale enterprises because corporations issue stock, certificates representing shares of ownership in a corporation.

By issuing stock, a corporation can enable thousands of individuals to pool financial resources and invest in a new venture.
Businesses also grew by combining into trusts. In a trust, a small group of business people, called trustees, acquire enough shares in several competing firms to control those companies.

The trustees are then able to manage and direct a group of companies in a unified way—in effect, creating a single firm out of competing firms. The trustees could prevent competition among the firms that were part of the trust. A leading example was the Standard Oil Trust, formed in Ohio in 1882 by John D. Rockefeller and his associates. Within a decade, trusts dominated many industries.
The trend toward large-scale production changed the structure of the labor force and the nature of work. From 1870 to 1900, as the industrial work force expanded, the unskilled worker replaced the artisan or autonomous craftsperson.

The typical workplace was more likely to be a large factory than a small workshop. Striving for efficiency, employers replaced skilled labor with machines and low-paid workers. Factory tasks became specialized, repetitive, and monotonous.
The need for unskilled labor drew women and children into the industrial work force. Some performed piecework, work paid for according to the amount produced rather than the hours worked, in crowded tenements; others operated machinery in textile mills and garment plants. Industrial labor in the late 19th century was often hazardous. Workers lacked protection against industrial accidents, long hours, wage cuts, layoffs, and sudden bouts of unemployment.
Child Labor in Vermont

- As the United States became more industrial, the need for unskilled labor increased. Often factories used children as workers. Addie Laird, a 12-year-old girl, worked along with many other children in Vermont’s spinning mills.

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DAMPAK INDUSTRIALISASI

• Three decades of industrial progress transformed American life. By 1900 the United States had an advanced industrial economy, dominated by big corporations. The corporation harnessed ingenuity, created unprecedented wealth, and spurred the growth of new cities such as Chicago, Atlanta, Minneapolis, and Dallas. It increased foreign trade. The value of exports doubled from 1877 to 1900; imports rose, too, but less rapidly.

• Industrial progress revolutionized the marketing of goods and transformed the office world, now filled with clerical workers, bureaucrats, and middle managers. It also transformed homes by introducing indoor plumbing, electric lights, and household appliances. Overall, industrialization made available labor-saving products, lower prices for manufactured goods, advances in transportation, and higher living standards.
Industrialization had liabilities as well. It brought about vast disparities of wealth and unreliable business cycles, in which overproduction and depression alternated.

The economy lurched between boom and panic, as in the 1870s and 1890s; bankruptcy became a common event, especially among indebted railroads that had overbuilt.

For laborers, industrialization meant competition for jobs, subsistence wages, insecurity, and danger. Children worked in coal mines and cotton mills; women labored in tenement sweatshops; workers faced the prospect of industrial accidents and illnesses such as respiratory diseases.
Industrialization also exploited natural resources and damaged the environment. Refiners and steel mills spewed oil into rivers and smoke into the atmosphere.

Finally, industrialization brought a relentless drive for efficiency and profit that led to ever larger, more powerful businesses and gave the corporate elite undue power in national politics. In the 1890s business leaders’ need for yet larger markets led to pressure on the United States to expand overseas.