

Reading Comprehension: The Ford Motor Company

The most famous product of the Ford Motor Company was the Model T, which came out in 1908. In 1913, Henry Ford introduced the assembly line into his factories, which made production of Model Ts increase enormously. By 1918, half of all cars in America were Model Ts. The design, supported and defended by Henry Ford, was kept until 1927, with a final total production of fifteen million vehicles. This was a record which would stand for the next 45 years. Ford once said, "Any customer can have a car painted any color that he wants as long as it is black," Until the development of the assembly line which made black necessary because of its quicker drying time, Model Ts were available in other colors including red.

Henry Ford had very specific thoughts on relations with his workers. On January 5, 1914 Ford announced his five-dollar-a-day program. The program led to a reduction in length of the workday from 9 to 8 hours and a raise in minimum daily wage from \$2.34 to \$5 for workers who fulfilled¹ certain conditions: The higher wage was offered to men over the age of 22, who had worked with the company for 6 months or more, and, importantly, led their lives in a way that Ford could approve of². The company founded a Sociological Department with 150 scientists whose job was to examine the workers' lives. Even with these conditions, a large percentage of workers were able to receive the increased wage.

In 1926, Ford introduced the five-day, forty-hour work-week, inventing the modern weekend, and giving the working class some time to do what they wanted. Ford knew what he was doing: The increase of leisure time and of wages led to an increase in consumption, and, as a consequence of this, car sales also increased.

¹ to fulfill: erfüllen

² to approve of something: etwas billigen, für gut erklären

Questions:

*Answer in **complete sentences**, using **your own words** as far as possible. (Try not to copy from the text!) Make your answers **short and snappy**; do not give any irrelevant information that does not answer the question.*

1. When did Ford start using the assembly line? Explain one advantage and one disadvantage of the assembly line, according to the text.
2. Show two positive and one negative aspects of Ford as an employer, according to the text.