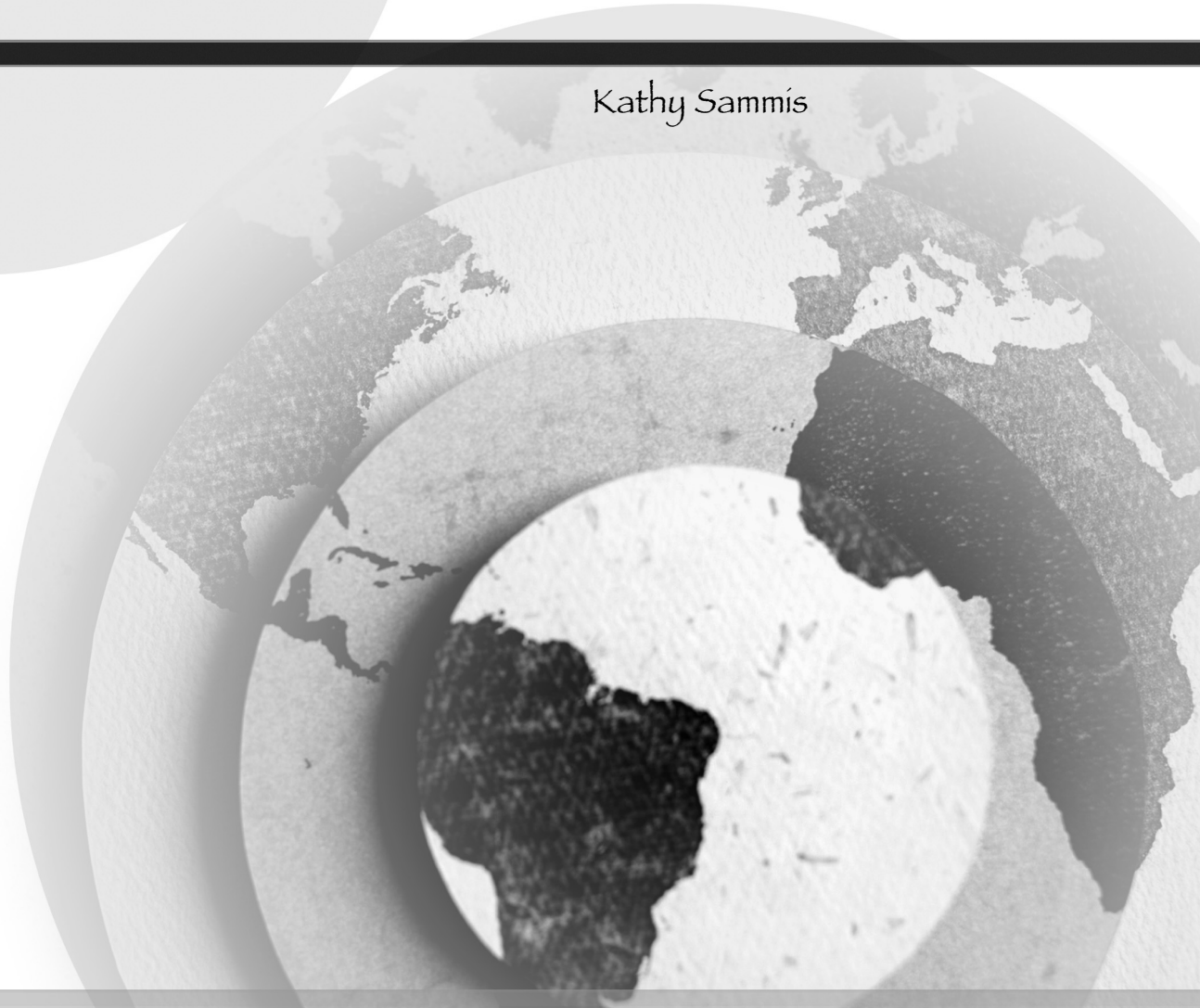


Focus on World History

# The Twentieth Century

Kathy Sammis



**User's Guide**  
**to**  
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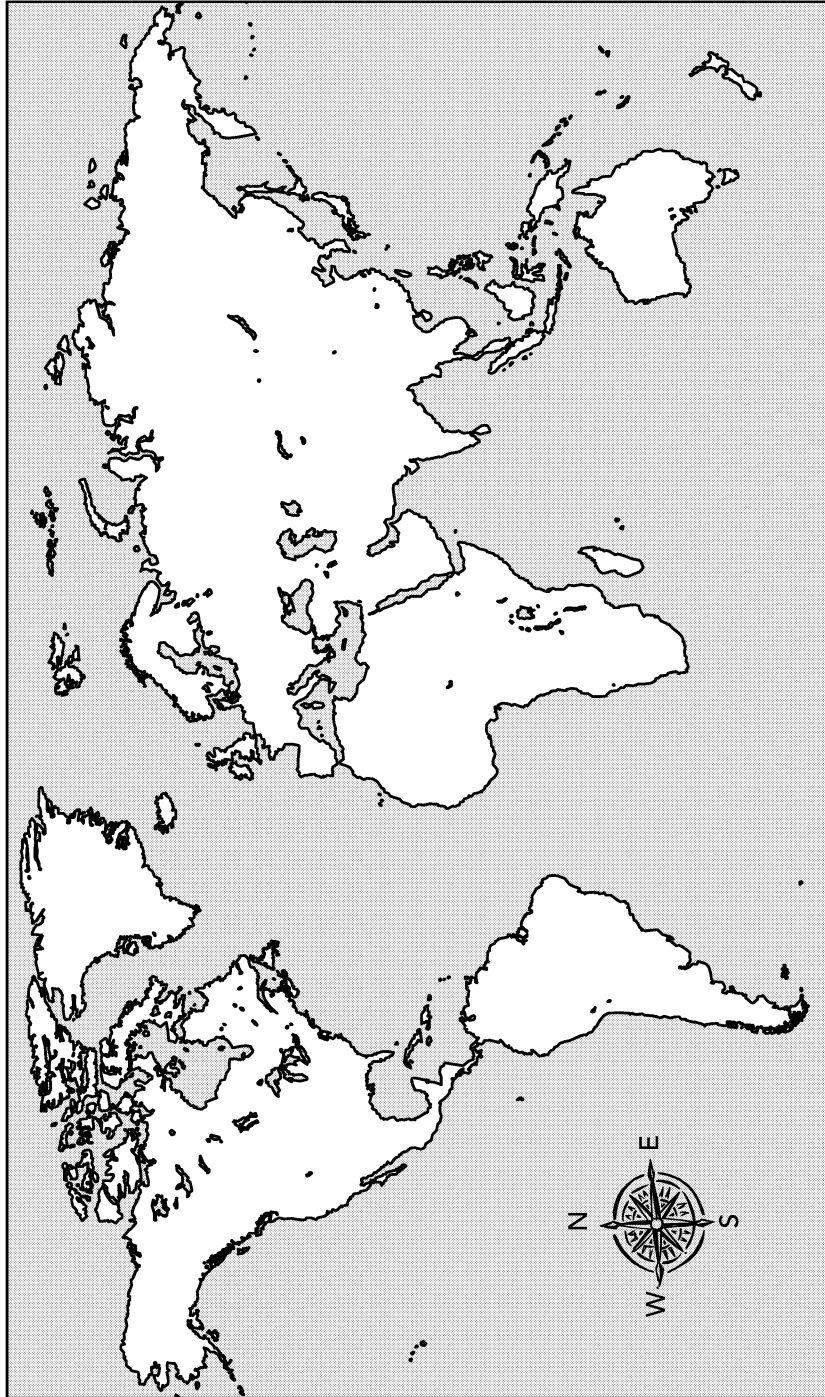
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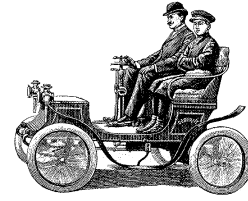
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# The World

(For use with Unit 1, Worksheet 4; Unit 2, Worksheet 4;  
Unit 5, Worksheet 3; Unit 6, Worksheet 3)



# The Twentieth Century Begins



The objectives of this unit are to help students understand the conditions of the emerging world industrial economy and to help them examine the causes and consequences of emerging revolutionary movements in the early decades of the twentieth century. New technologies—such as the telephone, electric power, the assembly line and the automobile, and the airplane—changed both everyday life and business and industry. Modern communication and transportation systems linked people globally as

never before in this new industrial world. Yet vast areas of the world remained rural, its people engaged in traditional, agriculturally based economies. Responses to the conditions of the modern industrial world ranged from status-quo conservatism to social reformism to socialism and communism and calls for revolution. The activities of this unit are designed to draw students into a better understanding of these early years of our most recently ended century.

## Student Activities

**Worksheet 1, New Technologies**, presents six everyday technological innovations of the early twentieth century. Students supply details about each invention or development. The Extra Challenge invites students to describe the impact of each innovation on “their” life as a person of this time.

**Worksheet 2, Industrial vs. Rural Life**, provides a grid for students to fill in comparing specific elements of rural and industrial lives in the early 1900s.

**Worksheet 3, Social and Political Ideas**, presents statements of the time that express socialist, progressivist, and conservatist social/political ideologies; students label them appropriately. Students then choose one of the three ideologies to investigate further and finish with a role-play debate on which of the three is best suited to address conditions in a western country of their choice in the early twentieth century.

**Worksheet 4, World Trade, World Environments**, investigates the impact of world trade on world environments. Students trace global crop transfers, locate areas of raw material extraction, and describe adverse environmental effects of mining, railroad building, and cash-crop plantations. They finish by assessing a 1909 statement advocating the precedence of production for world trade purposes over production for self-sufficiency.

**Worksheet 5, Urban Reforms**, presents urban reformer Jacob Riis’s description of dreadful living conditions in New York City’s tenements near the turn of the century. Students identify the various hazards that Riis describes and tell how urban reforms in the early twentieth century improved these conditions.

**Worksheet 6, The Mexican Revolution**, provides a chart for students to fill in with details about the varied players in Mexico’s turbulent, long-term revolution. The Extra Challenge invites students to assume the role of a Mexican peasant and explain his or her goals for the Revolution.

**Worksheet 7, Revolutionary Art**, presents a Diego Rivera mural panel, which students analyze for meaning and revolutionary message, both specific to the Mexican Revolution and universal to all revolutions.

**Worksheet 8, Bloody Sunday**, presents a graphic first-person account of the slaughter outside the tsar’s Winter Palace in St. Petersburg in January 1905. Students describe the event, guided by a series of questions. The Extra Challenge invites students to develop a strategy, to write a pamphlet, or to create a poster that uses the events of Bloody Sunday to further the Russian revolutionaries’ goals.

**Worksheet 9, Life of Chinese Peasants**, has students put themselves in the place of a Chinese peasant, describing various conditions of their life and explaining how Sun Yixian’s “Three Principles of the People” might affect them. Students’ answers reveal why the revolutionary movement appealed to China’s vast peasant population.





## The Twentieth Century Begins

As the twentieth century began, a new **industrial** world emerged. New **technologies** changed both everyday life and business and industry.

### Inventions Change the World

Inventions of the late 1800s and early 1900s gave the world a new, more modern look. One big change was the use of electricity. The great American inventor Thomas Edison perfected the light bulb in 1879. He then developed ways to transmit electric power through a system of lines. An Edison system lit up New York City in 1882. Edison also developed the generator, which used electric power to run huge industrial machines. A factory could now be built anywhere, because it no longer needed water power. Cities became cleaner as electric trolleys replaced manure-producing horses.

Thomas Edison also invented the phonograph (record player) and the motion picture (movies). Altogether, he patented more than a thousand inventions.



Thomas  
Edison

Inventions also changed communications radically. Alexander Graham Bell, a Scotsman who lived in the United States, patented the telephone in 1876. Networks of telephone lines soon spread across countries and around the world. By 1900, 1.5 million telephones were in use in the United States alone.



Alexander Graham Bell

Bell demonstrated his amazing invention at the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876. The emperor of Brazil spoke into it. When a voice replied, the emperor exclaimed, "My word! It speaks!"

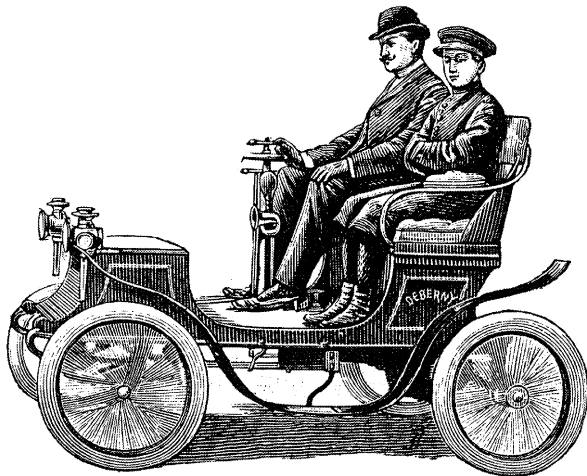
A young Italian inventor, Guglielmo Marconi, developed a way to send messages through the air, using radio waves instead of wires. He sent a wireless message across the Atlantic Ocean in 1901. After the vacuum tube was invented in 1904, radios could play music and human voices in people's homes.

(continued)



## The Twentieth Century Begins *(continued)*

In the 1880s, inventors in Europe and the United States developed gasoline engines that powered a new vehicle—the automobile. But hand-built cars cost a lot to buy and to repair. American Henry Ford changed all that in the early 1900s. He designed a simple, reliable, affordable car called the Model T Ford. He cut production costs by creating the **assembly line**. A belt carried car frames past workers who each added a standard piece to the developing vehicle. Assembly line workers could create a Model T in a few hours. The price of a Model T dropped within the reach of most middle-class people. People from all over the world began buying them. The age of the automobile had begun.



Another huge change in transportation began in 1903. Americans Wilbur and Orville Wright made the first powered and sustained airplane flight that year. The airplane industry developed over the next few decades. Planes

would play a part in World War I. In the 1920s, they began carrying mail and then passengers.

### The New Industrial World

It was no accident that so much new technology developed in the early twentieth century. Starting in the late 1800s, companies began setting up research centers. They paid scientists and engineers to work in these labs, to develop and apply the best science and technology. The German chemical industry, backed by the German government, was a pioneer in this field. Edison set up one of the first research labs in the United States, and Bell's telephone company soon followed suit.

The people who lived and worked in this new industrial world were much more connected to the outside world than earlier people had been. News from around the world was rapidly reported in newspapers, on radio, and by telephone. Transportation systems also drew people together:

- Railroads crisscrossed Europe, Russia, and the Americas.
- As more and more people owned cars, highway networks spread across the land.
- Trucks hauled more produce and manufactured goods to more places.
- Steamships made the world's seas their highways.
- World trade increased. As factories produced more goods, manufacturers sought new markets around the globe. They also sought raw materials from nonindustrial lands.

*(continued)*



## The Twentieth Century Begins *(continued)*

This modern industrial economy didn't grow at the same rate everywhere in the world. Great Britain, Germany, France, Japan, and the United States were very industrial. Southern, central, and eastern Europe were much less developed. Their economies remained mostly **rural**, based on agriculture. This was also true in much of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Nations and **colonies** in these areas had little industry. The industrial nations looked to these less-developed areas to provide raw materials and to buy manufactured goods. Most of the people lived in rural areas and were poor farmers.

The lives of people in the industrial nations were quite different from those in rural nations. Western Europeans, for example, in general had more and better food, clothing, and shelter than their parents or grandparents had. They could usually change jobs if they wanted to. Women could find work outside the home. Rural **peasants** in countries like India, however, remained tied to the land. They had few choices about how they could lead their lives. They often did not have enough food, clothing, or shelter.

### Reform and Revolution

Conditions in this newly modern, global world evoked varying responses:

- **Conservatives** favored the status quo (the way things were) and a society directed by market forces.
- Social reformers called for government action to correct social abuses and promote public welfare.
- **Socialists** called for public ownership of key industries, operated for the public welfare.
- **Marxists** predicted a class struggle between workers and employers. The workers would win, Marxists said. The workers would own all the means of production and share all the profits equally in a classless society.
- In some countries, radicals thought that conditions had become too much to bear. They called for revolution. They believed that only an overthrow of the existing political structure would allow the people's lives to get better.

### Russia

Russia at the turn of the century remained an **autocracy**. The **tsar** ruled with an iron hand and blocked all calls for reform. The vast majority of people lived grueling lives of hard work and poverty, either on the land or in factories. Unrest spread, and revolutionary groups grew. The discontent came to a head in January 1905. A huge mass of workers and their families marched to the tsar's palace to ask for reforms. The tsar's soldiers shot hundreds of them. This "Bloody Sunday" event was a herald of the Russian Revolution that would erupt in the next decade.

### Mexico

Mexico was under the harsh rule of dictator Porfirio Díaz from 1876 to 1911. During the early 1900s, more and more Mexicans called for reform and wanted Díaz out. Peasants wanted land, most of which was owned by a small, elite

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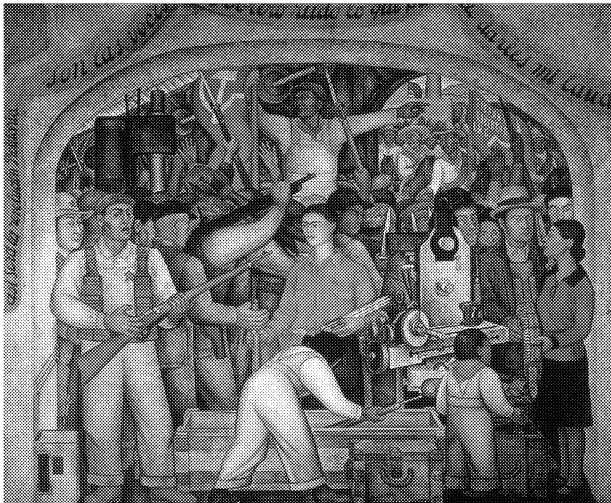


## The Twentieth Century Begins *(continued)*

group. Workers wanted better wages and working conditions. Liberals wanted a republic with free elections.

Mexico's revolution began in 1910 and went on into the 1920s. It had a number of key leaders, each with his own followers. Sometimes they fought together, and at other times they fought each other. It was a period of disorder. But it finally produced the Mexican Constitution of 1917. This document brought the Mexican people many reforms, such as

- Land reform—large estates broken up, land given to peasants; government takes over Church lands
- Worker's rights—minimum wage, right to strike and join labor unions, equal pay for equal work
- Natural resources—would be owned by the government, not foreigners



### China

In 1900, the foreign Manchus still ruled China as the Qing dynasty. In that year, the Boxer Rebellion broke out. It was a campaign against foreigners, who had forced the Qing rulers to grant them many special privileges. The Rebellion failed. But it made the Qing court realize they had to make some reforms to reduce foreign influence and improve their people's lives.

Sun Yixian was a physician who spent many years in exile from China. He lived for a long time in the United States. He became famous when he escaped from agents of the Qing court who had kidnapped him in London.

Reforms moved slowly, however. The Qing court did not really embrace modern change or **nationalism**. Calls grew for a change in government. A principal voice was Sun Yixian (called Sun Yat-sen in earlier texts). His Revolutionary Alliance worked hard to bring down the Qing dynasty. Uprisings in 1911 accomplished the goal, and Sun became the first president of the new Chinese Republic. He soon realized he did not have the skills to run the nation. He gave his office to General Yuan Shikai, who quickly turned into a military **dictator**. When Yuan died in 1916, a disorderly period of rule by local warlords began. Revolution in China would continue for the next several decades.



## New Technologies

**Directions:** Fill in the information about each innovation named below that became part of life in the early twentieth century.

1. Automobile

Date(s) invented/developed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) who invented/developed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Country(ies) of origin:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Aircraft

Date(s) invented/developed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) who invented/developed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Country(ies) of origin:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Electricity

Date(s) invented/developed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) who invented/developed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Country(ies) of origin:

\_\_\_\_\_

Immediate environmental impact:

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Telephone

Date(s) invented/developed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) who invented/developed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Country(ies) of origin:

\_\_\_\_\_

Immediate environmental impact:

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Typewriter (modern commercial version)

Date(s) invented/developed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) who invented/developed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Country(ies) of origin:

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Vacuum cleaner (electrically powered)

Date(s) invented/developed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) who invented/developed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Country(ies) of origin:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Extra Challenge:** Imagine you live in the early twentieth century. Describe how your everyday life is different because of each innovation named above.

