



Chapter 1

Overview: the making of the
modern world (1750–1918)



The making of the modern world

- The era from 1750 to 1918 was one of revolutionary change. It was propelled at a pace never before experienced in history. It was driven by:
 - industrialisation and technological change
 - political and social revolution and reform
 - imperialism and colonial expansion.



The Industrial Revolution

- Beginning in Britain in the 1750s, the Industrial Revolution had spread to Western and Central Europe and the United States by the middle of the nineteenth century.
- Coal and steam, and later electricity, replaced wind and water as forms of energy.



The Industrial Revolution (cont.)

- Massive investments were made in factories, roads, shipbuilding and railways.
- Changes in technology and methods of work increased production.
- Cities grew as economies shifted from agricultural to industrial production.





The Industrial Revolution in Australia

- Settlement of Australia was a product of changes in Britain.
- Australia was:
 - a source of raw materials for British industry
 - a place for transporting criminals from overcrowded jails
 - a place for free settlers seeking opportunity
 - a market for British goods.
- Following the discovery of gold in the 1850s, Australian colonial governments embarked on a program of nation-building involving massive expenditure.



Social changes of industrialisation

- The home as the workplace was displaced and workers, including children, toiled in dirty and dangerous conditions in mines and factories.
- A growing industrial working class worked long hours for minimal wages.
- A wealthy industrial middle class grew.



Social changes of industrialisation (cont.)

- Cities became crowded and unhealthy as people were displaced from rural areas.
- A gendered division of labour occurred with men as breadwinners.





Documenting change

- New technology and the growth of mass culture brought about a change in the way that society was depicted.
- The invention of the lithograph and photographs allowed society to be documented on a scale never before possible.
- A massive increase in newspaper and book consumption was driven by increasing literacy and reduced printing costs.
- The invention of the moving picture in 1895 coincided with the increased leisure time.



Mass migration and population movement

- The Industrial Revolution triggered significant population pressures. Industrialisation, colonial expansion and population pressures resulted in a growth in:
 - slavery, for labouring in the colonial plantations
 - convict transportation, relieving pressure in European jails
 - indentured labour, for working in the colonies
 - external migration, for free settlement in the colonies
 - internal migration, from the country to the cities.



Imperialism

- Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Britain and France were the main European colonial powers that divided up the world with their empires, with the USA and Germany developing empires later in the nineteenth century.
- By 1913 European powers occupied or controlled 84 per cent of the Earth's land surface.



Imperialism (cont.)

- Colonialism made Europe wealthy: profits made from the colonies were reinvested in commerce and industry, while investments in military technology allowed greater conquest and control.
- Imperial control was either direct or through exerting a powerful influence.
- Colonisation was achieved through the work of traders, missionaries and soldiers.



The Colonised

- Europeans spread Christianity, which displaced indigenous religions.
- The colonies suffered economic exploitation – local industries were suppressed to favour European goods, and agricultural and resource production was harnessed for European consumption.



The Colonised (cont.)

- Colonial regimes in Asia and Africa exploited racial hierarchies and used discrimination, violence and harsh punishment to stay in power.
- Colonisation brought with it modern medicines, education and improved agricultural techniques.
- By the late nineteenth century, anti-colonial and nationalist movements had begun to emerge in Asia and Africa.



Revolution

- The Enlightenment fostered an emphasis on reason, rights and the questioning of tradition and privilege, especially the divine rule of monarchs.
- The American and the French revolutions were powerfully influenced by liberalism, which held that political power emanated from the people, and that common people had right to freedom of person and property.



Revolution (cont.)

- The American and French revolutions set the scene for the gradual decline in monarchical and aristocratic power in the nineteenth century and gave rise to a growth in the middle and working classes and the political tensions that arose between them.





Political and economic change

- Western societies were put under pressure to allow democratic reform and a growth in constitutional democracies followed.
- Opposed to what was seen as the excesses of capitalism, socialists advocated for communal or state ownership of land, capital and the means of production.



Political and economic change (cont.)

- Capitalism as an economic philosophy gained widespread acceptance in Western societies by the eighteenth century, with its advocates arguing for the primacy of individual choice, private enterprise and the free operation of markets.
- The rise of the nation state, in which people saw themselves having a shared identity, gave rise to nationalism.



The Australian experience

- By the end of the 1850s the Australian colonies had been granted self-government by Britain.
- During the 1880s a system of public primary school education was introduced in all Australian colonies.





The Australian experience (cont.)

- Political reform followed self-government, with the vote given to all adult white males, along with the introduction of the secret ballot and payment of members of parliament. By 1902 women could vote and stand for parliament.
- Despite its far-ranging political reforms, Australia saw itself as an exclusively white European nation. A series of laws and regulations excluded Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders and prohibited the immigration of non-Europeans.