

# Detroit

## Activity 1

What do these numbers refer to?

15 million \_\_\_\_\_

1908 \_\_\_\_\_

3,300 \_\_\_\_\_

12h 8m \_\_\_\_\_

19 \_\_\_\_\_

1918 \_\_\_\_\_



## Activity 2

Answer these questions:

1. How did the prices of Ford's first cars compare to others at that time?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How could Ford sell his cars so cheaply? (Give 3 reasons)

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How long did it take to assemble a Model T in 1908? In 1914? In 1927?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Why didn't Ford do any advertising around the early 1920's?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Why did Ford stop producing such a successful car?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why isn't the Model T suitable for today's driving?

\_\_\_\_\_

### Activity 3

Listen and complete the gaps

As suggested by the nicknames 'Motor City' and 'Motown', Detroit is known as the world's \_\_\_\_\_ capital.

Here Henry Ford built the famous Model T, known as the 'Tin Lizzie' or the 'Flivver'. His first "car for the great \_\_\_\_\_ " was produced at the Piquette Avenue Plant on October 1st, 1908.

Model T was the first \_\_\_\_\_ automobile, the first to be marketed to the middle class. Until then, cars were very expensive, so only \_\_\_\_\_ people could afford one. When cars cost between \$2000 and \$3000, Ford Motor Company started to sell Model T at a price of \$850. And in the 1920s you could buy one for less than \$300, which today would be like spending \$3,300. It was soon a huge success: cars stopped being a luxury item for the rich and became an essential \_\_\_\_\_ of transportation for the masses.

What was Ford's secret? A few \_\_\_\_\_ innovations: highly efficient production, highly paid workers and low prices. First, he introduced the use of assembly-line production instead of hand \_\_\_\_\_, which allowed time saving and much lower costs. Before then cars were made by hand by groups of two or three men, using pieces ordered from other \_\_\_\_\_. At the beginning it took 12 hours and 8 minutes to assemble a Model T. In 1914, after only six years of production, the process had been reduced to 1 hour and 33 minutes. That same year Ford sold more cars than all the other producers put together. Then in \_\_\_\_\_, when the last Model T was produced, it only took 24 seconds to assemble one. Between 1917 and 1923 the car was so successful that Ford didn't even have to do any \_\_\_\_\_, and in 1918 half of the cars in the States were Ford's Model T.

But Ford was also clever in paying his workers a wage \_\_\_\_\_ to the cost of the car. He reduced the working time and paid his workers more, with a double effect: the \_\_\_\_\_ worked better and were able to buy themselves a car. And the more the factory improved its productivity, the more it reduced its prices.

In 1927 Ford retired Model T after having produced 15 million of them. After 19 years it was too antiquated to compete with the \_\_\_\_\_ cars that were being offered by other companies like Chevrolet and GM. \_\_\_\_\_, though, many steel Model T parts are still manufactured today and the car is regarded as the world's most influential of the 20th century, for its impact on American society.

Some Model Ts have survived until today but driving them is not easy at all, especially in today's traffic. They \_\_\_\_\_ and brake slowly and they don't handle well. However, they are perfect on \_\_\_\_\_ roads, as this is the surface they were made for.

This student worksheet is free to download and print for use in the classroom or for self-study. It is meant to be used in conjunction with the listening file which is available in mp3 format. However, the transcript can be used not only to check answers but also for reading comprehension and vocabulary

## Transcript

As suggested by the nicknames 'Motor City' and 'Motown', Detroit is known as the world's automotive capital.

Here Henry Ford built the famous Model T, known as the 'Tin Lizzie' or the 'Flivver'. His first "car for the great multitude" was produced at the Piquette Avenue Plant on October 1st, 1908.

Model T was the first affordable automobile, the first to be marketed to the middle class. Until then, cars were very expensive, so only wealthy people could afford one. When cars cost between \$2000 and \$3000, Ford Motor Company started to sell Model T at a price of \$850. And in the 1920s you could buy one for less than \$300, which today would be like spending \$3,300. It was soon a huge success: cars stopped being a luxury item for the rich and became an essential means of transportation for the masses.

What was Ford's secret? A few clever innovations: highly efficient production, highly paid workers and low prices. First, he introduced the use of assembly-



line production instead of hand crafting, which allowed time saving and much lower costs. Before then cars were made by hand by groups of two or three men, using pieces ordered from other companies. At the beginning it took 12 hours and 8 minutes to assemble a Model T. In 1914, after only six years of production, the process had been reduced to 1 hour and 33 minutes. That same year Ford sold more cars than all the other producers put together. Then in 1927, when the last Model T was produced, it only took 24 seconds to assemble one. Between 1917 and

1923 the car was so successful that Ford didn't even have to do any advertising, and in 1918 half of the cars in the States were Ford's Model T.

But Ford was also clever in paying his workers a wage proportionate to the cost of the car. He reduced the working time and paid his workers more, with a double effect: the employees worked better and were able to buy themselves a car. And the more the factory improved its productivity, the more it reduced its prices.

In 1927 Ford retired Model T after having produced 15 million of them. After 19 years it was too antiquated to compete with the innovative cars that were being offered by other companies like Chevrolet and GM. Surprisingly, though, many steel Model T parts are still manufactured today and the car is regarded as the world's most influential of the 20th century, for its impact on American society.

Some Model Ts have survived until today but driving them is not easy at all, especially in today's traffic. They accelerate and brake slowly and they don't handle well. However, they are perfect on dirt roads, as this is the surface they were made for.