

Sample Reading Test

Directions: The passage below is followed by 8 questions. After reading the passage, choose the best answer to each question and blacken the corresponding space on your answer sheet. You may look back at the passage as often as you wish.

The Industrial Revolution got under way first in England. This is a historical fact of the utmost significance, for it explains in large part England's primary role in world affairs in the nineteenth century. Consequently, the question of why the Industrial Revolution began where it did is of much more than academic interest.

The problem may be simplified by eliminating those countries that could not, for one reason or another, have generated the Industrial Revolution. Italy at one time had been an economic leader, but had dropped behind with the Discoveries and the shift of the main trade routes from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. Spain had been economically predominant in the sixteenth century but had then lost out to the northwestern states for various reasons already noted. Holland had enjoyed her Golden Age in the seventeenth century, but she lacked the raw materials, labor resources, and water power necessary for machine production. The various countries of Central and Eastern Europe had been little affected by the Commercial Revolution and hence, did not develop the technical skills, the trade markets and the capital reserves needed for industrialization.

This leaves only France and Britain as possible leaders, and of the two, England had certain advantages that enabled her to forge far ahead of her rival. In commerce, for example, the two countries were about equal in 1763, or if anything, France was somewhat in the lead. But France had a population three times that of England.

France also lost ground in foreign trade when she was driven out of Canada and India in 1763. Furthermore, the blockade of the British fleet during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars reduced French commerce to about half its 1788 value, and the loss was not restored until 1825.

Another important advantage enjoyed by Britain is that she had taken an early lead in the basic coal and iron industries. Because the forest reserves were being depleted, Britain early began using coal for fuel and for smelting iron. By the time of the French Revolution in 1789, Britain was producing about 10 million tons of coal per year, while France was producing 700,000 tons. A contemporary poet sensed the significance of this unlimited source of power for English industry when he wrote:

England's a perfect World! has Indies too!

Correct your Maps! New-castle is Peru.

England also pioneered in the development of the blast furnace which, in contrast to the old forges, could mass-produce irons. In 1780 Britain's iron output had been a third that of France; by 1840, it was three times more. All this meant that Britain was pushing ahead in the production of goods of mass consumption for which there was a large and steady demand; whereas, France specialized more in luxury commodities of limited and fluctuating demand. Perhaps Voltaire had this in mind when he wrote in 1735, "In truth we are the whipped cream of Europe."

From L. S. Stavrianos, The World Since 1500: A Global History

1. The word forge, as it is used in the third paragraph means:
 - A. make use of the blast furnace.
 - B. alter in order to deceive.
 - C. move forward steadily.
 - D. produce wrought iron.
2. In comparing the economic development of England and France, the passage shows that:
 - A. England and France were essentially equals until the middle of the nineteenth century.

- B. France modeled itself on the examples of Italy and Spain, while England modeled itself on the example of Holland.
 - C. England gained most of its capital reserves from the spoils of war, while France gained its capital reserves from trade.
 - D. England began on an equal base with France in the middle of the eighteenth century, but pulled far ahead by the middle of the nineteenth century.
3. What reason does the author give for discussing several countries besides England and France?
- A. Enriching the information provided in the passage
 - B. Balancing the passage in the interest of fairness
 - C. Simplifying the problem confronted in the passage
 - D. Eliminating countries whose Golden Age was yet to come
4. The passage suggests that generating the first Industrial Revolution required which of the following?
- I. Raw materials
 - II. Technical skills
 - III. A large population
- A. I only
 - B. III only
 - C. I and II only
 - D. II and III only
5. The author asserts that England's primary role in world affairs in the nineteenth century can be explained in large part by:
- A. the Industrial Revolution getting under way in England first.
 - B. England's overwhelming naval power.
 - C. the decline of Italy, Spain, Holland, and Central and Eastern Europe.
 - D. England's unlimited source of power to fuel its industry .
6. The passage suggests that one indication of a country's success in industrializing was:
- A. an educational system that could produce a steady supply of skilled workers.
 - B. an ability to satisfy a large market for necessary, rather than luxury, goods.
 - C. a forest reserve that could be rapidly and efficiently replenished.
 - D. a fluctuating demand for luxury, rather than necessary, goods.
7. According to the passage, France was compared to whipped cream by:
- A. an unnamed contemporary poet.
 - B. Voltaire.
 - C. Napoleon.
 - D. L.S. Stavrianos.
8. The main idea of the passage is that:
- A. certain conditions gave England an advantage over other countries in industrializing.
 - B. with its conquest of Canada in 1763, England controlled the raw materials necessary for industrialization.
 - C. the English preferred quantity in their goods, while the French demanded quality.
 - D. England's primary position in international affairs gave it the wealth and influence necessary for industrialization.