

The Industrial Revolution in the UK (according to Jeremy Black)

Watch the video!

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMV3E7wb24c>

General question:

Why did the Industrial Revolution happen in Britain?

- 1) Coal = potent fuel; coal close to the sea (easy to transport), development of pumps driven by steam engines
- 2) Psychological factors: profit drive, intellectually stimulating climate (no censorship), scientific breakthroughs in the 17th century by people such as I. Newton and Th. Newcomen, evidence above dogma → classic age of knowledge (industrial enlightenment with the 'Royal Society' and the 'Lunar Society')
- 3) Money available for industrial enterprise
- 4) Interest in practical applications of science
- 5) highly skilled workforce available
- 6) Factories were set up and new production technologies were made use of. ('Production was released from the constraints of natural power.')
- 7) quest for improvements: railways, steam ships
- 8) liberal and economic climate: Parliament controlled state expenditure + rule of law = security for private investments; competition allowed ('survival of the fittest') and abolition of monopolies
- 9) realisation that in the world wealth is not finite and can be created
- 10) The government helped accumulate money.
- 11) Rise in the consumption of the middle classes
- 12) development of marketing of products in showrooms
- 13) building of roads (1706: turnpike act) → connecting industrial centres and not military ones
- 14) building of canals (H. Wedgwood petitioned Parliament so to do) → engineering feats
- 15) run after everything new
- 16) imperialism (the colonies and trade were protected by the Royal Navy): sugar cane from the West Indies, tobacco and rice from North America, cotton from North America and India, spices from India, tea from China reached Britain and were processed / refined there
- 17) Wealth was produced in and with the colonies and reinvested in Britain.
- 18) slavery (cheap labour) until 1807 (abolition of slavery in the British Empire)

Task: Is there anything missing? –

Compare this list of reasons with the list of factors by Steven Kreis.