

TITLE: LIVING HISTORY Industrializing Period  
Unit on Industrialization 1870 - 1900  
Lesson: six

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GRADE LEVEL: appropriate for all grade levels  
(Social studies)

OVERVIEW: So often students are turned off by history classes because they view the past as irrelevant to their lives. This is a dynamite unit designed to bring history and technology alive. This activity gets all students involved and the finished product can be shared with the whole school.

OBJECTIVE(s): Students will be able to:

1. Identify major events of the 1870's through 1900's.
2. Gain an understanding of human artifacts, and how those artifacts define a generation.
3. Contrast the technology and artifacts of different generations.

Tennessee State Board of Education Social Studies Curriculum Standards  
Standards, Learning Expectation and Draft Performance Indicators:

- 1.04 Describe the influence of science and technology on the development of culture through time.
- 8.1.spi.6. Interpret a timeline of technological innovations
- 8.1.tpi.8. Research how specific technological innovations have impacted society.
- 8.1.tpi.9. Make a timeline of technological innovations.
- 2.4 Understand the interactions of individuals, businesses and the government in a market economy.
- 8.2.spi.2 interpret a diagram showing the steps of changing resources into a product(s).
- 8.2.tpi.13. Brainstorm ideas for inventions or innovations that might have been well received in early America.

Set: History of Sloss Iron Factory / Birmingham.

In 1876 James Wither Sloss, a railroad man, rode into the new city of Birmingham. Mr. Sloss and others wanted to build stores and factories and build a city. They need factories for people to work. They also needed to build blast furnaces. Blast furnaces could make iron from the minerals found in the mountains and valleys around Birmingham. The only place in the world where all three items: (coal, iron ore and limestone), to make iron. These three items could be found within miles of each other. In 1881, Mr. Sloss began the Sloss Furnace Company. This company started making iron. To mix all three items of coal, iron ore and limestone, Mr. Sloss's factory needed very hot air and giant blowing engines to pump into the furnaces. Many large stoves were needed to heat the air and blow into the blast furnace. In the blast furnace, the hot

air made the coke (made from coal) burn. The iron ore and limestone got so hot they melted. This formed molten iron and molten slag. Every few hours the workers drained the molten iron and slag from the blast furnace. This hot iron was poured into molds called pig iron. When the iron bars (pigs) cooled, they were hard. They were loaded onto trains and took the foundries. At the foundries, men melted the iron again and molded it into stoves tools, pans, pipes and machines.

#### ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES:

1. Students brainstorm the major events of the 1870's. The Civil War and Reconstruction had ended. What did American need to start building?
2. Students write an essay dated November 1876. Rutherford B. Hayes had become President by 20 votes. Encourage them to describe their feelings of what life is like, get them to become imaginative. What did American need?
3. Share the interviews. (You can require a typed synopsis to create a "packet of interviews", and you will find this to be a good resource for guest speakers.)
4. Have students define "artifact" and begin putting together a mini-museum of things made from iron. Students are to bring in artifacts. (I usually start it off with coal, limestone and iron ore, a few old tools, wheels, pictures of factories, etc. You maybe be surprised at what the students will get.
5. Set up the "museum" in the hallway, and assign students times to monitor it. They can give "tours" and answer questions.
6. Make the students responsible for the unit test. Have everyone write three multiple-choice questions and an essay question. Pick the best questions for the unit test. Make sure you have them compare an "old artifact" with a modern one.

**TYING IT ALL TOGETHER:** You will be surprised by the enthusiasm the students will have for this unit. This is a fun way to bring Living History into the classroom, and you will be surprised by the questions the students will ask. You could want to end this unit by having the students do a role-play in the future, and they come across our modern artifacts.