

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 04.01: Word Meaning: Tracing the Tractor's Legacy  
Reading: The Car Catalyst Text

## The Car Catalyst Text

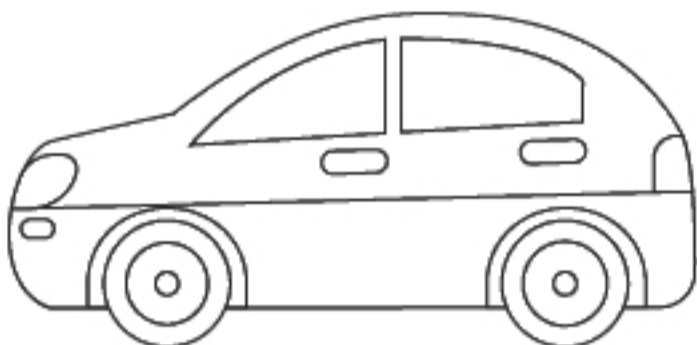
Read the text *The Car Catalyst*, following the lesson directions to highlight the details that show how automobiles changed the world.

### The Car Catalyst

Written by: Todd Briggs

#### How have cars changed the world?

The development of the automobile has had far reaching consequences beyond the world of transportation. Cars have obviously had a huge affect on our ability to be transported from one place to another, but they also helped to revolutionize production through the development of the factory line. The plan was that the factory line would work like a well-oiled machine. Henry Ford's desire to create mass-produced vehicles meant that cars were affordable to almost everyone, not just the wealthy. The popularity of the car also provided work for millions of people throughout the world, but particularly in the USA.



The car gave people the opportunity to travel easily and without much cost. This meant that they were able to engage in leisure travel, which was more difficult previously. They were finally able to get the show on the road! The invention meant that people did not have to live close to their work, as they could now use a car to get to work. This lead to the development of suburbs outside towns and cities worldwide, particularly in the USA.

#### The Car's Impact on the USA

At the beginning of the 1900s, the car was seen as a toy for the rich. Henry Ford had a vision that would change this. He made cars to be sold as cheaply as possible while still making a profit. He also ensured that his factory workers could afford to buy the product they made. Throughout his lifetime, he was able to ensure these goals were kept on track. More roads were built in the United States as the popularity of the car increased in the USA.

The popularity of the car experienced a boom and bust trend throughout the 1900s. This meant that car production lessened during the World Wars and the depression of the 1930s. After World War II the USA experienced a boom period, and this is often seen as being a golden era for car manufacturing in the USA. The cars produced during the 1950s and 1960s are still seen as iconic and are often now collectible items.

The car has also had an impact on creating the world's vision of the USA through popular culture. For many, the portrayal of American cars in songs and in films ties in with the concept of the American Dream.

#### How have cars changed?

Karl Benz is often viewed as the inventor of the first car. His original model had three wheels, one at the front and two at the back. The car was very difficult to control, and he often crashed his car through a period of trial and error. Strangely, it was not until 1901 that the brake was invented for use in cars. No wonder Karl Benz

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crashed his cars so often!

Having a radio in a car is standard now, and there are a variety of options available, such as satellite radio, MP3, and Bluetooth. However, the first car radio wasn't offered as an option until 1929.

The use of blinkers in cars only became a standard feature in 1939. This was obviously a huge development in terms of health and safety requirements. The seat belt was another important improvement. Australia was the first country to make seat belts compulsory soon after they were first installed in cars in 1956. The use of seat belts did not become law in the USA until 1968.

In terms of comfort, there have been huge developments throughout the last century. Perhaps one of the most notable improvements has been in the introduction of air conditioning in cars, particularly in warm climates. When it was first introduced in 1940, it wasn't as easy to use as now. Drivers had to stop the car, get out, and disconnect a tube located under the hood! It is now standard for cars to have a spare wheel and the means to change it, such as an air jack and a lug wrench. This was not the case in the first cars.

#### Racing Cars and the Indy 500

It seems inevitable that as cars developed, so too should the desire to race them. After all, what is a car if it can't be called lightening fast? The first true car race was held in 1895 from Paris to Bordeaux in France. The winner travelled at an average speed of 15 miles per hour. This may seem as slow as a turtle to us now, but it was considered very fast back then. In the USA, the first automobile race was a return race from Chicago to Evanston on Thanksgiving Day in 1895.

The car industry has relied on developments within motor racing. The world of racing is often seen as a testing ground for new innovations that could have an impact on the automobile industry. The world of motorsports is seen as pushing boundaries and generating ideas or solutions.

The Indy 500 race is held every year at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and is often viewed by 300,000 spectators. It is considered the apex of the racing calendar. The race is a 2.5-mile oval circuit, and the drivers race 200 laps counterclockwise for a total distance of 500 miles. The event has been considered the largest single-day sporting event in the world. There are normally 33 cars in the race. The race is never held in wet conditions. If it rains, then the event is postponed, and the track is dried. If it rains during the event, the race can be stopped. The apron was a popular part of the track for drivers to overtake one another. It was an extended area on the hairpin corners. However, it has been discarded for safety concerns.

As they say in the world of the automobile, that's the end of the road!

