

# Henry ford, hero or villain



Henry Ford spent his childhood growing up on a farm located outside of Detroit, his father wanted him to grow up and become a farmer however Ford had other ideas and whilst he was at the farm he studied engineering and by 17 he had left the farm and went to Detroit to study engineering. Ford eventually invented the Model T, a car which was cheap so it enabled people who weren't normally allowed the luxury to drive to be able to have their own car and take their families out in them; however he caused farmers to lose money and was cruel to his workers.

After Ford created the Quadricycle in 1896 he joined investors to establish a company that would manufacture automobiles, however the two companies disbanded (Detroit Automobile Company and the Henry Ford Corporation) so Ford used publicity to encourage people to buy his cars, he built race cars and his name became well known, however most people didn't need a race car as they wanted something reliable and this led to Ford designing the Model A, Ford created many cars such as Model B, C and so on but in 1908 he designed the Model T. The Model T was fast, light and strong as he used Vanadium steel which was the strongest steel at the time.

Also the Model T was cheap as it was \$850 which allowed the population who had a normal income to be able to buy the Model T as cars were normally priced between \$1000-\$2000, and by 1913 200,000 Model T's were manufactured as well as the fact that in 1914 the Model T only cost \$418. The invention of the Model T makes Henry Ford a hero because it allowed the farming population to travel to the cities which meant that they could sell their goods as well as look at farming technology, as well as the fact that the

city population could go on pleasure drives around the country and families could go on holidays.

As there was a growing demand for Model T's by 1913 and the plant being created in 1910 it lead to Henry Ford creating the conveyor belt. The conveyor belt moved each car to the workers who only needed to add one part to the car as the car went round the conveyor belt, the assembly line drastically cut the time as well as the price on the manufacturing process of each car which enabled Ford to reduce the price of the Model T and the price eventually dropped to under \$300.

Also the invention of the conveyor belt allowed the Model T to be created faster as the workers would only need to do one part of the car so it meant that the car would be made better as each worker would only have to remember how to make one bit of the car. The creation of the conveyor demonstrates Henry Ford as a hero as it allowed him to save money on every car meaning that cars would be sold cheaper to customers so that more Americans could buy the Model T and experience leisure driving.

Also in 1914 Ford increased the pay of the workers to \$5 a day which was nearly double to what workers were paid in other auto factories. Ford thought that by raising worker's pay it would make workers happier and work faster on the job, also by increasing the wages it meant that workers were more likely to stay with the Ford Motor Company which meant that new workers wouldn't have to be trained. Also as cars such as the Model T were becoming popular, it led to more roads needing to be built which created

jobs such as building the roads as well as gas stations and shops being around the roads.

The increase in wages conveys Ford as a hero because he is encouraging more people to work at the company as well as the fact as the wage is increasing it allows the workers to eventually be able to buy one of the Ford cars. However Ford wasn't always the hero as he had Anti-Semitism views. This meant that he had a dislike towards Jewish people, Ford was an avid fan of "The Protocol of the Elders of Zion" and he published it in a serial form in his newspaper (The Dearborn Independent), he later took the articles and published them as a book "The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem".

The book was published in the 1920s and in the book Ford blamed the Jews for everything (alcoholism, pornography, communism and more) and the book was very popular, and in the 1930s Hitler awarded Ford the Grand Cross of the German Eagle as well as mentioning him in 'Mein Kampf'. This describes Henry ford as being a villain due to the fact that he didn't like Jewish people as he thought they were the cause of the problems in to world.

Although Henry Ford increased wages to \$5 workers still didn't like working for Ford and his company. Due to the conveyor belts, Ford worked his workers like robots to keep up with the increasing speeds of the conveyor belts and many of the workers were bored as they had to repeat the process every day and it lead to them drinking at work. Also workers lost respect for Ford as he made rude comments in a newspaper, and all though he did apologise he still didn't regain some of the respect from his workers.

This displays Ford as a villain as he worked his workers too hard which led to them being bored and causing them to drink as well as the fact that he offended workers by comments he made in a newspaper. Henry Ford also hated labour unions. Ford thought that the labour unions were too heavily influenced by some leaders that ended up doing more harm than good for the workers, as well as the fact that they wanted to restrict productivity and in Ford's opinion productivity was necessary for economic prosperity to exist.

To prevent union activity Ford promoted Harry Bennett (former navy boxer) to head of the service department, Bennett used many tactics to intimidate union organizing, one incident occurred on May 26th 1937 which involved Bennett's security men beating UAW (United Automobile Workers Union) representatives with clubs, Ford kept Bennett around for several years to make sure no agreement was reached with the UAW, however in 1941 a sit-down strike by the UAW closed the River Rouge Plant (Ford Motor Company factory in Michigan) which led to Ford nearly closing down the company rather than cooperate, however he eventually signed the UAW contract in 1941.

This describes Henry Ford as being as villain as he didn't want his workers in unions and hired Harry Bennett to prevent a Union from being formed with the Ford Company, as well as the fact that he was prepared to close the factory instead of signing the contract created by the UAW which would have forced many people into unemployment. Also, due to cars being used more than horses it affected farmers how they bred horses and sold them so that people could use them as transport since the Model T's were cheap, Americans didn't see the need for horses. This makes Ford a Villain due to <https://assignbuster.com/henry-ford-hero-or-villain/>

the fact that he put horse's farmers out of business when Ford's whole idea of building the Model T was to build a cheap car which would allow farmers to sell their goods in towns in America.

I believe that Henry Ford was a Villain due to the fact that Ford was anti-Semitic as he blamed the Jews for problems in America which they didn't cause, as well as the fact that Ford was against working unions and hired Harry Bennett to stop unions being formed in his company which would make life for workers better. Also he made farmers who only bred horses out of jobs as people didn't want to buy horses when they could have a car however, I believe that economically Ford was a hero as he created the Model T which enabled working class Americans to have a car like the upper class Americans which as well gets away from the stereotype image that original cars were toys for the rich. Also, by increasing the wage of workers, it allowed them to purchase cars and other in disposable goods helping the American economy. However overall I think he is a Villain.