

Lesson 2 Ford's Solutions

Main Ideas

- Solutions were needed to the problems of the unsatisfying nature of assembly line work and the language/culture barrier.
- Ford Motor Company sought to address these problems with the \$5 day, Ford English School and the company's Sociological Department.

Key Concepts

- \$5 day
- Profit sharing
- Capital
- Paternalism
- Sociological
- Melting pot
- Salad bowl
- Assimilation

Digitized Artifacts

from the Collections of **The Henry Ford**

Lesson 2 Ford's Solutions

- Ford Motor Company Publication: "Helpful Hints and Advice to Ford Employes," 1915 (cover ID# THF68295) (page 7 ID# THF68296) (page 8 ID# THF68297)
- **Note:** Students may ask about the spelling of "employee" as "employe." The word "employee" comes from the French word "employé." When foreign words are newly used in the English language, often there is not an agreed-upon spelling.

- Ford English School Diploma for Mike Pachulski, July 4, 1917 ID# THF68327
- Ford Motor Company Publication, "Factory Facts from Ford," 1915 (page 45 ID# THF68316)
- Ford Motor Company Publication, "Ford Times," June 1915 (cover ID# THF68332) (page 407 ID# THF68333)
- Melting Pot Ceremony at Ford English School, July 4, 1917 ID# THF36844
- Ford Motor Company Clipping Book, Volume 2, January 6-10, 1914 ID# THF80232
- Crowd of Applicants Outside Highland Park Plant after Five Dollar Day Announcement, January 1914 ID# THF67496

Materials

- Computers with access to Internet; digital projector and screen (preferred) OR printed handouts of digitized artifacts and descriptions
- Sign: What influence do prior experiences, class, race, language and culture have on people's lives?
- Lesson 2 Articles Available at thehenryford.org/exhibits/smartfun/class/modelt/lessons.html
 - "Ford Factory Has a Heart"
 - "Ford and Some Questions"
 - "Ford Again Staggers the World"
 - "Big Employers Favor and Criticise Mr. Ford's Distribution of \$10,000,000"

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Materials Continued

- Lesson 2 Slideshow: Ford's Solutions
- Student Activity Sheet 2A: Changing Nature of Work – Understanding History Through Math
- Answer Key 2A: Changing Nature of Work – Understanding History Through Math
- Student Activity Sheet 2B: The \$5 Day in the News

Duration 2 class periods (45 minutes each)

Instructional sequence

1 Review of worker issues

Review the Venn diagram summarizing worker problems from Lesson 1.

2 The \$5 day

Have students read and complete Student Activity Sheet #2A: Changing Nature of Work – Understanding History through Math. Discuss the answers as a class.

Ask students what would persuade them to do a really unpleasant job. Why? Show and discuss slides 2 and 3 from the [Lesson 2 Slideshow: Ford's Solutions](#) with your students to introduce them to the \$5 day.

Divide the class into small groups. Copy and distribute articles that offer some different perspectives on the \$5 day. Each of these small groups will read one of these four articles: “[Ford Factory Has a Heart](#),” “[Ford and Some Questions](#),” “[Ford Again Staggers the World](#),” and “[Big Employers Favor and Criticise Mr. Ford's Distribution of \\$10,000,000](#).” (The articles are accessible at thehenryford.org/exhibits/smartfun/class/modelt/lessons.html.)

Distribute at least one article to each group. Have students analyze their article by completing Student Activity Sheet #2B: The \$5 Day in the News.

After they have completed their activity sheets, have the groups share answers with the class. Together review the unfamiliar words students found, especially **profit sharing**, **paternalism** and **capital**. Refer to the Glossary in the Teacher Guide for assistance.

2 Influence of workers' cultures on their lives as Ford Motor Company assembly line workers – Part 1: The Sociological Department

Introduce this part of the lesson by reminding your students that, as stated in the articles about the \$5 day, earning \$5 a day was not automatic. Display the [Ford Motor Company Publication: “Helpful Hints and Advice to Ford Employees,” 1915](#) (cover ID# THF68295). Tell students that Ford Motor Company published this booklet in 1915 to explain to employees how the profit-sharing plan worked.

Distribute copies of [Ford Motor Company Publication: “Helpful Hints and Advice to Ford Employees,” 1915](#) (page 7 ID# THF68296) (page 8 ID# THF68297).

Remind students of the content of the document, the requirements for profit sharing and that “investigators” needed to be convinced of legal marriages. This part of the booklet explains more about these investigators. With students, read page 8, starting with the second full paragraph and reading the entire section “Investigators.” Ask students to share their initial reactions to the plans to use investigators. Record their answers on the board or on a poster paper.

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Discussion Questions

- What do you think is Ford Motor Company's opinion of its employees? Why? Do certain words or phrases jump out at you?

If students do not identify them, ask them about the words “helpful” and “advice” and about the phrase “grasp the opportunities presented to them by the Ford . . .” These words imply a condescending, paternalistic attitude.

- What do you think is the purpose of the “Sociological Department”? Define sociological (see the Glossary).

Explain that the purpose of the Ford Sociological Department was to monitor employees and encourage them to adopt efficient and productive habits in the workplace and at home. The word “sociological” applies because the department was looking at the effects of culture and environment on the behavior of a large group; it was not assumed that the behavior was a psychologically based, personal characteristic. Ford Motor Company thought that by influencing the behavior of employees at home, employees would become better workers at the factory. The department sent investigators out into the community to meet with workers in their homes, show them habits that Ford Motor Company sought in its employees and evaluate the quality of their home lives. In order for a worker to receive his share of the profits, the company required that “he must show himself to be sober, saving, steady, industrious and must satisfy the . . . staff that his money will not be wasted in riotous living.” If a worker did not conform to these standards, he or she ran the risk of being paid half as much for the same work as his or her coworkers and could eventually lose his or her job.

Show students the artifact [Ford Motor Company Publication, “Factory Facts from Ford,” 1915](#) (page 45 ID# THF68316) which illustrates the department's work.

Discussion Questions

- What is your first reaction to the pair of photographs?
- Look closely at each photograph. Describe what you see.
- What do you not know about these photographs that you would like to know?

Some possible responses:

Were they taken in the same house?

Was the worker earning \$5 a day when the initial photo was taken?

How did the family get new furniture?

Who were the family members, and what was the role of each person? Was there a person in the family experienced in taking care of a home?

When this photo was taken, was a family member ill or had a big meal or important family event just taken place?

- Can you relate this situation to any experience you have had?

Some students may have issues with their parents over the cleanliness of their bedrooms; other students may have family members or friends with what they would consider to be messy rooms or homes.

- Why do you think Ford Motor Company and the investigators were concerned about a dining room like the one in this photograph?

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- How do you think a family's culture, traditions or income may affect how they set up their home?

Different cultures, traditions and incomes result in the setting up of homes in different ways.

- How do you think the family who lived in the home in this photograph felt about the investigator's finding?

As homework, ask students to write a journal entry about the Sociological Department visit from the perspective of either the investigator or a family member. Ask them to also write a paragraph explaining how they think the family member's or investigator's prior experiences, class, race, language and/or culture affect his/her perspective about the visit.

In class the next day, ask a few students to share their journal entries. Have a discussion about the role of prior experiences, class, race, language and culture in Sociological Department visits.

4 Influence of workers' cultures on their lives as Ford Motor Company assembly line workers – Part 2: Ford English School

First, show students the artifact [Ford English School Diploma for Mike Pachulski, July 4, 1917](#) ID# THF68327.

Discussion Questions

- What is the name on the diploma? *Mike Pachulski.*
- Where do you think Mike Pachulski emigrated from?

Eastern Europe, perhaps Poland or Russia.

- Tell students (or remind them, if you have done Lesson #1: Finding Jobs, Finding Problems) that the largest number of non-English speaking Ford employees were Polish.

Next, show students the artifact [Ford Motor Company Publication, "Ford Times," June 1915](#), (cover ID# THF68332). Introduce the article titled "Assimilation Through Education" in this issue of the [Ford Motor Company Publication, "Ford Times," June, 1915](#) (page 407 ID# THF68333). Display it on the projector (if available) and copy and distribute the article for students to read.

Discussion Questions

- According to the article, why was it necessary for Ford employees to learn English?

There were misunderstandings about orders from the foremen.

They were not integrating into American society.

They had to shop in stores where their native language was spoken, and some of these shopkeepers were taking advantage of them.

- What does assimilation mean?

Assimilation is the merging of previously distinct customs and attitudes from different cultures, with minority cultures usually being absorbed into the dominant culture.

- Now that you know the word "assimilation," do you sense any motives other than the ones mentioned in the article for having the employees learn English?

Perhaps Ford Motor Company felt that learning English would help the immigrants assimilate more quickly so that they would adopt American customs and attitudes and fit into the workplace better.

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Ask students what they have been told or what they have overheard about the ways immigrants are assimilated into American culture.

Discussion Questions

- Have students heard of the metaphors melting pot or salad bowl?

Answers will vary.

- What do these metaphors mean, and what is the difference between them? What do these different metaphors mean for the immigrants' home culture? What do these metaphors mean for the American culture?

In the melting pot metaphor, all groups' attitudes and customs are melted together to create a completely new culture that all individuals adopt. This means some elements of the home culture are lost but also that some elements of the home culture are adopted into the American culture.

In the salad bowl metaphor, all groups are tossed together in one society, but the groups retain their own attitudes and customs. This means the home culture is maintained while American culture becomes a mixture of the elements of many other cultures.

- Which metaphor do the students think more accurately describes what actually occurs?

Answers will vary; ask students to back up their opinions with examples.

- Which way of bringing new immigrants into American culture do students think is better?

Answers will vary; ask students to back up their opinions with examples.

Show students the artifact [Melting Pot Ceremony at Ford English School, July 4, 1917](#) ID# THF36844. Use the digital projector or distribute printed copies of the image. Explain to students that in this ceremony, Ford English School graduates would walk into the pot wearing their traditional ethnic clothing and would walk out wearing American suits.

Discussion Questions

- In light of our discussion about the melting pot metaphor, what is the melting pot ceremony saying about these individuals' culture?

Their native culture is melting off and mixing with American culture, and they are emerging as American.

- How would you feel if you were the company owner, Henry Ford, watching this ceremony?

Answers will vary. Ford may have felt both a paternalistic sense of pride in helping the immigrants and relief that his workforce would now be more cohesive and conformist.

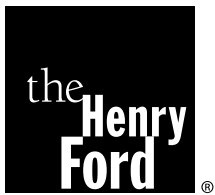
- How would you feel if you were a graduate participating in the ceremony, walking into and out of the melting pot?

Answers will vary. Graduates might feel that they are gaining something (a language, an American identity, etc.) or that they are losing something (their home language and ethnic identity).

Ask students to create an illustration of a metaphor or symbol for American culture – a symbol that they think both immigrants and Americans could agree on. They should explain, in a short class presentation or in a written paragraph, why they made their choice.

Assessment

Assess students' journal entries and their metaphor assignments.



Name _____

changing nature of work -

Understanding History Through Math



Some people did not like working on Henry Ford's moving assembly line. This new method of production changed the way that they worked. They were no longer involved in the yearlong process of planting and harvesting or even the whole process of building a car. Workers just completed one small part of the vehicle assembly process over and over again, every day. This made it easier to train workers and turn out cars more quickly. For instance, in 1914, fourteen men per shift were working on the assembly line to produce the flywheel, a part of the Model T's magneto starter. Together, they could produce approximately one flywheel every five minutes per person!

However, doing a small task over and over again was boring. Also, workers had to work as fast as the conveyor belt moved parts to their station; if one worker slowed down or got behind, the rest of the process would be held up. In fact, the company had to hire 53,000 people a year just to keep the 14,000 jobs filled.

1. In 1914, about how many flywheels could be produced on the flywheel assembly line in an eight-hour shift?

2. How many people quit or were fired (or what was the "turnover") at Ford Motor Company each year?

3. What percentage of people left Ford Motor Company each year?

Name _____

changing nature of work - Understanding History Through Math



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1. In 1914, about how many flywheels could be produced on the flywheel assembly line in an eight-hour shift?

$$\frac{1 \text{ flywheel} \times 60 \text{ minutes} \times 8 \text{ hours} \times 14 \text{ workers}}{5 \text{ minutes} \quad 1 \text{ hour} \quad 1 \text{ shift} \quad 1 \text{ shift}} =$$

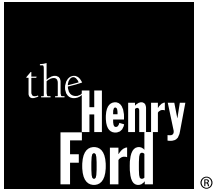
$$\frac{6720}{5} = \text{about } 1,344 \text{ flywheels}$$

2. How many people quit or were fired (or what was the "turnover") at Ford Motor Company each year?

$$\begin{array}{r} 53,000 \\ - 14,000 \\ \hline 39,000 \text{ workers} \end{array}$$

3. What percentage of people left Ford Motor Company each year?

$$39,000 \div 53,000 = 73.6\%$$



Name _____

THE \$5 DAY IN THE NEWS

TITLE OF ARTICLE

WERE THERE ANY UNFAMILIAR WORDS IN THE ARTICLE? WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY MEAN? REVIEW THEM WITH YOUR TEACHER AND CLASSMATES.

WHAT DOES THE ARTICLE SAY IS THE REASON FOR THE \$5 DAY?

Do you think Ford Motor Company was entirely, partially or not at all truthful in explaining its reasons? Why?

HOW DOES FORD MOTOR COMPANY BENEFIT FROM THE \$5-DAY POLICY?

