

# The Industrial Revolution:

## Diary of a Child Worker



These are pages from a diary written by a young girl named Harriet. Harriet lived in Britain and had to work in a factory every day.

The factory was noisy, smelly and very dangerous. During the Industrial Revolution, it was common for children to work in factories.

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1832**



Dear Diary,

Today is my 9<sup>th</sup> birthday. Last night, I wished that I wouldn't have to work today. Unfortunately, my wish didn't come true. Mum says that the factory owners don't care about birthdays. She was right. Although I was on time for work, the doorman still glared at me when I walked past. When Frank came in late, he was crying and there were red marks on his legs. I felt really sorry for him.

When I got home, Mum told me that we didn't have to eat gruel for dinner because she had managed to get some meat scraps from the butcher. Delicious!

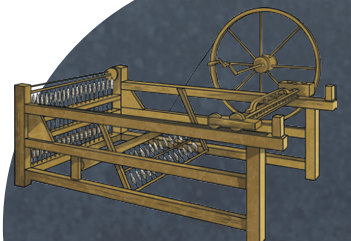
**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June 1832**



Dear Diary,

I wish I was taller. The clothes I have to wear every day are far too big for me and I keep tripping over them. I also can't reach the top of the machines. Today, the thread at the top had snapped so I needed to climb up and fix it. I've seen lots of kids who are missing a finger because they slipped when climbing on the machines.

I was really frightened that I was going to fall, especially as the machine was still on when I climbed up. Luckily, I was able to get down safely.



**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 1832**



Dear Diary,

It is so hot. I think I'm going to melt. Today, I had to spend 12 hours crawling under the machines to clear jams and balls of cotton fluff. Lots of people felt poorly because it was so hot. We weren't even allowed to open a window!

Everyone smells disgusting too.

That's the problem when you've not got any running water at home.

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January 1833**



Dear Diary,

I'm sorry that I haven't written to you for a while.

I'm just so tired all of the time. I wish I didn't have to work.

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 1833**



Dear Diary,

Great news! The newspapers have written about a man called Mr Sadler. He's written to the government and complained that children aren't being treated well in factories. He said that it is too dangerous and that we should be in school instead. I'm not sure what he can do but it's nice to have someone fighting for us.

I wonder if I do have a bright future after all.



# Questions

1. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they occurred.

One has been done for you.

- ☐ The newspapers write about a man called Mr Sadler.
- ☒ 1 It is Harriet's birthday.
- ☐ Harriet had to climb on top of a machine to fix it.
- ☐ Harriet is so hot that she's worried she might melt.

2. What date is Harriet's birthday? Tick one.

- ☐ 4<sup>th</sup> February
- ☐ 23<sup>rd</sup> May
- ☐ 9<sup>th</sup> June
- ☐ 14<sup>th</sup> August

3. Draw four lines to match each date to how Harriet was feeling on that day.

Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> June 1832	hot
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> August 1832	tired
Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> January 1833	frightened
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> February 1833	hopeful

4. Why does Harriet keep tripping over? Tick one.

- ☐ The machines are really tall.
- ☐ She is in a hurry to get to work on time.
- ☐ Her clothes are too big.
- ☐ She is too hot.

5. Look at the extract from **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 1833**.

Find and copy the phrase which shows you that Harriet is **excited**.

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6. What does Mr Sadler think children should be doing instead of working in a factory?

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7. Would you like to be Harriet's friend? Explain your answer.

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# Answers

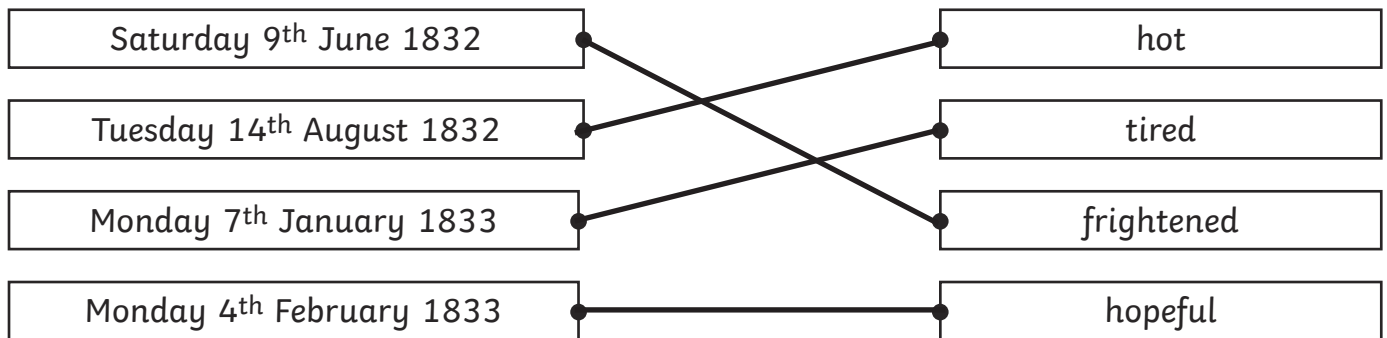
1. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they occurred.  
One has been done for you.

- 4** The newspapers write about a man called Mr Sadler.  
**1** It is Harriet's birthday.  
**2** Harriet had to climb on top of a machine to fix it.  
**3** Harriet is so hot that she's worried she might melt.

2. What date is Harriet's birthday? Tick one.

- ☐ 4<sup>th</sup> February  
☒ **23<sup>rd</sup> May**  
☐ 9<sup>th</sup> June  
☐ 14<sup>th</sup> August

3. Draw four lines to match each date to how Harriet was feeling on that day.



4. Why does Harriet keep tripping over? Tick one.

- ☐ The machines are really tall.  
☐ She is in a hurry to get to work on time.  
☒ **Her clothes are too big.**  
☐ She is too hot.

5. Look at the extract from **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 1833**.

Find and copy the phrase which shows you that Harriet is **excited**.

**Great news!**

6. What does Mr Sadler think children should be doing instead of working in a factory?

**Mr Sandler thinks that children should be going to school instead of working in factories.**

7. Would you like to be Harriet's friend? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I would really like to be Harriet's friend because it sounds like her life is really difficult and I would like to try and help her to not have to work in a factory.**



# The Industrial Revolution:

## Diary of a Child Worker



Harriet lived in Britain during a time called the Industrial Revolution. As a young child, she lived on a small farm in the countryside. When factory jobs became more popular, Harriet moved with her family to a large town. As Harriet wrote this diary, they all worked in a busy and noisy factory.

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1832**



Dear Diary,

Today is my 9<sup>th</sup> birthday. Last night, I wished with all my might that I wouldn't have to work today. Unfortunately, my wish didn't come true. Mum says that the factory owners don't care about birthdays. She was right.

Although I made it in time for work, Growler (I don't know his real name) still held the whip up and waved it in my face as I walked past. When Frank came in late, I could see from the red marks on his legs that he hadn't been so lucky.

When I got home, Mum told me that she had saved my wages from last week to get us some meat scraps from the butcher. Scraps beat gruel any day!

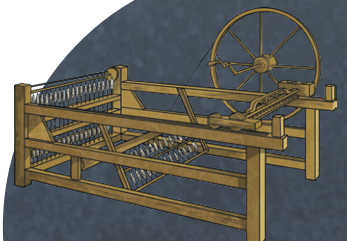
**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June 1832**



Dear Diary,

I need to grow taller. The clothes I have to wear every day are far too big for me and I'm constantly tripping over them. Not only that but I can't reach the top of the machines. Today, the thread at the top snapped and I had to climb on top to tie the loose pieces together. Obviously, the machine was still going and I was so scared about falling in.

There are lots of kids around here who are missing a finger or two and I don't intend on being one of them.



**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 1832**



Dear Diary,

It was so hot today that I thought I was going to melt. I spent 12 hours on my hands and knees underneath the machines clearing jams and cotton fluff. I saw several people looking unwell in the stifling heat and I wasn't surprised.

The smell was horrific too. It was the sort of smell that you can taste for hours after you've left. It's not like any of us have running water in our houses either so it will likely still be there tomorrow. Yuck.

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1832**



Dear Diary,

I got beaten today. After walking to work in the snow, my hands were numb and stiff. This meant that, at the beginning of my shift, I was struggling to tie the thread together. Growler saw this and said that I wasn't working hard enough. It's not fair.

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January 1833**



Dear Diary,

I'm sorry that I haven't written to you for a while. I'm just so tired all of the time. I wish I didn't have to work.

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 1833**



Dear Diary,

Recently, the newspaper has been writing about a man called Mr Sadler. He's written lots of letters to the government about how horrible it is for children to be working in factories and he says that things need to improve. I don't know what Mr Sadler can do but it's given us all a much-needed boost. For the first time, I think that I can see my future getting better.

# Questions

1. How does the news about Mr Sadler make Harriet feel? Tick one.

- ☐ worried
- ☐ nervous
- ☐ powerful
- ☐ hopeful

2. Who earnt the money for the meat scraps? Tick one.

- ☐ Harriet's mother
- ☐ Harriet's father
- ☐ Harriet
- ☐ the factory owner

3. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they occurred.

- ☐ Harriet is beaten by Growler.
- ☐ Frank is beaten by Growler.
- ☐ Harriet wishes that she was taller.
- ☐ Harriet spends 12 hours clearing jams.

4. Draw four lines to match each date to how Harriet was feeling on that day.

Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 1832	Harriet is concerned for her safety.
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> June 1832	Harriet sees lots of people looking ill.
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> August 1832	Harriet doesn't eat gruel for dinner.
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> February 1833	Harriet feels positive about her future.

5. What date is Harriet's birthday?

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6. Look at the diary entry dated **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 1832**.

Find and copy one word which means 'very hot'.

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7. How do you think that the man with the whip earned the nickname Growler?  
Explain your answer.

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8. Compare the working conditions on **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> August** and **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> December**.  
How were the two days different?

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# Answers

1. How does the news about Mr Sadler make Harriet feel? Tick one.

- ☐ worried  
☐ nervous  
☐ powerful  
☒ **hopeful**

2. Who earnt the money for the meat scraps? Tick one.

- ☐ Harriet's mother  
☐ Harriet's father  
☒ **Harriet**  
☐ the factory owner

3. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they occurred.

- 4** Harriet is beaten by Growler.  
**1** Frank is beaten by Growler.  
**2** Harriet wishes that she was taller.  
**3** Harriet spends 12 hours clearing jams.

4. Draw four lines to match each date to how Harriet was feeling on that day.

Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 1832	Harriet is concerned for her safety.
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> June 1832	Harriet sees lots of people looking ill.
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> August 1832	Harriet doesn't eat gruel for dinner.
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> February 1833	Harriet feels positive about her future.

5. What date is Harriet's birthday?

**Harriet's birthday is on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May.**

6. Look at the diary entry dated **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 1832**.

Find and copy one word which means 'very hot'.

**stifling**

7. How do you think that the man with the whip earned the nickname Growler?  
Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses provided that a sensible explanation is given, such as:**

**I think that Growler earned his nickname because he is scary and looks like a growling dog when the children walk past in the morning.**

8. Compare the working conditions on **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> August** and **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> December**.  
How were the two days different?

**Pupils' own responses provided that a sensible comparison is made between the two days, such as: On the 14<sup>th</sup> August, it was so hot that Harriet felt as though she was melting. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> December, it was the opposite because it was so cold that Harriet couldn't move her hands.**

# The Industrial Revolution:

## Diary of a Child Worker



Harriet lived in Britain during the Industrial Revolution. When she was younger, her family owned a small farm and lived in the countryside. When jobs in factories became more common, Harriet and her family moved to a large town where they all began to work in a busy cotton mill.

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1832**



Dear Diary,

Today is my 9<sup>th</sup> birthday. Last night, I wished with all my might that I wouldn't have to work today but my wish didn't come true. Mum says that the factory owners don't care much for birthdays. It seems as though she was right. Although I made it in time for work, Growler (I don't know his real name) still held the whip up menacingly as I walked past. Frank wasn't so lucky. He tried to hide it but I could see tears swimming in his eyes and the red marks starting to show across the back of his legs.

When I got home, Mum told me that she had saved my wages from last week to get us some scraps from the butcher. Scraps beat gruel any day!

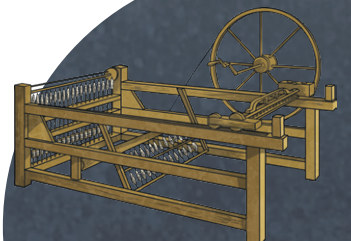
**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June 1832**



Dear Diary

I have decided that I need to grow taller. The clothes I have to wear every day are far too big for me and I'm fed up of constantly tripping over them. Not only that, I can't reach the top of the machines. Today, the thread at the top of the machine snapped and I had to climb up to tie the loose pieces together. The machine was still working of course and I was really frightened that I was going to slip and fall in.

There are plenty of kids around here who are missing a finger or two and I don't intend on being one of them.



**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 1832**



Dear Diary,

If you thought that it was hot outside today, it was nothing compared to the heat inside the factory. I thought that I was going to pass out. The machines didn't seem to like it either; I'm sure I spent all 12 of my hours at work crawling underneath them to clear jams and cotton fluff. I saw several kids and adults looking unwell in the stifling heat. The smell was appalling. It was the sort of smell that you can taste for hours after you've left. It's not like any of us have running water in our houses either so it will likely still be lingering tomorrow. Yuck.

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1832**



Dear Diary,

I was beaten today. After walking to work in the snow, my hands were numb and stiff. This meant that I couldn't tie knots properly at first. Growler saw this and said that I wasn't working hard enough. It's not fair.

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January 1833**



Dear Diary,

I'm sorry that I haven't written to you for a while.  
I'm just so tired all of the time. I wish I didn't have to work.

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 1833**



Dear Diary,

Recently, people have been talking about a man called Mr Sadler. Apparently, he's written lots of letters to the government about how horrible it is for children to be working in factories and he thinks that something needs to be done to make it better. I don't know what Mr Sadler can do but it's given us all a much-needed boost. For the first time, I think that I can see my future improving.

# Questions

1. Draw four lines to match each date to the event which happened on that day.

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1832

Harriet has to deal with broken thread.

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June 1832

Harriet wishes that houses had running water.

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 1832

Harriet feels hopeful.

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 1833

Harriet receives a break from gruel.

2. ...looking unwell in the stifling heat.

Tick the one word which is closest in meaning to the word **stifling**.

- ☐ hot  
☐ suffocating  
☐ unpleasant  
☐ warming

3. What happened to Frank on **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1832**?

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4. List **two** tasks that Harriet has to complete as part of her job at the factory.

1. 

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2. 

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5. On which date does Harriet's job seem the most dangerous?

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6. **The machine was still working of course and I was really frightened that I was going to slip and fall in.**

Why do you think the author has chosen to use the words **of course**? Explain your answer.

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7. Compare Harriet's attitude on **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1832** with her attitude on **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 1833**.

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8. Using the text to support you, write a short diary entry from Harriet for **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> August 1832**.

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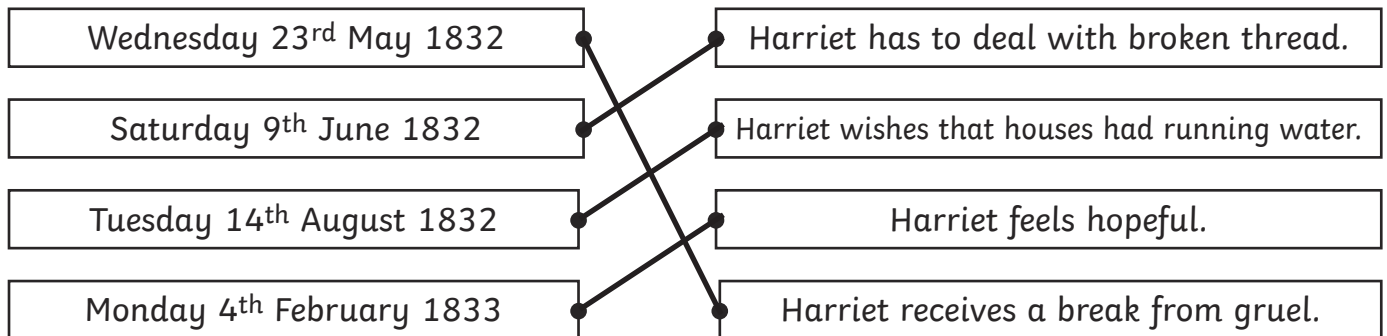
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# Answers

1. Draw four lines to match each date to the event which happened on that day.

Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 1832	Harriet has to deal with broken thread.
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> June 1832	Harriet wishes that houses had running water.
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> August 1832	Harriet feels hopeful.
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> February 1833	Harriet receives a break from gruel.



2. ...looking unwell in the stifling heat.

Tick the one word which is closest in meaning to the word **stifling**.

- ☐ hot  
☒ **suffocating**  
☐ unpleasant  
☐ warming

3. What happened to Frank on **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1832**?

**On 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1832, Frank was beaten by Growler because he was late to work.**

4. List **two** tasks that Harriet has to complete as part of her job at the factory.

**Accept any two of the following answers: Harriet has to tie loose pieces of thread together; Harriet has to clear jams; Harriet has to crawl under machines; Harriet has to collect cotton fluff.**

5. On which date does Harriet's job seem the most dangerous?

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June 1832**

6. **The machine was still working of course and I was really frightened that I was going to slip and fall in.**

Why do you think the author has chosen to use the words **of course**? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the author has chosen to use the words 'of course' to show that this happens all the time and is just a normal event.**

7. Compare Harriet's attitude on **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1832** with her attitude on **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 1833**.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: On Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> December, Harriet feels unfairly treated because Growler has beaten her for having cold hands. She is miserable. However, on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February, Harriet is feeling hopeful and has been given a much-needed boost after hearing that someone is fighting for the rights of children.**

8. Using the text to support you, write a short diary entry from Harriet for **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> August 1832**.

**Pupils' own responses provided that at least one event from 14<sup>th</sup> August has been referenced, such as: Today was just as hot as yesterday. As expected, nobody has managed to have a proper wash and the smell is still disgusting. I hope that it will get cooler tomorrow; I'm not sure I can cope with this for much longer.**