



**Filiere: English Studies**

**Semester 3**

**Module: 19**

**British Culture/ US Culture**

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## **Lecture 6: Britain in the Eighteenth Century**

-In the middle of the eighteenth century, the British economy became predominantly industrial. As a matter of fact, most people lived and worked in the towns. Britain's industrialization was known worldwide and brought her power and wealth. England in the eighteenth century was a great empire and such a factor sustained its growth at the economic level. At the political level, the changes taking place within urban areas paved the way for the appearance of a large middle class and even larger working classes. Britain's industrial supremacy lasted for a long time until other countries with immense resources and larger populations became themselves industrialized.

-Britain had a good base for industry. She had natural resources: wool, water, coal and some iron ore. Wool was used to make cloth. In addition to this, water was a source of power in the first phase of the industrial revolution and was always necessary to industry for cleaning, cooling and so forth. Apart from this, coal was a rapidly increasing source of energy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively. Apart from this, iron was vital to iron and steel production.

-The growth of commerce in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively gave Britain larger markets for her goods as well as some raw materials. In addition to this, imperial possessions and acquisitions in the eighteenth century reinforced this position and America continued to trade with Britain after independence. The wealth from trade increased investment and power in Britain. London was at that time in history, the greatest business and banking center in the world. People who had a lot of money in London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively were in fact willing to spend or to invest it in improving land, sinking mines and building factories because the profits accumulated from business transactions were very high.

-Industrialization in Britain would not have occurred without technical innovation. New ideas borrowed from other European countries were implemented in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively. The trend of innovation and invention intensified in the eighteenth century. The universities and learned societies did not actually contribute greatly. Rather, it was practical men, often owners of industries themselves who came up with the new ideas.

-Industry in the eighteenth century used water power to drive the machinery that was improved by the great inventors. With the application of steam to industry, the industrialization of the north, the midlands, the lowlands of Scotland and south Wales accelerated. In addition to this, the writings of the major economist of the eighteenth century, a Scottish academic, Adam Smith, extensively talked about the industrial change that was taking place in Britain. He strongly argued that the division of labour ought to be taken into account and that each worker ought to do a single job and should not see a task from the beginning till the end.