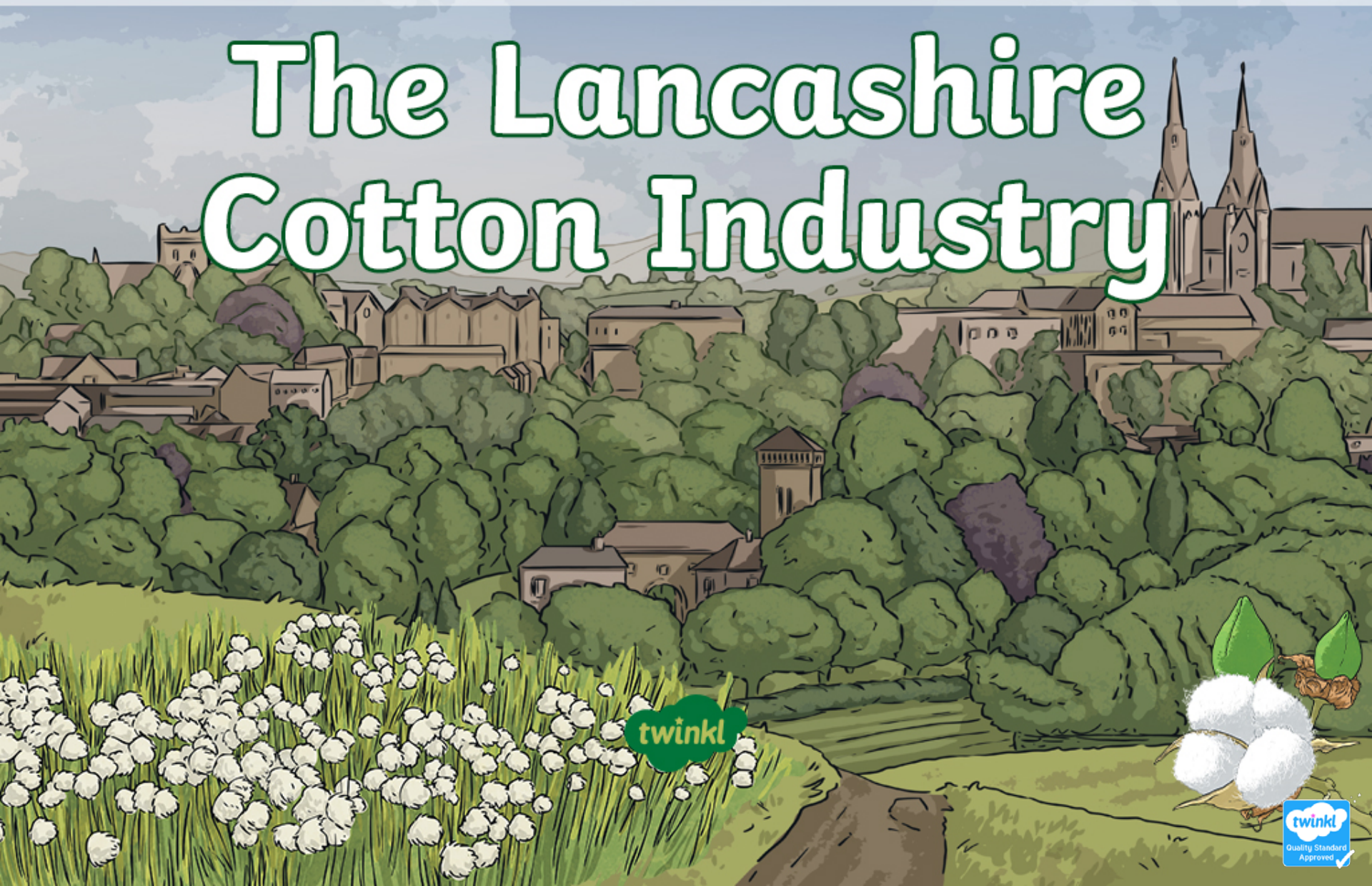


All About

The Lancashire Cotton Industry



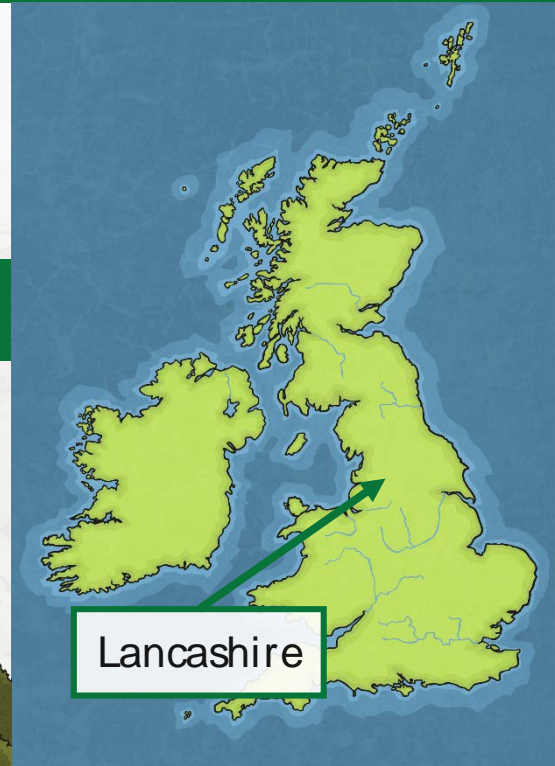
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Where Is Lancashire?

Lancashire is a county in the north-west of England. It has two cities, Preston and Lancaster. The popular holiday destination of Blackpool is in Lancashire.

People from Lancashire are called Lancastrians.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Lancashire was a major producer of cotton goods. This was known as the Lancashire cotton industry.



Did You Know?

The Duke of Lancaster is usually known by a different name: Queen Elizabeth II!

What Is Cotton?



Cotton taken from the plant is woven and spun into fabric which is then used for lots of different things, such as denim (for jeans), t-shirts, socks, tents, coffee filters, nappies and cotton buds.



Spinning Cotton



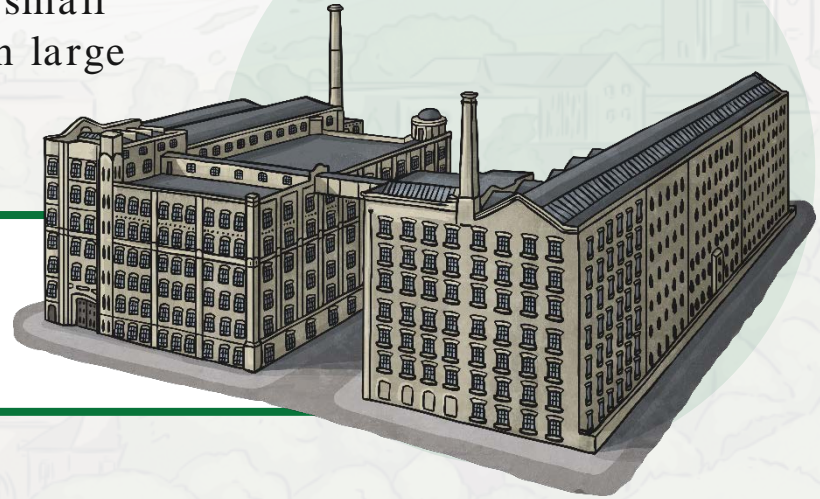
Across Lancashire, many people were part of the cotton cottage industry.

Cotton was turned into cloth using a handloom.

The Industrial Revolution

From around 1760, Britain experienced a huge change, known as the Industrial Revolution. Many British people went from living in small villages, working on the land, to living in large cities, working in factories.

It was a time of inventions, such as the steam engine. Britain became known as 'the workshop of the world'.



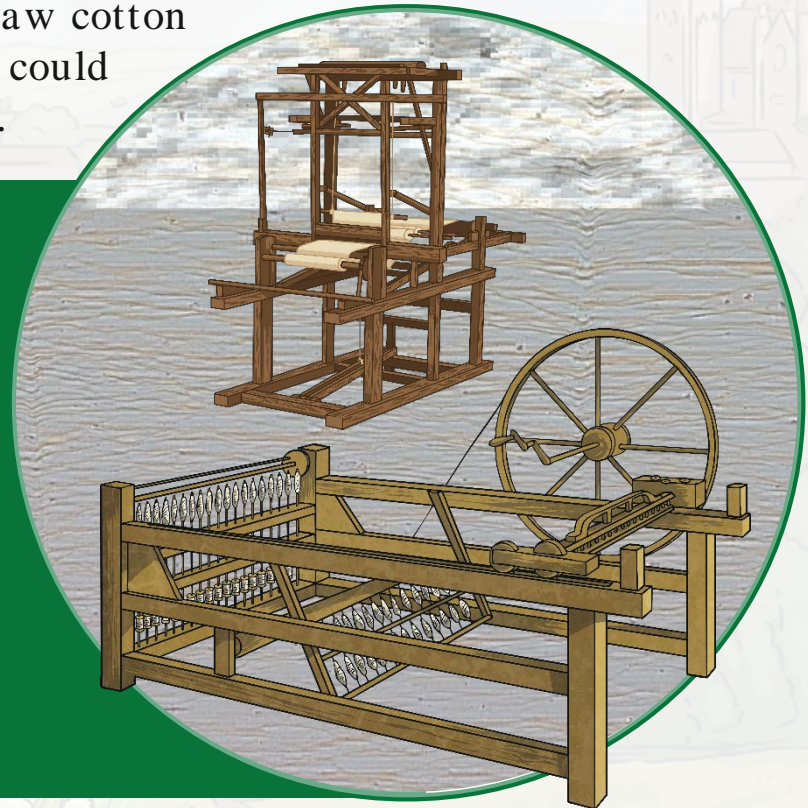
Talk about it

How do you think life changed for people who moved from the countryside to large cities?

The Lancashire Cotton Industry

In Lancashire and the surrounding areas, lots of cotton factories (sometimes called mills) were built. These factories turned raw cotton (the white fluffy fibre) into material that could be used to make clothes and other things.

In the 1790s, cotton goods made up over 15% of Britain's exports (goods that are sold abroad) and within ten years, this had grown to over 42%. Cotton factory owners became very rich. A saying was invented 'cotton is king'. The cotton industry grew throughout the 19th century and by 1860, there were over 2000 cotton mills in the Lancashire region, with nearly 500 000 people working in them.



Life in a Cotton Mill

Working day in a factory, with most came weaker, start for the workers and usually difficult for 13 hours. Despite these long hours, pay was poor.

There were very few safety measures in place and many workers suffered serious injuries while operating machinery.



Talk about it

What time do you get up in the morning? How long do you spend working?

Children

Children from poor families in the 19th century were often given the job of a 'piecer'. This involved supporting their machines, while they were still going on to off threads and collect dropped material. This was extremely dangerous as children usually worked on their hands and knees, and their hands could get caught in the machines, resulting in serious injuries or even death.



Talk about it

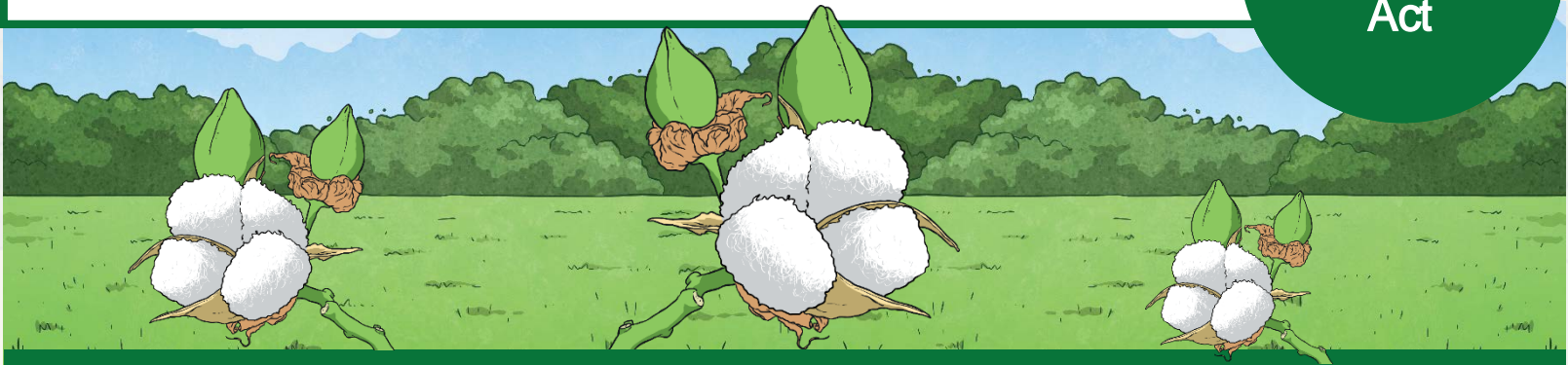
What do you want to do for a job when you are an adult?

Improvements

During the 19th century, people began to be aware of the conditions in cotton mills and other factories. Several laws were passed to help improve things including:

This banned the employment of children in factories under 10 years old.

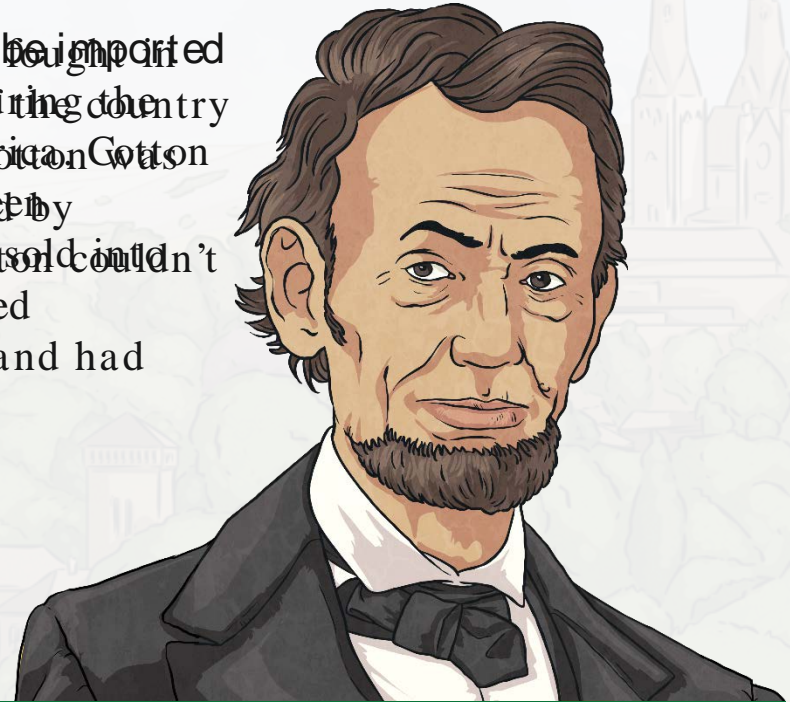
1874
Factory
Act



These laws were difficult to enforce and not every factory owner stuck to them. Life for factory workers remained hard.

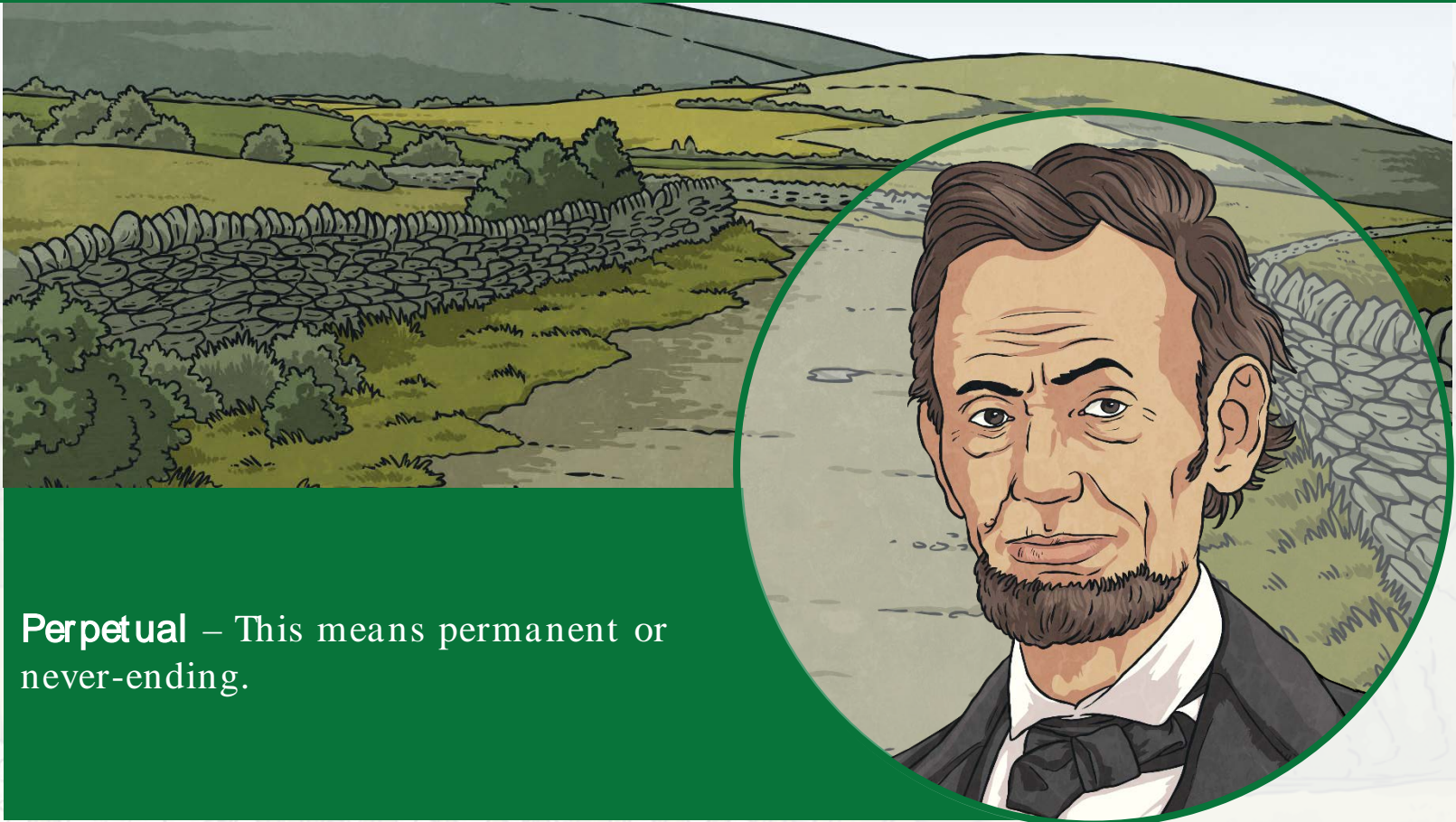
The Lancashire Cotton Famine

Cotton doesn't grow in the UK and had to be imported from over the sea as its source. The cotton of the country which slavery was the United States of America was picked by enslaved people. The cotton had been kidnapped from their homes in Africa and sold into slavery in America. Enslaved people suffered dreadfully, working in terrible conditions and had they no rights.



With less cotton being imported to Britain, many mill workers lost their jobs. In the time before unemployment benefits, many families faced starvation and faced ending up in the workhouse.

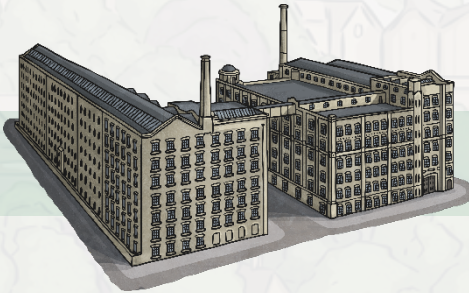
Support for Lincoln



Perpetual – This means permanent or never-ending.

The Decline of the Lancashire Cotton Industry

In 1912, Britain produced over 7 billion metres of cotton cloth.



The decline of the cotton industry started during the First World War (1914 – 1918). At this time, British cloth couldn't be sold overseas so many countries built their own cotton factories. By the 1960s, around one Lancashire cotton mill closed each week. The 1980s saw the end of the Lancashire cotton industry.



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