Have you ever thought what your life would be like if you were unable to read? What problems would you have? How would this affect your ability to find a job?

In the last section, you read about the Second Industrial Revolution. In this section, you will read about the mass society that emerged as a result of the industrialization of Europe. Public education and an increase in literacy were two products of the new mass society.

**ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS**

Use the pyramid diagram below to help you take notes. List the groups or occupations that made up the elite, the middle classes, and the working classes in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century.

**KEY TERMS**

- **feminism** the movement for women's rights (page 407)
- **literacy** the ability to read (page 409)
By the end of the nineteenth century, a mass society emerged in the industrial world. In this society the concerns of the majority—the lower classes—were central. Urban populations grew rapidly because of the vast migration to cities from rural areas. In the cities, people found jobs in factories and, later, in service trades and professions. Cities also grew because living conditions improved so much that people could survive there longer. City governments created boards of health to improve the quality of housing. Dwellings were now inspected for health hazards. New building regulations required running water and drainage systems for all new buildings. The ability to bring in clean water and expel sewage was essential to the public health in cities. New systems of aqueducts, tunnels, and pipes made this possible.

4. What changes were made in cities in the nineteenth century to improve the public health?

• Social Structure of Mass Society (page 404)

After 1871, most people enjoyed an improved standard of living. Even so, great poverty remained a part of Western society. The wealthy elite were at the top of European society. This group was only 5 percent of the population but controlled 30 to 40 percent of the wealth. It was made up of the landed aristocrats and the most successful industrialists, bankers, and merchants (the wealthy upper middle class). Members of the elite became leaders in the government and military.

The middle classes consisted of a variety of groups. Below the upper middle class was a middle group that included lawyers, doctors, members of the civil service, business managers, engineers, architects, accountants, and chemists. Beneath this middle group was a lower middle class of small shopkeepers, traders, and prosperous peasants. The members of this group provided goods and services for the classes above them. The Second Industrial Revolution produced a new group of white-collar workers between the lower middle class and the lower classes. Although not highly paid, these white-collar workers were often committed to middle-class ideals. The European middle classes believed in hard work. They were also regular churchgoers who associated good conduct with Christian morality.
Below the middle classes on the social scale were the working classes. They made up almost 80 percent of the European population. Many of the members of these classes were peasants, farm laborers, and sharecroppers. The urban working class consisted of many different groups, including artisans and semi-skilled laborers. At the bottom of the urban working class were the unskilled laborers. They were the largest group of workers and included day laborers and large numbers of domestic servants. Urban workers experienced an improvement in their lives after 1870. Reforms created better living conditions in cities. As wages increased and the cost of consumer goods declined, workers could buy more than just food and housing. Workers now had money for more clothes and even leisure activities. At the same time, strikes were leading to 10-hour workdays and Saturday afternoons off.

5. In what ways did the lives of urban workers improve after 1870?

• The Experiences of Women (page 406)

During much of the nineteenth century, middle-class and working-class groups believed that women should remain at home and not be allowed in the industrial workforce. Marriage remained the only honorable and available career for most women. One important change in women’s lives did occur during this time, however. The number of children born to the average woman began to decline.

Some differences existed in the lives of middle-class and working-class women. Most working-class women had to earn money to help their families. Daughters in working-class families generally worked until they married. After marriage, they often did small jobs at home to help support the family. Between 1890 and 1914, however, higher-paying jobs in heavy industry allowed many working-class families to depend on the income of husbands alone.

The Second Industrial Revolution opened the door to new jobs for women. A high demand for relatively low paid white-collar workers led many employers to hire women. Industrial plants and retail shops both needed clerks, typists, secretaries, file clerks, and salespeople. Women also took jobs in the fields of education, health, and social services.
Modern feminism, or the movement for women’s rights, had its beginnings during the Enlightenment. In the 1830s, a number of women in the United States and Europe argued for the right of women to divorce and own property. These early efforts were not very successful, and married women in Britain did not win the right to own some property until 1870. The fight for property rights was only the beginning of the women’s movement. Some middle-class women fought for and gained access to universities. Others tried to enter occupations dominated by men. Women generally could not train to become doctors. Some, however, entered the medical field by becoming nurses. Amalie Sieveking, Florence Nightingale, and Clara Barton were leaders in the nursing profession.

In the 1840s and 1850s, the movement for women’s rights expanded as women demanded equal political rights. Many feminists believed that the right to vote was the key to improving the overall position of women. Suffragists (people who advocate the extension of political rights) had one basic aim: the right of women to full citizenship. Before World War I, however, only women in Norway, Finland, and some states in the United States actually received the right to vote.

6. How did the Second Industrial Revolution open the door to new jobs for women?

• Universal Education (page 408)

Universal education was a product of the mass society of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most Western governments began to set up state-financed primary schools. Both boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 12 were required to attend these schools. Western nations made this commitment to public education for two main reasons. One reason was industrialization. The new firms of the Second Industrial Revolution needed trained, skilled labor. Both boys and girls with an elementary education now had new job possibilities. These included white-collar jobs in railways, post offices, and the teaching and nursing fields. The chief reason for public education, however, was political. Giving more people the right to vote created a need for better-educated voters. Primary schools also instilled patriotism.
The most immediate result of public education was an increase in literacy (the ability to read). In western and central Europe, most adults could read by 1900. With the increase in literacy after 1870 came the rise of mass newspapers. These newspapers were all written in an easily understood style. They were also sensationalistic (that is, they provided gossip and gruesome details of crimes).

7. What were the two main reasons that Western nations made a commitment to public education?

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8. How did the Second Industrial Revolution allow people to pursue new forms of leisure?

**New Forms of Leisure** (page 410)

The Second Industrial Revolution allowed people to pursue new forms of leisure. Leisure came to be viewed as what people do for fun after work. The industrial system gave people new times for leisure activities— evenings, weekends, and a week or two in the summer.

Amusement parks introduced people to new experiences and technology. Team sports also developed into another form of leisure. Subways and streetcars made it possible for even the working classes to get to athletic games, amusement parks, and dance halls. Amusement parks and professional sports teams were essentially big businesses organized to make profits.

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