

Key Vocabulary

Heritage	The history and traditions of a particular area or culture that are significant today.
Revolution	a dramatic and wide-reaching change in conditions, attitudes, or operation
Industry	The process of using raw materials to make and sell something.
Colliery	A coal mine and the buildings and equipment associated with it.
Collier	Someone who works with coal, usually the getter.
Ore	Natural rock that contains one or more valuable minerals, typically metals.
Coal	Valued for its energy content and since the 1880s, has been widely used to generate electricity.
Drift	A horizontal or sloping roadway leading from the surface to underground workings.
Coal face	The part of the seam currently being worked.
Shaft	Vertical tunnel which leads from the surface to the underground roadways.

Background Knowledge

Children should know:

- That Whitwell is a rural village surrounded by other similar ex-mining villages in the locality.
- Whitwell has a railway station that was built in 1875.
- The surface mining of deposits dates back thousands of years; as far back as the Roman times.
- Many people were employed at the collieries until the 1980s.

The History of Whitwell and Mining

Coal mining is the process of extracting coal from the ground. Coal is valued for its energy content, and, since the 1880s, has been widely used to generate electricity. Whitwell had a thriving colliery until 1986.

Key People

Margaret Thatcher	Thatcher was in power during the Miners' Strike of 1984.
Arthur Scargill	He led the 1984-85 mining strike which ended in defeat for the miners.
Ian McGregor	To make the coal industry profitable, he cut jobs and closed pits.

Key Dates

1815	The Davy safety lamp is designed in 1815
1825	Railways begin to open enabling the mass transportation of coal.
1842	The Coal Mines Act stops all underground work for women and girls, and for boys under the age of 10
1913	The year of peak coal production in Britain at 287 million tons.
1921	The year of peak employment with 1.25 million people working in Britain's coal industry.
1972, 1974 and 1984 to 1985	A number of national strikes take place in Britain during the 1970s and 1980s.

2015

The total number of workers is 2,046. There are 9 underground mines (6 of which are operational) and 24 surface mines

Since 2021

There are 4 deep mines and 3 opencast surface mines left in the UK



Key Facts

The Industrial Revolution started in the 1700s, with improved technology for mining coal and providing a much larger market for the use of coal.

It would be common for whole families of mothers, fathers and children to be employed together in the mines.

Conditions were cramped. Some of the underground roadways were as little as 60 – 120 cm in height. Mine owners did not want to increase their costs by making them bigger.

The cramped conditions made accidents and injuries a common occurrence, with roof-falls one of the most likely causes of injury or death.

The strikes in the 1980s led to the closure of the mines and people were forced to work in other industries, however the legacy lives on.

