

B B C BITESIZE

The UK economy changed enormously during the Industrial Revolution and has continued to change ever since. The Industrial Revolution led to the mechanisation of agriculture, which reduced the need for workers in the primary sector. Many of these workers moved into manufacturing jobs in towns and cities.

Secondary heavy industries such as mining and shipbuilding became very important from the 19th century.

As the world economy globalised, that is, became more interconnected, many of the UK's traditional primary and secondary industries were no longer competitive with overseas suppliers. These sectors declined and the UK economy became post-industrial. Today, the tertiary sector, which includes services such as health and education, is dominant and recently the quaternary sector, based on innovation, research and development, is growing. For example, pharmaceuticals or computing.

As the UK economy has changed, it has left a mark on the landscape. But economic change across a nation can often be uneven. For example, in the UK, England has a north-south divide, exemplified by differences in income levels, house prices and even life expectancy.

Closing this gap represents an ongoing challenge for the UK. So you can see, over time, the UK economy has changed from being dominated by primary and secondary industries to a very modern focus on tertiary and quaternary sectors.