

## Topic 5.6 — Industrialization: Government’s Role from 1750 to 1900

### Standards Alignment

AP Theme	Learning Objective	Key Concept
Governance (GOV) A variety of internal and external factors contribute to state formation, expansion, and decline. Governments maintain order through a variety of administrative institutions, policies, and procedures, and governments obtain, retain, and exercise power in different ways and for different purposes.	<b>Unit 5: Learning Objective G –</b> Explain the causes and effects of economic strategies of different states and empires.	<b>KC-5.1.V.C</b> As the influence of the Industrial Revolution grew, a small number of states and governments promoted their own state sponsored visions of industrialization.
		<b>KC-5.2.II.A</b> The expansion of U.S. and European influence in Asia led to internal reform in Japan that supported industrialization and led to the growing regional power of Japan in the Meiji Era.

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson students should be able to:

- Explain why some governments actively promoted industrialization.
- Describe how state policies supported economic development.
- Identify how industrialization strengthened the power of some states.
- Analyze how external pressure from industrialized nations influenced reforms.

### Lesson Overview

During the nineteenth century, industrialization transformed global economies. While the Industrial Revolution began in Britain largely through private investment, some governments later played an active role in promoting industrial development.

Certain states sponsored industrialization by building infrastructure, supporting factories, and encouraging technological adoption. Governments recognized that industrial production increased economic strength and military power.

One important example is **Japan during the Meiji Era (1868–1912)**. Faced with pressure from Western industrial powers, Japanese leaders adopted policies that modernized the economy, expanded industry, and strengthened the state. These reforms helped Japan become one of the first industrialized nations outside Europe and North America.

## Essential Vocabulary

- **State-Sponsored Industrialization**  
Government efforts to promote industrial development through policies and investments.
- **Economic Modernization**  
Changes that make an economy more industrial, productive, and technologically advanced.
- **Meiji Restoration**  
Political and economic reforms in Japan beginning in 1868 that modernized the country.
- **Infrastructure**  
Large systems such as railroads, roads, and communication networks that support economic activity.
- **Industrial Policy**  
Government strategies designed to promote industrial growth.

## Background Reading

Although industrialization began in Britain through private investment and innovation, many governments later became actively involved in promoting industrial growth. States recognized that industrial production increased economic wealth and strengthened military power. Governments therefore introduced policies to encourage factory production, build railroads, and support technological innovation.

In some countries, governments played a direct role in organizing industrialization. Russia, for example, developed railroads and heavy industries with strong government support during the late nineteenth century. These efforts aimed to modernize the economy and strengthen the state's ability to compete with industrialized European powers.

Japan provides one of the clearest examples of state-sponsored industrialization. After Western powers forced Japan to open trade in the 1850s, Japanese leaders launched major reforms during the **Meiji Restoration**. The government promoted industrial development by building factories, investing in infrastructure, and adopting Western technology. As a result, Japan rapidly industrialized and emerged as a major regional power.

## Primary Sources

### Primary Source 1

#### Charter Oath of the Meiji Emperor (1868)

Source: Columbia University Asia for Educators

[https://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/japan/charter\\_oath.htm](https://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/japan/charter_oath.htm)

Deliberative assemblies shall be widely established, and all matters decided by public discussion. All classes, high and low, shall unite in vigorously carrying out the administration of affairs of state.

The common people, no less than the civil and military officials, shall be allowed to pursue their own calling so that there may be no discontent. Evil customs of the past shall be broken off and everything based upon the just laws of nature.

Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to strengthen the foundations of imperial rule. Through these reforms the nation shall gain the strength necessary to stand among the modern powers of the world.

### Source Analysis Questions

1. Identify ONE goal of the Meiji reforms described in the document.
2. Explain ONE way the government sought to strengthen Japan.
3. Explain ONE historical situation that encouraged these reforms.

### Primary Source 2

#### Sergei Witte on Russian Industrialization (1890s)

Source: Fordham University Internet History Sourcebook

<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/witte-industrialization.asp>

Russia must accelerate the development of industry if it is to remain a strong and independent state. Railways, factories, and modern industry are essential to the growth of national wealth and military power.

The government must support industrial expansion through policies that encourage investment and infrastructure development. The construction of railroads will connect distant regions of the empire and stimulate economic growth.

Through state planning and financial support, industry can develop more rapidly than if left entirely to private initiative. Such policies will strengthen both the economy and the political power of the state.

### Source Analysis Questions

1. Identify ONE economic strategy described in the passage.
2. Explain ONE reason Witte believed industrialization was necessary.
3. Describe ONE effect of government-sponsored industrialization.

### Government Approaches to Industrialization

Country	Government Strategy	Outcome
Britain	Mostly private investment	Early industrial leadership
United States	Government support for railroads and industry	Rapid industrial expansion
Russia	State-directed industrial development	Growth of heavy industry
Japan	Meiji government modernization policies	Emergence as industrial power

### Change, Continuity, and Comparison

#### Change

- Governments increasingly promoted industrialization.
- Industrial economies strengthened state power.
- Infrastructure expanded through railroads and factories.

#### Continuity

- Some industrial development continued to rely on private investment.
- Economic inequality persisted in industrial societies.

## Comparison

Industrialization in Britain developed largely through private entrepreneurs, while countries such as Russia and Japan relied more heavily on government planning and support.

## Key Takeaways

- Governments sometimes promoted industrialization through policies and investments.
- Industrial development increased national wealth and military strength.
- External pressure from industrial powers encouraged reforms in some countries.
- Japan's Meiji reforms led to rapid industrialization and increased regional power.
- State-sponsored industrialization reshaped global economic competition.

## Practice Activity

Answer each question in **2–3 sentences**.

- A. Identify ONE reason governments promoted industrialization during the nineteenth century.
- B. Explain ONE example of state-sponsored industrialization.
- C. Explain ONE effect of industrialization on the power of states.

## Primary Source Citations

Charter Oath of the Meiji Emperor (1868)

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