

# Assessing a piece of written work

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On the following pages you will find an anonymised, actual piece of written work. The question to be answered was

**The advent of electricity and of information technology are often referred to as the Second and Third Industrial Revolution. Choose one of these revolutions and compare and contrast its effects to that of the First Industrial Revolution (the one that you you've read about this term).**

This could be a question in a first year economics unit. Clearly the Industrial Revolution was a topic discussed in the unit (if you want a reference you could assume that students have read chapters 1 and 2 of The CORE Team's (2017) "The Economy" and perhaps in particular [Section 2.6](#)).

You should assume that the maximum length for the written assignment was 400 words, so the assignment is inside the length requirement (app. 360 words).

Attached you will find the assessment criteria by the University of Manchester's Economics Department. You should assess the written work with reference to these assessment criteria and use these to judge which class of grade you would give this piece of work.

Make sure that, before you read the assessment, you re-read the above question in order to identify the exact task given to the students. You may want to refer to [this document](#) (University of Manchester Library) to clarify the meaning of "Instruction Words".

## Reference

The CORE Team (2017). 'Technology, Population, and Growths'. Unit 2 in The CORE Team, The Economy. Available at: <http://www.core-econ.org>. [Accessed on 13/6/2019].

## Assessment Criteria

These are from the Economics Department, The University of Manchester

### Very High First Class (90-100)

Such answers are exceptional and *fully* answer the question demonstrating the attainment of all learning objectives and in adherence to all guidelines. The answer will be expected to show an exceptional level of achievement with respect to the following criteria:

- insight and depth of understanding of the material;
- the exercise of critical judgment along with clarity of analysis and of expression;
- comprehensiveness and accuracy;
- knowledge of the relevant literature;
- demonstration of elements of creative and independent thinking.

### High First Class (80-89)

Such answers are outstanding and provide a *near-full* and well-structured answer to the question and can be expected to indicate an outstanding level of achievement of all of the following qualities:

- insight and depth of understanding of the material;
- the exercise of critical judgment along with clarity of analysis and of expression;
- comprehensiveness and accuracy;
- knowledge of the relevant literature.

### First Class (70-79)

Such answers are excellent and provide a *largely-full* and well-structured answer to the question and can be expected to indicate excellence in *some or most of* the following qualities:

- insight and depth of understanding of the material;
- the exercise of critical judgment along with clarity of analysis and of expression;
- comprehensiveness and accuracy;
- knowledge of the relevant literature.

### Upper-second Class (60-69)

Such answers are very good and provide a generally well-structured answer to the question and can be expected to indicate *some of* the following qualities:

- generally accurate and reasonably comprehensive understanding of the material;
- clarity of analysis, of argument and of expression;
- demonstrating a sound understanding of the relevant data;
- a demonstrable grasp of the important contributions of the relevant literature.
- some evidence of insight

### Lower-second Class (50-59)

Such answers are good and provide a clear and substantially correct answer to the question. They can be expected to show *most of* the following features:

- generally firm understanding of the material; but with some omissions or errors
- clarity of analysis and argument, albeit limited in extent;
- some awareness of the relevant data and the relevant literature.
- Some elements of the answer may be irrelevant to the question asked

**Note:** What distinguishes a high Lower-second Class from a low Upper-second Class is greater extent of understanding of material and clarity of analysis and argument, as well as at least some selective knowledge of the relevant literature, not mere awareness of its existence. It should also demonstrate an ability to evaluate, where appropriate, the secondary sources used in writing the answer and should, where appropriate, offer evidence of an ability to evaluate empirical evidence.

### Third Class (40-49)

Such answers are sufficient and demonstrate a *rudimentary* understanding of the issues and offer *only partial* answers to the question. They can be expected to show some of the following features:

- sparse coverage of the material with several key elements missing;
- unsupported assertions, possibly in note form and not supported by authority or evidence;
- a lack of clear analysis or argument;
- some major errors and inaccuracies.

#### **Fail (30-39)**

Such answers are insufficient and, while showing some awareness of the area, fail to deal with the question in a way that suggest more than a fragmented and shallow acquaintance with the subject. They are often error-prone, lacking in coherence, structure and evidence of independent thought. These answers typically:

- contain very little appropriate or accurate material;
- only cursorily cover the basic material;
- are poorly presented without development of arguments.

#### **Bad Fail (20-29)**

Such answers are inadequate and fail to demonstrate the ability to engage with the question. They demonstrate only the most basic awareness of the area and may contain important errors. They will be almost completely lacking in coherence, structure and evidence of independent thought.

#### **Very Bad Fail (10-19)**

Such answers are severely inadequate and exhibit an almost complete lack of engagement with the area or question.

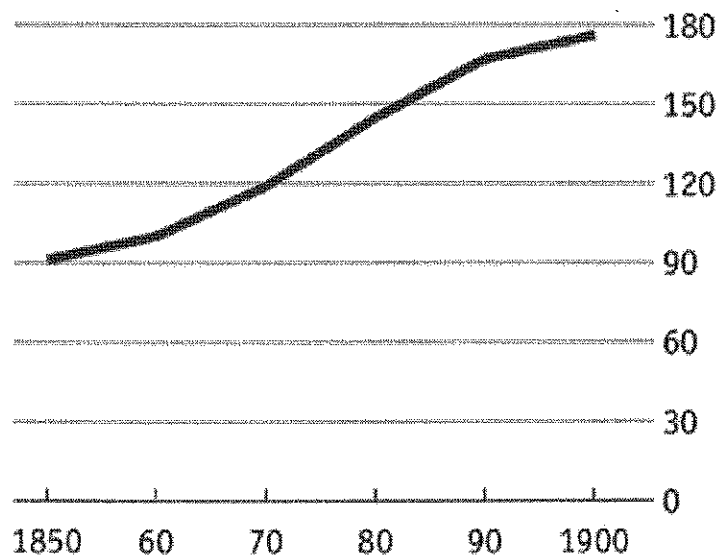
3. The advent of electricity and of information technology are often referred to as the Second and Third Industrial Revolution. Choose one of these revolutions and compare and contrast its effects to that of the First Industrial Revolution (the one that you've read about this term).

This article aims to define the main drivers of the first and second industrial revolution, and provide a systematic breakdown of their impacts on the economy evaluated in connectedness and production.

The first industrial revolution between 1760 and 1850 is widely characterised by the introduction of machines and steam engines which replaced human labour. New combinations of labour and capital in product manufacturing led to greater labour productivity and hence, higher wages. This was a major turning point in Europe, where labour was more expensive than coal and other capital goods. Technology and its practical possibilities encouraged further knowledge expansion, leading the path for the second industrial revolution. Skilled labour (knowledge to operate machines) saw wages rising, leading to a quick rise in the rich-poor gap.

Along with production, the first industrial revolution enabled increased connectedness of the world. Prior to the discovery of steam engines, the main mode of transport was by horse carriages or bicycles. This new technology created possibilities for sea travel and opened countries up to foreign trade. This allowed for cultural exchange, geographical movement and also foreign trade, resulting in increased incomes.

### Real wages in Britain 1860=100

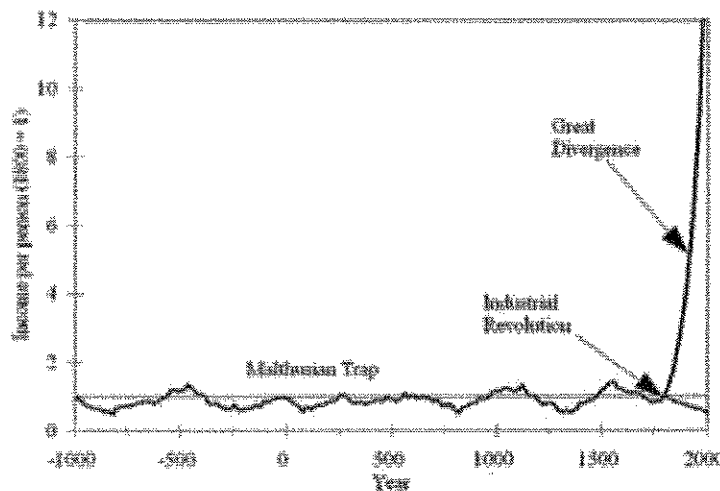


Source: Clark, 2005

During the second industrial revolution between 1850 and 1910, electricity and advanced technologies such as the internal combustion engine were introduced. Major discoveries such as the

use of electricity by Micheal Faraday and coal gas were also made. Electricity was cheaper and more efficient; soon replacing steam as the main source of power in manufacturing. This allowed for mass production, and it came with its relevant economies of scale as firms started to expand. Unemployment shrank and wages increased. Skilled labour continued to be high in demand, exacerbating inequality in the economy.

With electricity replacing steam engines, transportation became faster and its networks wider. People could travel between nations quickly and cheaply. Easier geographical movement encouraged trade and access to cities which led to sustainable increase in income year over year.



**Figure 1 World Economic History in One Picture.** After 1800 income in some societies rose sharply, while in others it declined.

The Industrial revolution has led to major improvements we enjoy today. Each phase of development has its own unique invention but their positive effects are felt cumulatively and should be evaluated together.

#### References:

Economic History: Did living standards improve in the industrial revolution?

(<http://www.economist.com/blogs/freeexchange/2013/09/economic-history-0>)

The second industrial revolution ([http://www.skwirk.com/p-c\\_s-14\\_u-424\\_t-1100\\_c-4258/the-second-industrial-revolution/nsw/the-second-industrial-revolution/the-industrial-revolution/the-impact-of-the-industrial-revolution](http://www.skwirk.com/p-c_s-14_u-424_t-1100_c-4258/the-second-industrial-revolution/nsw/the-second-industrial-revolution/the-industrial-revolution/the-impact-of-the-industrial-revolution))

On the following pages you can find a marked up version of the coursework and a commented version of the assessment criteria which should help you to understand how written pieces of work are assessed.

HOWEVER, if you really want to benefit from this exercise you should **first read the piece and try to assess it by yourself or together with fellow students without looking at the next pages**. Yes, it is hard and difficult, but unless you do this yourself you will not learn as much as you can. And after all, you are only looking at this document because you want to learn ....

... right?!

The mark-up and comments on these pages are quite intensive and you should not expect to see the same amount of comment on your own pieces of coursework.

3. The advent of electricity and of information technology are often referred to as the Second and Third Industrial Revolution. Choose one of these revolutions and compare and contrast its effects to that of the First Industrial Revolution (the one that you've read about this term).

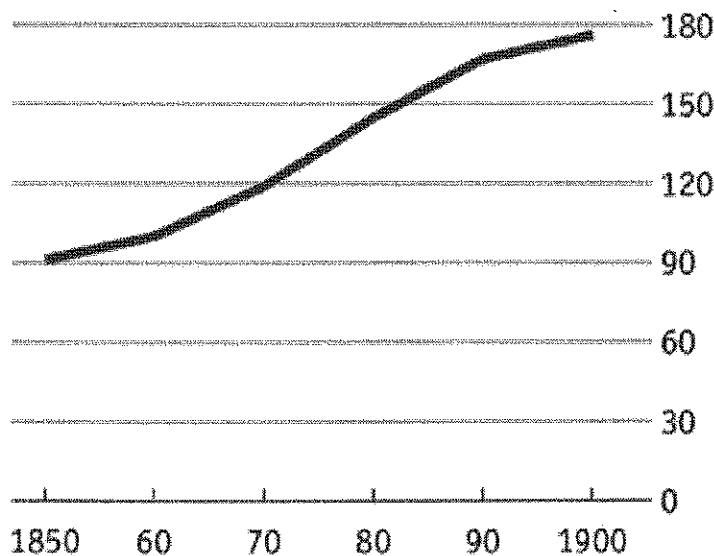
This article aims to define the main drivers of the first and second industrial revolution, and provide a systematic breakdown of their impacts on the economy evaluated in connectedness and production.

The first industrial revolution between 1760 and 1850 is widely characterised by the introduction of machines and steam engines which replaced human labour. New combinations of labour and capital in product manufacturing led to greater labour productivity and hence, higher wages. This was a major turning point in Europe, where labour was more expensive than coal and other capital goods. Technology and its practical possibilities encouraged further knowledge expansion, leading the path for the second industrial revolution. Skilled labour (knowledge to operate machines) saw wages rising, leading to a quick rise in the rich-poor gap.

Along with production, the first industrial revolution enabled increased connectedness of the world. Prior to the discovery of steam engines, the main mode of transport was by horse carriages or bicycles. This new technology created possibilities for sea travel and opened countries up to foreign trade. This allowed for cultural exchange, geographical movement and also foreign trade, resulting in increased incomes.

## Real wages in Britain

1860=100



Source: Clark, 2005

During the second industrial revolution between 1850 and 1910, electricity and advanced technologies such as the internal combustion engine were introduced. Major discoveries such as the

This is a clear statement of what the student intends to do and is a good brief intro statement, but it does not mention that the arguments to follow will contain any "compare and contrast" arguments.

These paragraphs are generally well written. However, no sources have been cited here. This is a problem. There are a number of factual statements in these paragraphs for which we want sources (e.g. the rise in skilled labour wages and changes in distribution).

this is a good move, the length of the piece does not allow a comprehensive discussion of the effects of the Ind. Rev. so the student states what aspects of life she will look at

here is the anticipated impact of the 1st Ind Rev on connectedness. This is good. A discussion on the impact on production technologies is sort of discussed in the previous paragraph.

This Figure is not well worked into the argument. At no stage in the text does the student refer to the figure. It has the potential to help the argument on the next page. So use it properly. The source in the figure does not appear in the reference list. make sure a reader can clearly identify the source. If at all possible don't just copy and paste a graph from some other source but try and get the actual data and produce the figure yourself, in Excel, or R or other software.

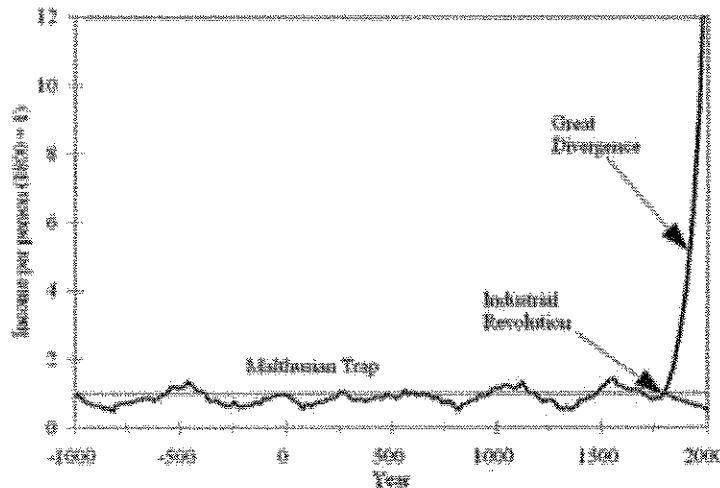
good clear characterisation!

use of electricity by Micheal Faraday and coal gas were also made. Electricity was cheaper and more efficient; soon replacing steam as the main source of power in manufacturing. This allowed for mass production, and it came with its relevant economies of scale as firms started to expand. Unemployment shrank and wages increased. Skilled labour continued to be high in demand, exacerbating inequality in the economy.

Altogether this seems like a useful summary of the the 2nd Ind Rev

but most transportation in the 2nd half of the 19th century would not be powered by electricity.

With electricity replacing steam engines, transportation became faster and its networks wider. People could travel between nations quickly and cheaply. Easier geographical movement encouraged trade and access to cities which led to sustainable increase in income year over year.



same comment for this figure as for the previous one. Its content is not used in the argument. Further there is no source information for these data.

So far you have given individual short "summaries" of some of the features of the two revolutions, but you have not really done any comparing or contrasting which was the actual task. To achieve this you would have either left you some space to follow-up after the two individual descriptions to highlight the differences. At this stage you leave that to the reader.

**Figure 1 World Economic History in One Picture.** After 1800 income in some societies rose sharply, while in others it declined.

The Industrial revolution has led to major improvements we enjoy today. Each phase of development has its own unique invention but their positive effects are felt cumulatively and should be evaluated together.

This is a nice summary statement to end with. However, it does not make up for the lack of "compare and contrast" content.

#### References:

Economic History: Did living standards improve in the industrial revolution?

(<http://www.economist.com/blogs/freeexchange/2013/09/economic-history-0>)

The second industrial revolution ([http://www.skwirk.com/p-c\\_s-14\\_u-424\\_t-1100\\_c-4258/the-second-industrial-revolution/nsw/the-second-industrial-revolution/the-industrial-revolution/the-impact-of-the-industrial-revolution](http://www.skwirk.com/p-c_s-14_u-424_t-1100_c-4258/the-second-industrial-revolution/nsw/the-second-industrial-revolution/the-industrial-revolution/the-impact-of-the-industrial-revolution))

- 1) The formatting of these references does not follow any of the standard referencing conventions (e.g. the Harvard system)
- 2) It is totally unclear where in the text you are using these references. Make sure you check out the University's guidance on referencing to understand how to properly reference.



## Discussion of the submitted work

The key instruction words in the question were “compare” and “contrast”. From this University of Manchester Library document we understand that the instructions therefore ask us to

**Compare:** Look for similarities and differences between; perhaps conclude which is preferable; implies evaluation.

**Contrast:** Bring out the differences.

When judging the work we will have to judge it relative to these demands.

## Assessment Criteria applied to the submission

After reading the piece try and identify characteristics of the submission in these assessment criteria.

It is important to not fall in the trap of asking the student to have written a lot more. There was a word limit of 400 words which would have not given a lot of extra space.

### Very High First Class (90-100)

Such answers are exceptional and *fully* answer the question demonstrating the attainment of all learning objectives and in adherence to all guidelines. The answer will be expected to show an exceptional level of achievement with respect to the following criteria:

- insight and depth of understanding of the material;
- the exercise of critical judgment along with clarity of analysis and of expression;
- comprehensiveness and accuracy;
- knowledge of the relevant literature;
- demonstration of elements of creative and independent thinking.

### High First Class (80-89)

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- insight and depth of understanding of the material;
- the exercise of critical judgment along with clarity of analysis and of expression;
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- knowledge of the relevant literature.

### First Class (70-79)

Such answers are excellent and provide a *largely-full* and well-structured answer to the question and can be expected to indicate excellence in *some or most of* the following qualities:

- insight and depth of understanding of the material;

- the exercise of critical judgment along with clarity of analysis and of expression;
- comprehensiveness and accuracy;
- knowledge of the relevant literature.

### Upper-second Class (60-69)

Such answers are very good and provide a **generally well-structured answer** to the question and can be expected to indicate *some of* the following qualities:

- **generally accurate and reasonably comprehensive understanding of the material;**
- clarity of analysis, of argument and of expression;
- demonstrating a sound understanding of the relevant data;
- a demonstrable grasp of the important contributions of the relevant literature.
- some evidence of insight

**Commented [RB1]:** This is certainly true, although a crucial part (compare and contrast) was missing. So well structured, but deficient.

**Commented [RB2]:** It is fair to say that this can be used to characterised the work. It indicates that the student would have well been in a position to deliver work in this grade category if the question was addressed more clearly.

### Lower-second Class (50-59)

Such answers are good and provide a clear and substantially correct answer to the question. They can be expected to show *most of* the following features:

- **generally firm understanding of the material; but with some omissions or errors**
- clarity of analysis and argument, albeit limited in extent;
- some awareness of the relevant data and the relevant literature.
- Some elements of the answer may be irrelevant to the question asked

**Commented [RB3]:** One can easily see these features in the student answer. As the paper is well written it certainly has characteristics of a lower second class piece of work.

**Note:** What distinguishes a high Lower-second Class from a low Upper-second Class is greater extent of understanding of material and clarity of analysis and argument, as well as at least some selective knowledge of the relevant literature, not mere awareness of its existence. **It should also demonstrate an ability to evaluate, where appropriate, the secondary sources used in writing the answer and should, where appropriate, offer evidence of an ability to evaluate empirical evidence.**

**Commented [RB4]:** This is certainly missing. The student includes some data, but certainly doesn't use them. So this seems to suggest that the grade is certainly not an upper second class.

### Third Class (40-49)

Such answers are sufficient and demonstrate a **rudimentary** understanding of the issues and offer **only partial** answers to the question. They can be expected to show some of the following features:

- sparse coverage of the material with several key elements missing;
- unsupported assertions, possibly in note form and not supported by authority or evidence;
- a lack of clear analysis or argument;
- some major errors and inaccuracies.

**Commented [RB5]:** When looking at the headline of what the student achieved this seems to hit the nail on the head. It expresses how the student's answer failed to answer the core "compare and contrast" task.

### Fail (30-39)

Such answers are insufficient and, while showing some awareness of the area, fail to deal with the question in a way that suggest more than a fragmented and shallow acquaintance with the subject. They are often error-prone, lacking in coherence, structure and evidence of independent thought. These answers typically:

**Commented [RB6]:** One may make the argument that the answer is insufficient, but it would be harsh, on this occasion, to suggest that the student only demonstrated a shallow understanding of the subject matter. The student demonstrates a generally good understanding, but fails to address the question as well as he could have.

- contain very little appropriate or accurate material;
- only cursorily cover the basic material;
- are poorly presented without development of arguments.

**Bad Fail (20-29)**

Such answers are inadequate and fail to demonstrate the ability to engage with the question. They demonstrate only the most basic awareness of the area and may contain important errors. They will be almost completely lacking in coherence, structure and evidence of independent thought.

**Very Bad Fail (10-19)**

Such answers are severely inadequate and exhibit an almost complete lack of engagement with the area or question.

## Final Judgement

When assessing the submission against the marking criteria it becomes obvious that it has some elements of an upper-second class answer and certainly a substantial number attributes of a lower-second class answer. The problem is that the student wasn't careful enough in addressing the main task of the task (compare and contrast). Failing to do so is the characteristic of a third class grade.

It is fairly easy to disagree here regarding the final judgement. A grade in the lower-second to third class region seems fair. The fact that it is well written and easy to read would help a marker to go for a grade in the low 50s. However, the problematic referencing and use of figures is not good practice and could make a marker decide that a lower-second grade cannot be justified.