Inventions Change Lives

Trace how industrial innovations reshaped daily life

SS24.US1.16b "Describe the changes in American society that resulted from the inventions and innovations of business leaders, entrepreneurs, and inventors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two innovations in the passage and circle one change in Americans' lives caused by each. Give each innovation and its linked change the same number.

A Changing Day in America

1 At the turn of the twentieth century, a worker could leave a crowded apartment and see new steel-framed buildings rising nearby. Andrew Carnegie did not invent steel, but his company expanded its production by using efficient methods and large mills. Cheaper steel helped builders put up taller buildings and helped railroads lay more track. These changes brought jobs and connected cities to distant farms and markets. Yet mills also exposed workers to dangerous machines and exhausting shifts. Steel changed where Americans could work and live, but the gains came with risks for the people who made it.

2 After sunset, electric lights began to change the rhythm of city life. Thomas Edison and his team developed a practical lighting system, including bulbs, wiring, and a power station that served part of New York City in 1882. Businesses with electric service could keep shops and offices open after dark, while some homes gained a cleaner alternative to gas lamps. Access spread unevenly, especially outside cities. The telephone, patented by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876, also changed daily routines. As telephone networks grew, people could arrange deliveries or reach relatives without sending a letter or traveling across town.

3 On the street, Henry Ford's factories helped bring another change. Ford did not invent the automobile, but in 1913 his company introduced a moving assembly line for making cars. Workers repeated specialized tasks as each car moved past them. Faster production lowered the price of the Model T over time, making car ownership possible for more families. Cars gave people more choices about where to shop or visit, while demand for roads and gasoline grew. Repetitive factory work could be tiring, and many families still could not afford a car. Innovation reshaped everyday choices without benefiting everyone equally.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Carnegie's expanded steel production change cities and work? Include one benefit and one cost.

2. How did Edison's lighting system change business hours and home life? Why did some Americans see less change?

3. How did growing telephone networks change the way people handled deliveries or kept in touch with relatives?

4. How did Ford's moving assembly line affect both car ownership and factory work?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a city family in 1900 and the same family in 1920. In one paragraph, explain how two innovations from the passage could combine to change a specific day in their lives, and describe one limit or trade-off.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 10 · SS24.US1.16b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two innovations in the passage and circle one change in Americans' lives caused by each. Give each innovation and its linked change the same number. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Carnegie's expanded steel production change cities and work? Include one benefit and one cost.	**Cheaper steel supported taller buildings and more railroad track, bringing jobs and connecting markets. Steelworkers faced dangerous machines and exhausting shifts.**
2	How did Edison's lighting system change business hours and home life? Why did some Americans see less change?	**Businesses with electric service could stay open after dark, and some homes could use electric lights instead of gas lamps. Access spread unevenly, especially outside cities.**
3	How did growing telephone networks change the way people handled deliveries or kept in touch with relatives?	**People could arrange deliveries or contact relatives without sending a letter or traveling across town.**
4	How did Ford's moving assembly line affect both car ownership and factory work?	**Faster production lowered the Model T's price over time, so more families could own cars. Workers performed repeated, specialized tasks that could be tiring.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1900, the Rivera family closed its small shop at dusk and usually visited relatives nearby. By 1920, if their block had electric service, the shop could stay open after dark. With a Model T, they might then drive to visit relatives farther away. Staying open later could help pay for trips, so the two changes might expand both their income and their choices. But a car still cost money, and someone in the family might have to work longer hours at the shop.

Accept other passage-supported links between an innovation and a change in daily life. For Part 3, look for two innovations working together in a plausible situation and one historically grounded limit or trade-off.