Inventions at Work

Trace how industrial changes affected businesses and daily life.

USH.C.2.1.D "Identify the impact of new inventions and industrial production methods on the growth of the American economy and standard of living (e.g., technologies developed by Thomas Edison, Alexander G. Bell, Henry Ford, and the Bessemer Process)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each named invention or production method. For each one, circle an effect on business or jobs, then number a related effect on daily life from 1 to 4 in passage order.

How Industry Changed a Town

1. In the late 1800s, a growing city needed strong bridges, rail lines, and buildings. The Bessemer process blew air through molten iron to remove impurities, allowing factories to make steel faster and at lower cost than earlier methods. Cheaper steel helped railroads expand and made construction materials more affordable. Those projects created demand for workers and connected producers to distant buyers. A farmer could send grain to a city market by rail, giving city shoppers more food choices. Faster movement of goods supported business growth, although new rail connections did not reach every community.

2. After sunset, a shopkeeper once depended on gas or oil lamps to serve customers. Thomas Edison and his teams developed practical incandescent lamps and systems that supplied electric power to buildings. Electric lighting made it easier for some shops and factories to stay open after dark, increasing hours for sales and production. At home, electric lamps offered light without an open flame, though wiring and electricity cost money. Alexander Graham Bell's telephone let people speak across long distances. Businesses could place orders or settle problems faster than they could by sending a letter, while families with telephone service could contact one another more quickly.

3. In 1913, Henry Ford introduced a moving assembly line for Model T cars. Instead of workers building a whole car in one place, the car moved past workers who repeated specific tasks. This system cut assembly time and helped Ford lower prices as production grew. More people could afford cars, making trips to work, shops, and relatives easier for some families. Car production also increased demand for steel, rubber, glass, and road construction, supporting other businesses and jobs. Yet factory work could be repetitive, and many households still could not afford a car or the fuel to run it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Bessemer process help businesses grow, and what change might city shoppers notice?

2. How did Edison's electric lighting systems affect both businesses and life at home?

3. How did Bell's telephone affect the speed of business and family communication?

4. How did Ford's moving assembly line affect car prices and some families' travel?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a small-town business in 1915. In four or five sentences, explain how two different developments from the passage might affect its sales or costs and a worker's daily life; include one realistic limit to those benefits.

ANSWER KEY

Inventions at Work

HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.2.1.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each named invention or production method. For each one, circle an effect on business or jobs, then number a related effect on daily life from 1 to 4 in passage order. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Bessemer process help businesses grow, and what change might city shoppers notice?	**Lower-cost steel helped railroads expand, connecting producers with distant buyers. City shoppers could choose from more food shipped by rail.**
2	How did Edison's electric lighting systems affect both businesses and life at home?	**Some businesses could stay open after dark for more sales or production. At home, electric lamps provided light without an open flame.**
3	How did Bell's telephone affect the speed of business and family communication?	**Businesses could place orders or solve problems faster than by letter. Families with telephone service could contact one another more quickly.**
4	How did Ford's moving assembly line affect car prices and some families' travel?	**It cut assembly time and helped Ford lower car prices as production grew. More families could afford cars and travel more easily to work, shops, or relatives.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1915, a small-town bakery installs electric lighting and a telephone. The lights let it sell bread after sunset, while the telephone lets customers order cakes without visiting the shop. After work, a baker reads by an electric lamp at home and calls a relative in another town. Wiring the bakery and paying for telephone service cost money, so the owner must watch expenses.

Accept other passage-supported links between a development, economic activity, and daily life. For the open task, look for two distinct developments, a plausible 1915 business, and a realistic limit.