

SSWH15 Describe the Impact of Industrialization and Urbanization



Element C: Examine the social impact of urbanization, include: women and children.

Urbanization

- The cities of industrialized nations grew at unprecedented rates in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The impact of this rapid urbanization varied greatly by class.
 - Families that owned and managed businesses enjoyed large homes, new churches, museums, trolley systems, and theaters all paid for with the profits from industrialization.
 - Women in wealthy or middle class families might work for a few years before marriage but once married most conformed to the social norms of the day, called "Victorian morality" by historians.
- These social norms were based on the principle of separate spheres.
 - According to this idea, men were uniquely suited for the demands of business while women best fulfilled the role of homemaker, mother, and moral arbiter of the family.
 - The role of moral arbiter did give some women the opportunity to pursue leadership roles outside of the home in the many reform movements that emerged in this period.
- Some wealthy and middle class women became important leaders in reform movements.
 - Among other things, these movements worked to end slavery, limit the use of alcohol, end child labor, improve the life of the urban poor, and win the vote for women.
 - The children of wealth and middle class families, particularly boys, received quality educations that prepared them to work in the same roles as their parents.



Urbanization

- For the working class, cities were crowded, pollution was common, housing was small and poorly built, and municipal infrastructure supported business interests more than quality of life.
 - Rapid growth meant that urban planning was unusual and most cities were made up of narrow winding streets, shoddy construction, and lacked or had inadequate city services like water, sewers and policing.
 - This made urban life dangerous for the working class.
 - Disease and fire were common and working class neighborhoods were often so dangerous that they received nicknames like Hell's Kitchen.
 - Wages among the working class kept families in poverty and forced women and children into the workforce.
 - A typical urban factory worker spent fourteen to sixteen hours on the job.
 - This transformed family life like never before in human history.
 - In agricultural societies, peasant families typically worked together and work hours that varied by season. Now men, women and their children worked in different facilities for most of the day year round.


