



Amazing World Records of History

Earliest Machines: Stone Tools

History
Worksheets
and Activities

To the Teacher

Welcome to a superlative of history!

This teaching packet is excerpted from the book, *Amazing World Records of History*; the activity sheet numbers are for reference only.

Sharing World Records

However you integrate this packet into your teaching, always keep in mind that the student activity sheets provide countless opportunities to foster broader and deeper awareness of historical forces. Keep in mind, too, that children learn best when they're having fun. Foster surprise, delight, and awe about these superlatives of the human experience. Emphasize the drama that underlies every world record of history. Do your best to evoke wonderment of the grand human story. Good luck in this important work.

“Foster surprise, delight, and awe about these superlatives of the human experience.”



National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

The Themes of Social Studies

1. CULTURE

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.

2. TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the past and its legacy.

3. PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.

4. INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity.

5. INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

6. POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.

7. PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION, AND CONSUMPTION

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

8. SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society.

9. GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.

10. CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.



14. The World's Earliest Machines

Stone Tools

NCSS Themes

- Time, Continuity, and Change; Production, Distribution, and Consumption

Time Required

- About three class periods

Teaching Tips

The activity sheets can be completed by students working independently, with partners, or in small groups.

Activity Sheet 14A

- Discuss the definition of *machine*.
- Have students speculate on what might have been the first multiple-part, complex machine.

Activity Sheet 14B

- Remind students that there are no “correct” answers, but each of their answers must be justified.
- Help students by pointing out that a reasonable measure of importance is influence and that they can gauge influence by imagining the world without certain machines.

Activity Sheet 14C

- Make sure students understand the concept of the machine age.
- Make sure students understand that “machine” is a highly inclusive term.

Answers

- **Activity Sheet 14A** 1. According to the article, a machine is any device that helps people do work; 2. Answers will vary. Possible responses may include the following: I think of machines as large complex tools like cars or TV’s; I think of machines as more complex than these simple tools; this is exactly what I think of machines. Reward thoughtful responses; 3. The article says stone chopping tools might be the world’s earliest machines.
- **Activity Sheet 14B** Answers will vary. Possible responses may include the following: cars, cutting tools, computers, guns, airplanes, or roads. Reward honest effort.
- **Activity Sheet 14C** Answers will vary. Remember to reward honest effort.

Extension and Enrichment

- Have students research and explain the six simple machines to the rest of the class.
- Encourage students to invent their own machines.

Visit WorldRecordsBooks.com for more images and activities!



The World's Earliest Machines

Activity Sheet 14A

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Directions: Read the article and answer the questions.

Some machines, like cars, are extraordinarily complex. But many machines are actually quite simple. A ramp, for example, might not appear to be a machine, but it is. A *machine* is any device that helps people do work.

To be a true machine, a device must reduce the effort it takes to accomplish a task. A ramp, for example, makes it easier for a person to raise something to a higher level. The effort is reduced because the machine gives a person mechanical advantage. Mechanical advantage is the relationship between the force exerted by the machine and the force applied to the machine by a person using it. For example, a crowbar is a simple machine. By pushing one end of the crowbar with a small force, you can exert a larger force against an object with the other end of the crowbar.

Historians are certain that the first machines must all have been very simple devices—like ramps and levers—that people made to help them accomplish tasks. But what was the earliest machine? As with other facts from so long ago, we can't ever know for certain. But a good guess is that the earliest machine—a device that helped people do work— was a simple stone tool. Perhaps it was simply a rock that was used like a hammer. Maybe it was a small, sharp stone that was used to cut and scrape meat from bones.

The earliest things ever known to be crafted by human hands are stone tools. The earliest ones known are stone chopping tools found in Africa. They were made and used about 2.7 million years ago. They may very well be the world's earliest machines.

1. According to the article, what is a machine?

2. How does the article's definition of a machine compare to what you think of as a machine?

3. What does the article say might have been the world's first machines?



How Machines Changed History

Activity Sheet 14B

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Directions: What do you think the single most important machine ever built is? It's a tough question. To make it easier, think about the five most important machines ever built. What do you think they are? List your choices in the chart. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. But you need to explain why you chose each machine on your list.

The Five Most Important Machines of All Time	
Machine	Why You Think It Is Important
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	



Life in the Machine Age

Activity Sheet 14C

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

People give names to the periods of time in which they live and in which people of the past have lived. For example, you've heard of "ancient times," "colonial America," and "the Civil War period." What name will be given to our time in history? Many people have already begun calling it "the machine age." Why? Because today we use so many machines, and use them so frequently, that they may be said to define the way we live.

FOCUS

To appreciate the nature of your times, complete the chart and answer the question.

Machines Used in My School

--

Machines Used in My Home

--

Machines I Have Used or Benefited From Today

--

How does the chart show that you are very much part of the machine age?
