



GET CREATIVE  
WITH ART ONLINE

MODULE No: 4 of 8

# WORK and INDUSTRY

- Lesson Background for Teachers -



## LESSON AIMS and OBJECTIVES

- To think about all different types of work and how industry has changed over time
- To think about women in the workplace
- To consider work in the past, compare to modern times and in the future

## FOCUS

Art, Drama, Language (SMSC) Spiritual, moral, social, cultural understanding

## AGE RANGE

Ages 9 – 11 (Adaptable for younger or older pupils)

## SKILLS

Analytical Thinking/ Creativity/ Perception/ Self Awareness

# Theme: Work and Industry

## What do we think of when we think of it?

When we think of work and industry, we probably think of the different jobs that people do and all the different places where they do them, such as the home, the factory, the office, shops and schools.

But, in early times, all work was on the land. Over time, farming largely replaced hunting, as a way to produce enough food. This was known as the 'agrarian economy'. Later, as production improved and inventions progressed, in many places, societies moved from the countryside to ones based on large-scale industry in cities.

The industrial revolution marks the period of development in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that transformed largely agrarian societies in Europe and America into industrialized, urban ones.

Factories and mass production in the textiles industry were born. Often these factories were noisy, dark and dangerous, with long work hours and poor conditions.

Today, our digital society means better tools for lifting, robots that deal with technical issues and of course computers. And we now understand the need for workplace 'health and safety', equal working rights for men and women and for 'work-life balance'.

# Why is it important?

Work is important, both for societies to grow and progress and on a personal level. Industry produces much of what we need to live well and allows us to prosper. Work can also give us our personal and social identity, our mental well-being -- and the means to make money so we can access the goods and services we need.

Most people will need a job throughout their life and men and women should have equal rights in the labour market according to law.

Before the industrial revolution, most women worked at home or on the land, often for low or no pay. While women were not usually thought competent to oversee a factory, many women (and children) were exploited in the early factories because their small hands made them better suited to working the first machines.

In today's labour market, the working environment has improved in many countries. We focus on the value that industry and work can produce while also considering the work environment. Wellbeing at work and production sustainability have a higher priority.

# How does it affect our lives/ our world?

Having no job or only low quality, low earning work can have a devastating effect, both on a personal level and on the level of prosperity of a community. Doing a job we enjoy and find satisfying can provide a meaningful focus for our lives, as well as an income. Our standard of living usually relies on the amount of money we make, while employment often contributes to our self-image and self-esteem. We find that the places with a higher quality of life are usually those with high tech, efficient industries which bring resources and prosperity to their communities.

At the same time, industrial processes can have negative environmental impacts, causing climate change, loss of natural resources, air and water pollution and extinction of species. These threaten the global environment as well as economic and social welfare. The Covid pandemic has made us even more aware of the need to find a balance.

# Did you know .....

- The term 'sustainable business' is used to describe the work of companies which has a positive impact on society, the environment or the economy. Increasingly, it also refers to having a minimal impact of the Earth's resources. Gender equality is an important aspect of the way companies work with sustainable business.

- Life expectancy at birth in the EU was estimated at **81.3 years in 2019**. A hundred years ago, this was only 45 years. Both health promotion and improvements in the working environment have led to the change.
- Corruption has been identified by the World Bank as one of the greatest threats to growth.

## HOW MIGHT AN ARTIST PORTRAY 'WORK and INDUSTRY'?

Work and industry can be shown in Art in many ways. How will depend on the times being depicted.

Many traditional artworks display farming life and hard work on the land. Some paintings show women working at home on domestic work. Mining and fishing are also common themes in traditional paintings in areas blessed with natural resources.

The colours used tend to vary, depending on the environment. Often, artworks depicting industrial practices use dark colours that mirror the dirty environments they are recording. Photographic style realism may be necessary to show the intricacies of complicated machinery, although more abstract styles may capture the energy and 'force' of factory processes.

Capturing images of metals, liquids and glass or finding ways to represent the noise, smell and 'energy' of industrial practices can require many varied techniques. These help us appreciate the sensations of the workplace.

## OUR MAIN ARTWORK



- Title: THE LITTLE BREWERY (Lilla Bryggeriet)
- Artist: ANDERS ZORN 1860-1920 Swedish
- Medium: Oil on Canvas
- Dimensions: 47.5 x 78 cm
- Date Completed: 1890
- Location Displayed: The National Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden
- Web link: <https://digitaltmuseum.se/021046502991/lilla-bryggeriet>
- How / When was it acquired by the gallery? Bought 1992

### How does it communicate 'WORK AND INDUSTRY'?

THE LITTLE BREWERY captures the energy and atmosphere of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century factory, where an all-female workforce is producing beer for the community. The picture focuses on working women who are pouring beer into bottles.

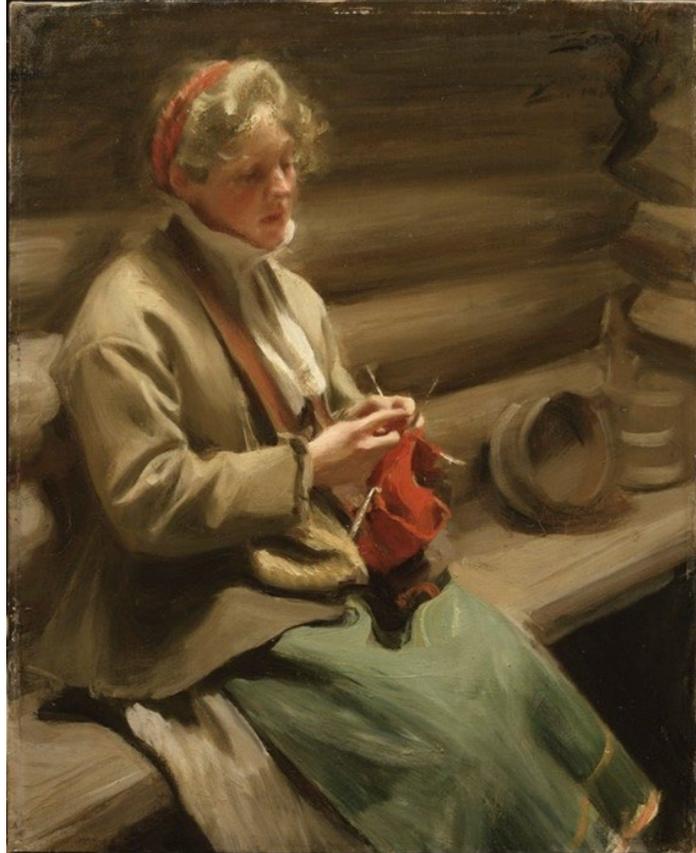
In the background, the male foreman is supervising the work.

The picture communicates the stresses of the dark, narrow premises, but also shows the supportive connections between the workers gathered together in one common pursuit.

The work was heavy and unhealthy. However, the artist, Anders Zorn, was as interested in capturing the light, the humidity and the concentrated activity, as in describing the heavy work. He is better known for his painting of water, using water colour techniques able to capture the fast flow and shining reflections. So, this painting of a stuffy workplace was not typical of his work.

## IN CONTEXT

Are there other works by the same artist (or others) that help us understand it more?



Anders Zorn also painted, 'Dalecarlian Girl Knitting', which captures the working life of one Swedish woman in a traditional wooden house. In pre-industrialized times, with no machinery to help, homemakers spent every minute working. They switched between caring for the family's flock of sheep and endless household chores like cooking, sewing and caretaking. This quieter setting allows for a more detailed picture.



In the same period, as Zorn presented a female workforce making beer in 'The Little Brewery', famous French artist, Edouard Manet painted 'Corner of a Café Concert' in 1879. In this, he also showed more women in beer related work, but this time at the end of the production, serving the beer. The waitress works to deliver it to customers in the foreground, while a dancer (yet another woman worker) provides the entertainment in the background. Again, the brushwork is fast to give an impression of the energy of the scene, rather than to show every detail.



Production machines fill Laura Knight's 'Ruby Loftus Screwing a Breechring' from 1943. Painted during World War 2, it shows worker Ruby at an industrial lathe, working to assemble an anti-aircraft gun. While the working women produce beer in Zorn's 'The Little Brewery', here weapons of war are the end products. And with many men away on the battlefield, the female workforce dominated industry on the home front—as this artwork depicts.

# OTHER ARTWORKS THAT SAY SOMETHING ABOUT 'WORK and INDUSTRY'



From Greece

- Title: DESOLATE PLANT
- Artist: Charatsidis Savvas 1925 – 1994, Greek
- Date Completed: Unknown
- Location Displayed: THE NATIONAL GALLERY, ATHENS, GR

## What it says about 'Work and Industry'

While 'The Little Brewery' shows the activity and energy of the working women in their factory, 'Desolate Plant' presents the machinery and buildings of an industrial environment once the work has stopped. The atmosphere is quiet and calm, but somehow the artist makes a beautiful landscape from the factories and chimneys which could easily look ugly.



From United Kingdom

- Title: MEN OF THE DOCKS
- Artist: George Bellows 1882 -- 1925, American
- Date Completed: 1912
- Location Displayed: THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON, UK

## What it says about 'Work and Industry'

One reviewer wrote that the painting tries to, "evoke something of the raw and unbeautiful energy of the urban experience in what was at the time, one of the world's fastest growing cities" -- through its "wilful awkwardness and brutality". The group of men are most likely New York day labourers, waiting to unload the ships behind them. But this meant waiting in the cold and grime to be called forward for work whenever it became available, while all the while the great ships and the city seem to bear down on them.



From Italy

- Title: IL COSTRUTTORE (The Builder)
- Artist: Mario Sironi 1885 – 1961, Italian
- Date Completed: 1936
- Location Displayed: NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART, ROME, IT

## What it says about 'Work and Industry'

The worker appears to be in a calm and fragile panorama of an industrial landscape. In a very energetic way, he constructs the wall. But the artist seems to be questioning progress, as the wall he is building looks like it might grow so big that it overwhelms him. What is the price of never-ending work and industry?

# PUPIL ACTIVITIES:

## (POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES TO USE AS APPROPRIATE WITH YOUR PUPILS)

Teachers can choose from each category below or devise their own – or different activities, like creating computer generated images, a piece of music/ song/ rap inspired by art or researching other galleries or pieces of art they feel illustrate this theme.

## ART ACTIVITIES

Acrylic paints are very versatile. They dry quickly and over time and can be used to build up 3-dimensional layers to give depth and character. Using this technique, imagine an active factory landscape and build up layers of paint to make a realistic representation of the massive buildings, the noisy machinery and the billowing smoke. Choose the colours and viewpoint which best capture the industrial environment.

*Link to Toolbox*

Collage -- or the combining of photos, magazine clippings and small objects onto a surface -- is another way to construct a 3-dimensional representation of a busy factory. Select and tick down as many different textures and images as you can to make a collage of an imaginary, industrial workplace. *Link to Toolbox*

Using modern technology, such as an I-Pad or cell phone, take a picture of a workplace or of someone you know working. Think about all the aspects you can control to ensure you capture the best possible representation of 'work' in Art. e.g. the lighting, the angle, the composition etc. *Link to Toolbox*

Marketing the goods produced by industry is an important step in the production cycle. Design your own label for your favourite drink. Make it eye catching and informative and think about how it might be effective to generate maximum sale.

*Link to Toolbox*

## LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

Become a journalist. Create a news item about a situation in a factory. Write supporting words to explain what happened, to who, how, when and why. Then, present your story to the class in under 2 minutes.

Use the picture you made of a worker or workplace to inspire you to write a story, or a description of that person or place.

Create a recipe for a new food that could be produced in a local factory and sold all over the world. Working in pairs, choose the type of dish (sweet or savoury), the ingredients, the recipe and the techniques needed to combine them all into something delicious. Write everything down and combine all the recipes into a class 'Cookbook'.

## DRAMA ACTIVITY / Circle Time

In groups of 5-6 choose a machine which is used in our everyday life (it can be a Hoover, a boiler, a laptop, a washing machine, etc). Consider its use and its different parts and try to recreate it, using your bodies, movement and sound. Present it to the rest of the class. It will be interesting to be able to understand how the final product can be actually produced (symbolically) in front of everyone's eyes!

What would happen if the machine started to work on different modes (rhythms)? Very fast? Or on slow mode? One person gives the rhythm as a maestro, and the machine changes rhythms accordingly. What would happen if the machine overworked so hard that went on break down? Improvise!

In groups of 5 or 6, imagine a factory full of busy machinery. Take it in turns to use your bodies and the sounds you make to act out the movement and bustle of your industrial site. What is your purpose? What is your factory making? See if your classmates can guess.

## USEFUL RESOURCES:

**Industrialization, Labour and life/ National Geographic Society Teaching plan, 2020**

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/article/industrialization-labor-and-life/6th-grade/>

**Britannica Online Encyclopaedia – The Industrial Revolution**

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Europe/The-Industrial-Revolution>

**Artist, Anders Zorn: A YouTube collection of 120 paintings**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OgV0WY1lihU>

**The Anders Zorn Museum, Sweden**

<https://zorn.se/en/>

**How To Paint with Acrylics (WikiHow)**

<https://www.wikihow.com/Paint-With-Acrylics#>