

Background

The industrialization and urbanization that took place in the 19th century led to the creation of standardized working hours for the American working class. This meant that for the first time, millions of Americans had guaranteed hours of leisure time every week. People began to seek new activities to share with family and friends during their free time.

At this same moment, early improvements in printing and papermaking made board games one of the first forms of popular entertainment of the industrial era. They were the perfect way for families to entertain themselves and the demand for children's board games increased slowly through the end of the century. Board games like *The Mansion of Happiness* did more than just entertain—they reinforced social values.

Task

Introduce students to the ways the Industrial Revolution changed life in the U.S. and consider both the positive and negative outcomes of the Industrial Revolution. Then, guide students through the creation of a board game that highlights what they have learned.

Vocabulary

Thematic board games: Games with some type of detailed storyline or detailed setting.

Theme: The topic of a game.

Roll and Move: A player rolls the dice, then moves the set number of spaces. The total amount of spaces a player can move depends on how many faces the particular die has and how many dice the game calls for.

Materials

Cardstock, cardboard or chipboard for the board game's base

Scissors
Construction paper
Glue
Markers/Colored Pencils

Steps

As a class, define the Industrial Revolution.

Suggested Definition: A period of “rapid major change in an economy marked by the general introduction of power-driven machinery or by an important change in the prevailing types and methods of use of such machines.”¹

Explain to students that every aspect of life was impacted by the changes that occurred during the Industrial Revolution.

Begin by leading an inquiry on Spinning cotton with self-acting mules

- What do you notice?
- Who is in the image? (make sure to highlight the woman working and child under the cotton mill)
- What would it be like to work here?
- What is the positive result of the cotton mill? Negative?

Inform students that the introduction of the cotton mill offered women and children a job, created clothes at a lower price but was dangerous. Read Regulations: Boot Cotton Mill for a clearer picture of the working conditions at a mill.

Remind students there is a positive aspect to changing industry during this time period. Families are now acquiring larger amounts of leisure time.

Ask students to define the term "leisure."

Create a list of what students like to do in their leisure time. Encourage them to discuss their favorite forms of entertainment.

¹ 1. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/industrial%20revolution>
Visions of America, 468
Visions of America, 470

Introduce the The Mansion of Happiness Board Game

- What do you notice?
- What text do you see?
- What do the images on the game show you ?
- How do you think you would play this game?

Mansion of Happiness is a roll and move board game. Players roll a teetotum and move according to the number it lands on. (For more examples of games from long ago students can find inspiration from the Liman Collection [here](#).)

- NOTE FOR TEACHERS: You can use as many additional resources as you would like in order to talk about life in the Industrial Revolution. The more you use, the more your students will have to draw from when making their games.

Ask students to reflect on the sources they've examined. What changes took place during the Industrial Revolution? Work together to make a list and then discuss whether the changes were positive or negative.

Now the students will design their own board game about trying to survive during the Industrial Revolution.

To start activity have students consider the following:

- What is the setting on their game? (a factory, a town, a city, a neighborhood)
- What is the goal of their game? (make money, survive, get promoted, be the first to cross the finish line)
- How will players advance in your game? (roll the dice, spin a wheel, pick a card)
- What obstacles will players encounter in your game? (these should be based on what they've learned looking at the resources)

After students have finished brainstorming, have them share their idea with a partner for feedback. As they finalize their game, they should give it a title.

After the outline of their game is set, it is time for them to make the board game!

Create board games on a large base (suggested 11x17 cardstock or larger). Students can create their spaces in any format they wish. The places on their board game can be created around the board like in the game of [Monopoly](#), or move in a spiral similar to the [Mansion of Happiness](#). Spaces can be any shape they like.

Using materials available, including construction paper, scissors, glue and markers, they will create their spaces of the game, chips, cards and/or players.

If students have access to collage materials or printed images of the time period, they are welcome to incorporate them into the game pieces.

When game boards are completed, have students demonstrate how they will play the game and what a player will learn while playing.