Directions: Use the information in this section to highlight differences between old and new methods of production.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work patterns before the Industrial Revolution</th>
<th>Work patterns after the Industrial Revolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>simple tools and machines, such as looms and spinning wheels</td>
<td>standardized, manufactured items made in factories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one part fits with only one other part</td>
<td>hundreds of unskilled laborers working side-by-side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working hours depend upon employer and processing stage</td>
<td>any one worker completed only part of the end product</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*United States History*
Section Activity Sheet — Chapter 9

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Factory Life

What was the Industrial Revolution?

A revolution is an important and dramatic change from the way things were done in the past. The period in history when factories began mass-producing goods is called the Industrial Revolution. Factories played an important role in the rapid economic growth and development of the United States and greatly changed the way products were made and the way people lived.

How did the Industrial Revolution change the way products were made?

- Before factories began using mass-production techniques, most goods were made in people's homes. Things like soap, furniture, clothing, and machine parts were all handmade. For example, one person had to work a long time to build a cabinet by hand. Each panel, knob, and hinge had to be carefully crafted.

- After the Industrial Revolution, cabinets could be made in a factory. Rather than having one person make an entire cabinet, several people made different standardized parts that would fit any of the same kind of cabinets. For example, one person might cut the doors, another shape the knobs, and still another make the hinges. Finally, another worker would assemble the cabinets.

How did factory-made products compare with handmade products?

Factory-made products were mass-produced quickly and inexpensively, and the products were uniform in shape and size. In contrast, handmade products were produced very slowly. Though often finely done, these products varied in size and shape because they were made by different craftspeople.

What was life like for factory workers? How did they seek better conditions?

Working conditions varied but were generally difficult. Many New England factories employed women, young children, or even entire families. By 1830 most factory owners were searching for ways to make larger profits, which often meant cutting wages and increasing the workday from 13 to 15 hours. Because of these changes, many workers formed organizations called labor unions to help improve working conditions. Unions succeeded because many workers acting as a group had more power than workers acting alone. Separate unions were formed for men and women. Often these unions printed their own newspapers, established libraries, and helped workers who went on strike. Improvements came slowly, but by 1840 the federal government had reduced the workday of federal employees to 10 hours.

For more information on factory life or industry in America, see the Working Conditions Source Reading or the Samuel Slater Biography on the Exploring America's Past CD-ROM.