

## Factory Conditions: Using Conflicting Sources

During the Industrial Revolution, there were conflicting views about working conditions in factories. The first of the following selections is adapted from a book published in 1835 by Andrew Ure, a prominent British scientist. The second selection is adapted from testimony given to Parliament by Michael Crabtree, a factory worker, in 1832. Crabtree was questioned by Michael Thomas Sadler, a member of Parliament. Read both selections and answer the questions that follow.

### Andrew Ure

Of all the common prejudices that exist with respect to factory labor, none is more unfounded than the one that holds the work to be difficult. In an establishment for spinning or weaving cotton, all the hard work is performed by the steam engine. The worker has literally nothing to do in general, but occasionally join the thread that breaks or perform other easy tasks. It is far from being true that work in a factory goes on without interruption. Thus, children in factories often have much idle time. . . . If a child remains during twelve hours a day, for nine hours he performs no actual labor. A spinner told me that during those intervals he had read through several books.

### Michael Crabtree

SADLER: At what age did you first go to work in a factory?

CRABTREE: Eight.

SADLER: Will you state the hours of labor . . . in ordinary times?

CRABTREE: From 6 in the morning to 8 at night.

SADLER: Were you always there on time?

CRABTREE: No.

SADLER: What was the consequence if you had been too late?

CRABTREE: I was most severely beaten.

SADLER: Will you state to the Committee whether piecening (joining broken threads) is difficult work for children?

CRABTREE: It is very difficult work. Pieceners are continually running to and fro, and on their feet the whole day.

SADLER: So that the work is not only continual, but it is unceasing to the end?

CRABTREE: It is unceasing to the end.

1. What facts about factory labor in Britain can be learned from these sources? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. On what points do Ure and Crabtree disagree? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. How might this disagreement be explained? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What additional evidence might help to resolve the contradiction between the two points of view?

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