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Inventors and Inventions of the 19th Century

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Title: Inventors and Inventions of the 19th Century

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Grade Levels: 9-12

Time: 2 class periods of one hour each

Focus Statement: As we dive deeper into the Gilded Age, the students begin to understand the idea of change in this era. The prior lesson discussing the chaos and drastic change of America, the students will understand the amount of change. Change is everywhere and is constant. Drastic upgrades with technology are sweeping across the country at a rapid pace. This causes change in industry and improves the lives of people in a general sense. Tasks that were once difficult are made easier with a new invention or an upgrade of an old one. Products that were once made manually and involved a lot of work is now done at a rapid rate and the amount of that same product increases tenfold. We will begin to dig deeper into some changes that occurred by working with material that deals with those who are inventors and create things that dramatically change the way the world runs.

The students should have a habit of mind when working on this project. They need to understand how things happen and how things change, how human interactions matter, but also how their consequences are shaped by the means of carrying them out, in a tangle of purpose and process. Understanding how things have changed since that era to now is important when trying to create a poster. We are using current technology to create posters that would be represented in an era that did not possess this advanced technology. It is important to understand the drastic differences between then and now.

MN Standard: As the United States shifted from its agrarian roots into an industrial and global power, the rise of big business, urbanization and immigration led to institutionalized racism, ethnic and class conflict and new efforts at reform. (Development of an Industrial United States 1870-1920)

MN Standard Benchmark: 9/12/4.20.1 Explain how technological innovation, heavy industrialization, and intensified boom-bust cycles of an unregulated capitalist economy led to changes in the nature of work, economic scale and productivity, the advent of the modern corporation, and the rise of national labor unions. (Development of an Industrial United States 1870-1920)

Learning Objective:

- Express importance of inventions in context of time they were invented.
- Creatively identify invention benefits through propaganda poster

Resources:

- Materials to create propaganda poster (scissors, rulers, markers and colored paper)
- Access to computer for research
- Printer (color if possible)

Methods/Procedures

Beginning (20 minutes):

- Begin with a short lecture on what propaganda is. For the purpose of the lesson, we are making types of propaganda that will try to convince those to buy or support the new invention made by the inventor. In the lecture, show types of propaganda that have been used.

- The lecture begins with that propaganda is. Talk about the purpose of propaganda and how it is a useful tool that has been used in America to convince the general public to either invest in or buy something.
- Show examples of propaganda that was used during WW2. Tell the students what these posters were for. A lot of them were pointed towards convincing the public to buy war bonds or support the troops overseas. This was done by creating posters that showed what would happen if the United States lost the war and why just a little help from average Joe could change the war in our favor. It is important the students understand and look for ways to best portray and show off their product. Tell people why this product is needed and how it would impact society in a positive way.
- Have a class discussion on what they find in common with the propaganda posters that are being presented in class. They will note any similarities and differences based on what they are trying to promote. These examples will give the students common propaganda tips and ideas to help create an influencing poster. For example, they want big lettering, a good image if possible and it is always important to try and make the propaganda interesting and easy to understand.
- Transition into talking about how inventors and their inventions during this era dramatically changed the landscape of industry, business and the overall quality of life. Thomas Edison is one that comes to mind but there are many others whom students are allowed to study. Give a list of inventors and inventions during this time in history.

Middle (40 minutes)

- Explain to the students that they will be assigned an invention that they will then create a propaganda poster. We discussed propaganda posters for World War II so they can apply that knowledge from the lecture and use it to create their own poster.
- The purpose of the posters is to help convince the patent office. In this case, the other classmates will be playing that role. Explain the importance of making a presentable and convincing poster that will give them the best chance of getting their product approved by the patent office so they can begin to sell their product to the public.
- Before they do that, they must do some research about the inventor and invention they are assigned and must create a visual that somehow promotes the invention and the inventor if they so choose. This is also the portion that they will be creating the poster. It must be visually stimulating enough to where people would be intrigued and interested in the product. (Not all students are good artists so they may create their poster on the computer to help make it visually appealing). The poster must be presentable so they can share their posters when they explain it the next class period. They must also create a short paragraph of at least ten sentences discussing the product and then explain the idea they came up with for the poster and where would they put them if they were living in that era. Would you hang them up at all?

End (50 minutes)

- Students will be divided into 5 groups [Method will be counting off] so the students will be more comfortable presenting what they have created. The main purpose of making groups is making presenting comfortable for all students. This format also gives the other students of the group the role of being the patent office. They have the ability to decide whether or not to put the product to market. This also saves times than if you were to have all students individually present to the whole class. Each student will take turns presenting the poster they made and describe what the purpose of the poster is and why their product deserves to be put to market. The other students of the group will analyze and decide what is good about the propaganda and give advice for future ideas they may submit. Is it more expensive? Can it be sold the regular people? Each invention will have a different purpose so it is important the students explain the true purpose of their product.
- After the presentations, each student will write a summary of other products they saw in their group and write about them as compared to their invention or inventor. How are they similar? How are they different? If a student has a very well done and clean poster, they can choose to quickly show the class if they would like to.
- Finally, the students will submit their poster and summary to receive a grade for their work.

Afterwards

Self-Reflection

- Maybe I could give more time for research or more time to create their poster. It may take more time than I am imagining.
- It may not be a good idea to discuss propaganda from World War 2 because this era is before that happened.