

Lowell becomes a town

1826 | Grade 4 · Explain with evidence

Words to know

industry — work that makes goods or provides services

labor — work done by people

organize — arrange people or things to carry out a plan

Look closely



The Boott Cotton Mills is one of the best, most-intact complexes of cotton mills from Lowell's heyday in the 19th century.

Read the story

Lowell was incorporated as a town. Mills grew beside waterways. Many young women worked in textile factories. Workers created communities and organized for better conditions. The city's story includes many immigrant families.

Waterpower, investment, and labor made the mills possible. The Lowell mill girls were not a single uniform group. Their letters and publications reveal aspirations, criticism, and changing work experiences.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. State the main idea. Support it with two details from the reading.
2. Explain a change or challenge described in the text. Which words support your answer?
3. Use one vocabulary word in a new sentence about this event.
4. What can the image and caption help explain? What can they not tell you?

Follow-up reading: The Liberator begins

1831

William Lloyd Garrison began publishing The Liberator in Boston. The newspaper called for ending slavery. Black and white abolitionists worked in many ways for freedom. Publishing helped spread arguments and news.

Garrison's newspaper was one part of a movement shaped by Black activists, speakers, writers, and communities. Compare a famous editor's work with the organizing that supported abolition.

Compare the two readings. Explain one similarity or difference using a detail from each. Their order does not prove that one caused the other.

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.4.1: refer to details; RI.4.2: main idea and summary; RI.4.3: explain events; RI.4.7: interpret visual information; W.4.2 and SL.4.1: 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: Lowell was incorporated as a town. Mills grew beside waterways. Many young women worked in textile factories. Workers created communities and organized for better conditions. The city's story includes many immigrant families. Waterpower, investment, and labor made the mills possible. The Lowell mill girls were not a single uniform group. Their letters and publications reveal aspirations, criticism, and changing work experiences.

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: NPS Photo

[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.