

BRITAIN'S POWER FROM 1850 TO 1914

1. Selecting and ordering data

Document	<i>Britain's industrial and technical superiority</i>	<i>A society undergoing profound changes</i>	<i>The evolution of Britain's domination</i>
<p># 1 <i>"Technical ingenuity boosts new industries"</i> (Text, 1851)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ British industrial production is really huge, and dominates other country's one (especially in metals production), ✓ The production's efficiency has been improved thanks to "labour-saving devices", reduction of costs and bigger volume of production, ✓ New technologies are developed; new processes are discovered (paper-folding machine, ...). Those discoveries are used in industry to enhance efficiency and precision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Industries supply new equipments and machines that improve the British way of life (railway equipment, gas and water pipes, locomotives). 	
<p># 2 <i>"Dundee booms as 'jute capital of word'"</i> (text – 1883)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Britain pays attention to textiles that are required by army and the growing population. ✓ The labour-force is considerable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The population is increasing greatly (multiplied by 5 in Dundee), because of the important economic growth, ✓ Two antagonistic classes appear: a few bosses managing the industry, who possess the capitals, and the workers who live in poverty, ✓ Most of the workers are women (they get lower wages). 	

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# 3 "Quelques indicateurs de l'industrialisation" (Comparative data table)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The part of British industrial production in worldwide industrial production is very important during the second half of the 19th century (Almost 1/3), ✓ In the beginning of the 20th century (1913), this part decreases: Britain is competed by Germany or France.
# 4 "Les principales régions industrielles vers 1880" (Map)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The British main activities are very varied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coal extraction, ▪ Steel industry, ▪ Textiles industry. <p>Those industries produce necessary materials for transports (trains, boats), development of others industries (metallic machines and engines), army (weapons), clothes...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Some humongous industrial centres appear; a massive population concentrates inside (for instance London's population reaches 1,800,000 inhabitants in 1880). 	
# 5 "Britain's position as top industrial power threatened" (Text, 1887)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In 1887, the rate of growth of industrial production is slowing because foreign countries supply their own needs. ✓ The trade of industrial products is less profitable because of competition and foreign duties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There has been a drift away from the land: the importance of farming has diminished during Victoria's reign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Britain's industrial superiority declines at the end of the 19th century. ✓ Britain, which has lost its first position in industry, becomes a capitalist country (massive investment overseas especially in shipping, insurance and banking).

2. Analysing data - synthesis.

Britain acquires a real power on Europe and on the world between 1850 and 1914. This superiority is especially an industrial superiority, thanks to new techniques and discoveries, to a social organisation permitting economical growth and a very important production adapted to the needs. At first we note that industrial production is enormous for this time and dominate worldwide economy. Britain's production is focused on metals (iron and steel), textiles (jute, cotton and wool), and coal. Those raw materials are very used during 19th century for the development of economy, and Britain, that is highly industrialized and advanced, export them in other countries that are not still able to produce themselves what they need. In fact those industries represent "strategic activities" that make profits. This production is a real commercial advantage for Britain. Moreover discoveries and advanced technologies give to the industry an important help: new machines improve labour efficiency and reduce the production costs; therefore the industries are more profitable. Quotidian life is also nicer thanks to new transports and better sanitary conditions. Some profound social changes are linked to this economical power. The population increases quickly and concentrates in big industrial cities, because of better life conditions compared to the country and jobs given by industries, which need a massive labour-force. The importance of farming decreases: Britain becomes little by little an industrial society. Rich people or wealthy families supply the capitals. They are richer and richer, whereas workers have a laborious and difficult life. Women are employed, but they get lower wages. This industrial dominance lasts until the end of the 19th century, and decreases afterwards. At the beginning of the 20th century, Britain is competed by other emergent industrial countries, like the United States or Germany. Britain becomes a more capitalist than industrial power, because of colossal investments overseas in its colonies and in America. Those investments, concerning transports (ships, trains), trade and banks, will assure the prosperity and the power of Britain for a long time.