

Waltham's textile factory

1813–1814 | Grade 2 · Read & notice

Words to know

industry — work that makes goods or provides services

labor — work done by people

power — the ability to make something happen

Look closely



Modern topic illustration created for Massachusetts History Explorers. It is not a historical artifact.

Read the story

The Boston Manufacturing Company was formed in 1813. Its Waltham mill began operating in 1814. Machines and workers turned cotton into cloth. A river helped supply power. Factory work changed communities.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. What happened in this reading? Tell one fact.
2. Who or what is this reading mostly about?
3. Choose a word from the word bank. Explain it in your own words.
4. Look at the picture and its caption. What does it help you notice? Is it from the time of the event?

Follow-up reading: The Granite Railway

1826

A railway opened in Quincy to move heavy granite. Stone traveled toward the Bunker Hill Monument project. Rails made moving loads easier. This was an early commercial railroad in the United States.

How are the two readings alike or different? Tell a partner one connection. Which event came first?

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.2.1: ask and answer questions; RI.2.2: identify a main topic; RI.2.7: use images and words; W.2.2 and SL.2.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: The Boston Manufacturing Company was formed in 1813. Its Waltham mill began operating in 1814. Machines and workers turned cotton into cloth. A river helped supply power. Factory work changed communities. The enterprise brought spinning and weaving together. Cotton connected New England manufacturing to enslaved labor elsewhere. Distinguish a company's founding date from when its machinery began production.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

Image: Original site illustration.

[Image source and rights record ↗](#)

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's [HTML page](#). External sources may need adult guidance.