

How the Car Has Changed Our Lives

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OVERVIEW

Students will analyze how the advent of the automobile changed lives and write an editorial article for an early twentieth century newspaper.

STANDARDS

- Reading & Writing Standard 2.1: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Reading & Writing Standard 5: Students read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technological sources.
- History Standard 2.2: Students know how to interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources of historical information.
- History Standard 4.1: Students understand how science technology, and economic activity have developed, changed, and affected societies throughout history.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this activity, students will be able to:

- interpret information from historical photographs and text
- evaluate the impact of the automobile on lives in the early twentieth century
- write an editorial article explaining these impacts

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- What were the first automobiles like? How are they similar/different from today's cars?
- What new things were people able to do once they owned a car?
- How did traveling change for people?
- What were some of the problems with the first cars?
- How do you think cars changed Colorado?

MATERIALS

- All photographs and text from the Doing History unit on the Twentieth Century, focusing on the Transportation – Autos Theme
- A recent newspaper editorial

PROCEDURE

1. Have students review the photographs and text dealing with Autos in the Twentieth Century with the above inquiry questions in mind.
2. As a whole class or in small groups, discuss the students' thoughts and answers to the inquiry questions, charting the responses.
3. Discuss what an editorial article is. Read students the example you found. How is it different from other newspaper articles? What other issues might people write editorials about today? What kind of Voice is used in editorials?

ASSESSMENT

Tell students that they are going to pretend that they are journalists in Colorado in 1920. Their assignment is to write a cause-and-effect editorial about how the car is changing people's lives and changing Colorado. Remind them to write with an editorial Voice.