The Industrial Revolution began in Britain. Britain had plenty of natural resources and many workers for the new factories. The British overseas empire made the economy strong. As a result, the middle class had money to invest in mines, railroads, and factories.

During the early Industrial Revolution, iron and coal were very important. Iron was needed to produce machines and steam engines. In 1709, the British began using coal instead of wood for fuel in the production of iron. Experiments led to the invention of the steam engine that powered the production of iron that was cheaper and stronger.

The textile industry was the first to use inventions of the Industrial Revolution. In the 1600s, families spun raw cotton into thread and then wove the thread into cloth at home. By the 1700s, new machines allowed people to make cloth much faster. However, the machines were too large and expensive to be operated at home. Instead, people built factories in long sheds that became the first factories.

As production increased, people needed a faster and cheaper means of transportation to move goods from place to place. In the 1700s, people built turnpikes (privately built roads) that charged a fee to travelers who used them. Canals and stronger bridges improved the steam engine that powered boats along canals. Most important, the invention of the steam locomotive made the growth of railroads possible.

Graphic Summary: Travel Time to London

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1750</th>
<th>1830</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advances in transportation during the Industrial Revolution made travel between cities much faster.

Review Questions

1. Give two reasons why the Industrial Revolution began in Britain.