Waltham’s textile factory

1813–1814 | Supported reading · Words first

Words to know

industry — work that makes goods or provides services

labor — work done by people

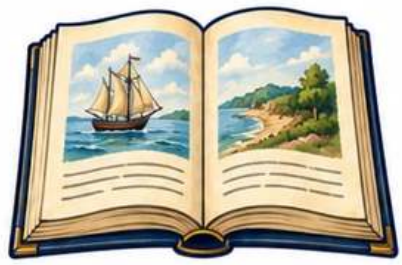
power — the ability to make something happen

Talk before you read

Point, speak, draw, or write. Use your home language first if it helps. Take one word at a time with a teacher or partner.

The teacher page at the end gives all seven steps of the vocabulary routine. These everyday and general academic words are teaching choices, not an official WIDA word list.

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?

Try these starters: “This happened in ___. I learned ___. The picture shows ___. My word is ___. It means ___.”

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.

Calderón's seven-step vocabulary routine

1. Say and show each selected word. Invite learners to repeat it three times.

2. Place the word in a meaningful sentence connected to this event. Read the sentence aloud and point to the word.

3. Give a precise definition. Clarify which meaning fits this context.

4. Restate it in friendly language using an example, object, gesture, or picture.

5. Briefly highlight a useful sound, spelling pattern, word part, or verified home-language connection. Do not invent cognates.

6. Partners practice the word aloud in a complete sentence. Listen, prompt, and provide feedback before asking for writing.

7. Explain how learners will use the word in the reading and final explanation. Revisit it and check that each learner can use or explain it.

Adapted for this lesson from Margarita Calderón's seven-step vocabulary handout. The routine is a teaching adaptation, not a reproduced worksheet.

Offer oral rehearsal, a bilingual glossary, extra processing time, text-to-speech, and a choice of spoken, drawn, dictated, or written response. Consult WIDA Can Do Descriptors for language scaffolds. Clear type and spacing can aid access but are not a dyslexia treatment.

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.