

Worksheet A: The Impact of New Inventions

Technology means the tools and methods used by people to get what they need and want. It also means the use of science to invent new tools and methods.

For each generation:

- Ask a friend or family member to list between three and five new products or inventions that modern technology has created during their lifetime..
- Ask them how these products or inventions have changed the way people live.
- Ask them to explain why they think this invention is so important.(It is okay if some people pick the same inventions.)

My Generation (the last 15 years):

Parents Generation (the last 30 years) :

My Grandparents Generation (the last 45 years):

My Great-Grandparents Generation (the last 60 years):

Examine the Labels

Some people have blamed the economic problems of the 1970s and 1980s on competition between foreign goods and American-made goods. How significant is this competition? Students can start to answer this question by examining the labels in their clothing and on their favorite products at home.

Where Does My Clothing Come From?

Shoes/Sneakers _____

Shirt _____

Pants _____

Jacket/Coat _____

For Homework - Where Do My Family's "Things" Come From?

Make a list of your families audio and video equipment, cars or kitchen appliances. Try to uncover where each of these things was manufactured.

Car _____

Television _____

Radios _____

VCR _____

Computer _____

Video Game _____

Audio System _____

Camera _____

Video Camera _____

Microwave _____

Air Conditioner _____

Other items _____

What's the matter with America-made cars?

A) Many Americans say that they do not buy American-made products because they are not of high quality. Consumers Union tests products for safety and reliability. It publishes the results of these tests in its magazine, Consumer Reports. In its 1990 Buying Guide, Consumers Union made recommendations for used cars. It recommended 11 small car models. In alphabetical order, they are:

Acura Integra	Eagle Summit	Ford Festiva	Honda Civic	Mazda 323	Mercury Tracer
Nissan Sentra	Subaru	Toyota Corolla			
Toyota Tercel	Volkswagen Jetta				

- The Acura Integra, Honda Civic, Mazda 323, Nissan Sentra, Subaru, Toyota Corolla, and Toyota Tercel are all made and sold by Japanese automobile companies.

- The Volkswagen Jetta is made and sold by a German automobile company.

- The Eagle Summit, Ford Festiva, and Mercury Tracer are sold by United States companies. However, the Mercury Tracer and the Ford Festiva are manufactured by Mazda and the Eagle Summit is manufactured by Mitsubishi. These are all Japanese owned companies.

B) As a result of federal government laws, companies must "recall" and repair or replace products that do not work properly. In 1979, the following cars were recalled by the Ford Motor Company, an American car manufacturer:

Number	Year	Model	Problem
16,000	1979	Mustangs and Capris	power steering
3,400	1979	Mustangs	engine fan
77,700		Vans	front brake hose
400,000		Capris	front seats
70,000		Light trucks	wheel assembly
390,000	1969-73	Full-size cars	steering system

Sources: Consumer Reports, 1990 Buying Guide Issue (Dec. 1989) p. 146-152. Marvin Harris, America Now (Simon and Schuster: N.Y., 1981) p. 19.

1- What qualities do you think are important in a car? Why?

2- Do you think organizations like the Consumers Union should report on the quality of products?

3- What is your reaction to the information in list B?

4- Have you ever purchased a product that turned out to be "defective"? What did you do? Why?

5- Do you think companies should be required to recall and repair defective products?

6- What do you think would be the impact of these lists on United States automobile manufacturers? Why?

7- If you were an official in an American automobile company, what would you do when you saw these lists? Why?

Allentown, by Billy Joel

As more and more manufactured goods were imported from other parts of the world, many United States factories began to close. The industrial belt in the northern eastern United States began to be called the "Rust Belt".

This popular song by Billy Joel discusses what happened to the people who lived in Allentown, Pennsylvania, during the 1970s when steel mills and coal mines closed. Allentown, Pennsylvania is a real city, but this song is about many places in the United States.

Well, we're living here in Allentown,
And they're closing all the factories down.
Out in Bethlehem they're killing time,
Filing out forms,
Standing in line.

Well, our fathers fought the Second World War,
Spent their weekends on the Jersey shore,
Met our mothers in the U.S.O.,
Asked them to dance,
Dance with them slow.

And we're living here in Allentown,
But the restlessness was handed down,
And it's getting very hard to stay.
Well, we're waiting here in Allentown,
For the Pennsylvania we never found,
For the promises our teachers gave,
If we work hard,
If we behaved.

So the graduations hang on the wall,
But they never really helped us at all,
No they never taught us what was real,
Iron and coke,
And chromium steel.

And we're waiting here in Allentown,
But they've taken all the coal from the ground,
And the union people drove away.
Every child had a pretty good shot,
To get at least as far as their old man gets,
Something happened on the way to that place,
They threw an American flag in our face.

Well, I'm living here in Allentown,
And it's hard to keep a good man down,
But I won't be getting up today,
And it's getting very hard to stay,
And we're living here in Allentown.

- 1) According to this song, what has happened to Allentown, Pennsylvania?
- 2) What kind of industries were in Allentown?
- 3) Billy Joel says that people are waiting for the "Pennsylvania we never found". He claims that "promises" were made. What do you think he means?
- 4) In your opinion, what is the "mood" of this song? What is your evidence for this opinion?
- 5) Do you think the song explains why these things are happening to Allentown?

The New York City Financial Crisis

Examine these headlines and articles about the New York City financial crisis of the 1970s. The leading actors in this crisis were New York City Mayor Abraham Beame, New York State Governor Hugh Carey and President Gerald Ford. Thousands of teachers, police officers, hospital workers, firefighters and other city employees lost their jobs during the financial crisis. City services were cut. Many people suffered.

Abe in Washinton to Chop Down Money Tree (Daily News, Friday, May 9 1975)

With New York's back up against an economic stone wall, Mayor Beame came back to Washington today to lobby for federal aid to his city and said later that his private talks with federal officials were centering on three bail-out proposals. But Beame emphasized: We haven't gotten any commitments from anyone."

In Washington, Beame and fellow Democratic mayors were lobbying for passage of legislation to pump \$4 billion in one-shot federal aid into hard-pressed communities.

Ford Puts a Chill on Beame's Aid Plea (Daily News, Tuesday, May 13, 1975)

As Mayor Beame and Gov. Carey prepared to go to Washington tomorrow to seek cash to help New York City pay its bills, they got word from the White House that they were making a futile (doomed) journey.

Press Secretary Ron Neesen said in Washington that Treasury Secretary William E. Simon's rejection of the city's plea was "the administration position." Of Simon's statement, Beame said: "I never considered that a final answer. The President is the one who has to give us the final answer."

City Writing Pink Slips for 3,067 (Daily News, Wednesday, May 14, 1975)

The Beame administration yesterday announced a three-stage timetable for firing 3,067 city workers. The first dismissal notices will be issued tomorrow. Budget chief Lechner said that the layoffs are part of a planned reduction of 13,782 job positions.

Dear Abe: So Sorry I Can't Help -- Ford (Daily News, Thursday, May 15, 1975)

President Ford last night rejected Mayor Beame's urgent plea for immediate federal assistance to tide the city over its \$1.5 billion cash-flow crisis and dumped the problem in Gov. Carey's lap.

In a 10-paragraph "Dear Abe" letter, the President said that while he was "impressed with the problems you and the City Council must face in the next few weeks," he must turn down the city's request for a financial bailout. The mayor said the President's answer to the city's request "is to advise us to cripple our vital services." Carey called Frd's letter "news of more abandonment...our darkest fears have been confirmed."

Banks Won't Buy 280 M City Notes (Daily News, Tuesday, May 20, 1975)

Banking representatives rejected late yesterday the city's attempt to float \$280 million worth of short-term notes that would have brought in cash to meet expenses.

Ford Says City Flunks Test on Fiscal Fitness (Daily News, Wed., May 21, 1975)

President Ford has blamed New York City's financial plight on "bad municipal management" for the last 10 years. He suggested that the city could help put its fiscal (economic) house in order by imposing tolls on East River bridges, curtailing (ending) free university education and cutting expenses. Ford delivered a firm and final "no" to city pleas for \$1.5 billion in federal financial assistance.

Banks Tie City Loan to State or U.S. Aid (Daily News, Friday, May 23, 1975)

The leaders of 25 banks and other financial institutions said last night that they would lend the city \$280, but only if the state or federal government agreed to provide an additional \$720 million needed to meet city expenses through June.

Abe: Big Layoffs If We Get Only Half (Daily News, Saturday, May 24, 1975)

The Beame administration ordered agency heads yesterday to prepare for a \$300 million budget cut that could lop 4,000 cops, 1,500 firemen and thousands of other city employees from the payroll if Albany Republicans approve only half of Beame's tax and aid package.

City Gears Up To Fire 51,097 (Daily News, Friday, May 30, 1975)

Wielding a budget knife that he charged was honed by Albany Republicans and Wall Street bankers, Mayor Beame last night submitted a drastically pared (reduced) city budget calling for sharp service cuts and the slashing of 51,097 workers from the payroll.

Ford to City: Drop Dead (Daily News, Thursday, October 30, 1975)

President Ford declared flatly today that he would veto any bill calling for "a federal bail-out of New York City" and instead proposed legislation that would make it easier for the city to go into bankruptcy.

In a speech before the national Press Club, Ford coupled repeated attacks on the city's fiscal management with a promise that, if default came, the federal government would see to it that "essential public services for the people of New York City" would be maintained.

Carey Tells City: Sound Off To Ford (Daily News, Friday, October 31, 1975)

Asserting that President Ford had given New York a "kick in the groin", Gov. Carey mapped plans yesterday for a huge public pressure campaign, including giant rallies, "to sound off on behalf of the city." It was learned that one big Times Square rally was being set for Sunday, Nov. 16.

Ford Gives In, Backs \$2.3 B Aid (Daily News, Thursday, November 27, 1975)

Declaring that "New York has bailed itself out," President Ford reversed himself tonight and said that he would ask Congress for authority to provide direct federal loans of up to \$2.3 billion a year for three years to help the city avert (avoid) financial default.

Ford maintained that he had decided to aid New York once the city and state made the "tough decisions" required to insure sound finances in coming years.