Second Grade

DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



Robert Fulton's Steamboat

LITTLEPATRIOTS

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Key Themes

- Creative freedom
- Community
- Risk-taking and Experimentation

Core Values

- Community
- Liberty
- Life



Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Define what an inventor, an innovator, and a visionary are, and give examples from the lesson.
- Describe perseverance and explain why it is important for inventors, innovators, and themselves when working toward a goal.
- Retell key events in Robert Fulton's life and the history of the steamboat, including the *Clermont's* first voyage.
- Explain how steamboats helped families, communities, and the movement of goods during the early 1800s.
- Describe how creativity, teamwork, and determination helped Robert Fulton solve problems and how they can use these skills in their own lives.

Key Terms

01 **community:** a group living in an area with similar interests, beliefs, attitudes, and goals.

02 **engineering:** figuring out how to design and build useful machines, tools, and structures.

03 **Industrial Revolution:** a time in history when machines began to do work that people used to do by hand.

04 **innovator:** someone who takes an existing idea or invention and makes it better, easier to use, or safer.

05 **inventor:** a person who thinks of a brand new idea and makes something that did not exist before, like a new tool or machine that helps solve a problem.

06 **perseverance:** not giving up when something is hard or when a plan does not work the first time.

07 **river transportation:** using rivers to move people and goods from one place to another.

08 **steam engine:** a machine that uses steam from boiling water to make other machines move.

09 **steamboat:** a boat that moves using steam from a fire instead of just paddles or sails.

10 **visionary:** a person who can imagine new ideas for the future and see how things could be better.

Introduction

TELL Students 📷🔑

Hello, Little Patriots. Today we are going to learn about inventors and innovators and what those words mean. An **inventor** is a person who thinks of a brand new idea and makes something that did not exist before, like a new tool or machine that helps solve a problem. **[Reference Inventor Image]** An **innovator** is someone who takes a tool or idea that already exists and finds a better way to use it or make it work even better. **[Reference Innovator Image]** Both inventors and innovators use their imagination to solve problems and make life easier for people.

ASK Students

Have you ever had a dream or a goal that you really wanted to make happen? What was it, and what did you do to try to achieve your goal? Have you ever worked hard toward something you wanted but didn't reach your goal the first time? What did you do after that, and how did you keep going?

TELL Students

Inventors and innovators often start with a dream or a goal they really want to make happen because they see a problem and want to fix it. Sometimes inventors and innovators do not succeed the first time they try. Have you ever worked hard toward a goal and not reached it right away? What did you do next—did you try again, change your plan, or think of a new way? Just like inventors and innovators, learning to keep going and try new ideas helps us grow and succeed.

ASK Students

If inventors and innovators sometimes fail or have to try many times before their ideas work, what do you think helps them keep going and not give up when things get hard?

TELL Students 📷🔑

Inventors and innovators keep going because they have **perseverance**, which means they do not give up when something is hard or when a plan does not work the first time. **[Reference Perseverance Image]** Perseverance helps people stay focused on their goal, try again, and learn from mistakes instead of quitting. It is important to keep your determination even when you feel discouraged.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

Let's look back in history to learn about an important man named Robert Fulton to learn more about perseverance. **[Reference Robert Fulton Image]** He had a goal of becoming an artist, so he traveled across the Atlantic Ocean to study art in France, a country in Europe. When he did not find success in the arts, he did not give up. Instead, he showed perseverance by changing his plan and studying to become an **engineer**, which is a person who designs and builds things using machines and structures. **[Reference Engineer Image]** As an engineer, Robert Fulton used his love of drawing to help create canals, ships, and new inventions, including a submarine called the *Nautilus*, and later the first commercially successful steamboat. **[Reference *Nautilus* Image]** He took steamboat designs that had failed before and stayed determined to make a better, cheaper steamboat that would work. Because he persevered, he successfully changed transportation.

ASK Students

What do you think a steamboat is, and how do you think it helped people travel and move goods?

TELL Students

A **steamboat** is a boat that moves using steam from a fire instead of just paddles or sails. **[Reference Steamboat Image]** The fire heats water to make steam, and the steam helps the boat move through the water by moving a big paddle wheel. Steamboats were very important because they could carry people, food, and other goods much faster than boats that only used sails or were rowed by hand. This made it easier for families and communities to get the things they needed, like food, clothes, building materials, and even new inventions. Thanks to steamboats, goods could get to the people who needed them more quickly, which helped towns grow and made life easier. Now, let's watch another Star Spangled Adventures cartoon to learn more about how steamboats helped change America.

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Ep. 18: Fulton's Steamboat

Lesson

TELL Students 📷🔑

In our Star Spangled Adventures cartoon, we learned that the Industrial Revolution had started. The **Industrial Revolution** is the time in history when machines began to do work that people used to do by hand. **[Reference Industrial Revolution Image]** Liberty the Eagle tells us that many of these machines were powered by the **steam engine**, which is a machine that uses steam from boiling water to make other machines move. **[Reference Steam Engine Image]** Because of the steam engine, goods like clothing, tools, and other products could be made faster and cheaper than ever before.

ASK Students

Why do you think it would be a good thing to make things faster and cheaper?

TELL Students 📷🔑

The ability to make goods faster and for less money was good because more people could get the things they needed, families could afford more items, and communities could grow with the new products. A **community** is a group living in an area with similar interests, ideas, attitudes, and goals. **[Reference Community Image]** In the cartoon, we also learned that the United States was a very large country with many communities and people who were spread out across long distances. Even though goods could be made faster and cheaper during the Industrial Revolution, there still needed to be a way to get them from one place to another. That is where Robert Fulton comes in!

ASK Students

Even though goods could be made faster and cheaper, people lived far apart in many communities. How do you think steamboats helped families get the things they needed?

TELL Students 📷🔑

Steamboats helped families get the things they needed by moving goods and people much faster than boats with just sails or paddles. This meant that even communities far apart could receive food, tools, and other supplies more quickly, and families could travel to see each other more easily. In the Star Spangled Adventures cartoon, we also learned about the importance of **river transportation**, which means using rivers to move people and goods from one place to another.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

[Reference River Transportation Image] If your family lives far away today, you can probably take a car or an airplane to visit them. But back during this time, people did not have cars or planes. Steamboats made river travel faster and easier, so families could visit each other more often and spend time together, even if they lived far apart.

ASK Students

What do you think you would do if you had a really good idea, but other people laughed at you and said it would never work?

TELL Students 📷

In the Star Spangled Adventures cartoon, we saw that Robert Fulton and his business partner, Robert Livingston, had built a steamboat, but many people laughed at them and did not believe it would work. **[Reference Robert Livingston Image]** Even though it was hard and sometimes discouraging, they had to persevere, which means to keep trying and not give up, even when things are difficult. They had to solve many problems to make the steamboat work, and it took determination, patience, and hard work. Because they persevered, they were able to create a steamboat that really worked and could carry goods and people along rivers faster than ever before. Their example shows us that when we keep trying and believe in our ideas, we can accomplish amazing things, even if others doubt us at first.

ASK Students

How do you think having a friend or partner, like Robert Livingston, might help you reach your goals when your ideas are big or hard to do?

TELL Students 📷

With Robert Livingston's help, Robert Fulton made a steamboat called *The North River Steamboat*. But this wasn't the first steamboat ever created. In fact, others had tried to build steamboats before Robert Fulton. Back in 1803, Robert Fulton was part of a team that successfully tested a 74-foot side-wheeler steamboat on the Seine River in Paris, France. **[Reference France Image]** France is a country across the Atlantic Ocean in Europe.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

Fulton was determined that he could make a steamboat work in America, too. He teamed up with his friend Robert Livingston to improve the earlier steamboat designs. The previous designs had not worked well because they were too expensive, so Fulton and Livingston worked to create a cheaper and better steamboat that could really carry people and goods. Let's watch another Learn More with Liberty video to learn more!

WATCH

Learn More with Liberty: Costs of Creating A Steamboat



TELL Students

On August 17, 1807, the steamboat made its first successful trip along the Hudson River from New York City to Albany. It was a little scary because the engine could explode! And some of Robert's friends thought it was a bad idea, but he didn't give up. The steamboat made the trip in 32 hours, and on the way back, it only took 30 hours. That was very fast back then! The steamboat, named the *Clermont*, could carry up to 100 passengers, and they paid $7 to ride one way. **[Insert *Clermont* Image]**

ASK Students

How do you think traveling on a steamboat instead of walking or using a small boat made life easier for families and communities back then?

TELL Students

In the cartoon, Liberty the Eagle explains that the trip from New York City to Albany helped connect the United States by rivers, especially the Mississippi River. **[Reference Mississippi River Image]** Rivers worked like roads to connect people and goods across the country. But that is not all—we also learned that Robert Fulton did not stop just because the *Clermont* worked. He went on to build a larger and faster steamboat called the *New Orleans*, which helped bring even more goods and people together. **[Reference *New Orleans* Image]** His perseverance shows that when we keep trying and solving problems, we can make a big difference for everyone.

Lesson

ASK Students

Robert Fulton didn't stop after the *Clermont* worked—he kept thinking of new ideas and built an even bigger and faster steamboat. How do you think being creative, working with friends, and not giving up helped him make his ideas become real?

TELL Students 📷

Robert Fulton was able to make his bigger and faster steamboat because he kept trying, even when it was hard, and he worked with his friend Robert Livingston to solve problems. He also used his imagination to think of new ideas to make the steamboat better. A person who can imagine new ideas for the future and see how things could be better is called a **visionary**. **[Reference Visionary Image]** Being a visionary means you don't just see what is—it means you can imagine what could be and then use your perseverance, teamwork, and creativity to make it happen. Just like Robert Fulton, when you keep trying, work with others, and use your imagination, you can solve problems and make a difference today.



Building a Timeline: Rivers, Steamboats, and New Lands

Objective

Second-grade students will be able to arrange historical events in order on a timeline, identify key events in early U.S. river transportation, and understand how inventions like Robert Fulton's steamboat helped connect communities.

Materials

- Long sheet of paper or bulletin board space for the class timeline (butcher paper works particularly well.)
- Timeline cards with events and dates (one set per class)
- Marker or pen
- Tape or magnets (to attach cards to the timeline)
- Optional: pictures of rivers, steamboats, Robert Fulton, and maps

Passage for Teacher Read-Aloud

In 1798, the Mississippi Territory was created. In 1803, the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory from France. These two new territories added land and riverways to the United States. Two of these rivers are the Chattahoochee and the Mississippi rivers, and they were used to transport people and goods from place to place.

In 1803, Robert Fulton was part of a team that successfully tested a 74-foot side-wheeler steamboat on the Seine River in Paris, France. France is a country across the Atlantic Ocean in Europe. He was determined that he could make the steamboat a success in America. Robert Fulton teamed up with his friend Robert Livingston to work on improving other steamboat designs. The earlier steamboats that did not work out were too expensive, so they needed to make a cheaper one.

In 1806, Robert Fulton returned to America and began building his steamboat, *The North River Steamboat of Clermont*, in the East River of New York. On August 17, 1807, Robert Fulton's steamboat, *Clermont*, made its maiden voyage along the Hudson River from New York City to Albany, New York. It was a bit scary because the engine could explode! Some of Robert's friends thought it was a bad idea, but he didn't give up. The steamboat made the trip in 32 hours, and on the way back, it only took 30 hours!



Building a Timeline: Rivers, Steamboats, and New Lands

Less than one month later, on September 4, 1807, the *Clermont* went into commercial service, carrying as many as 100 passengers along the same route on the Hudson River at a cost of $7 for a one-way trip. The steamboat helped America grow because people could move things up and down the river easily.

Activity Instructions

1. Introduction (Teacher Read-Aloud): Read the passage aloud to the class, pausing occasionally to check for understanding and visualize the events.
2. Discussion Questions (During Read-Aloud):
   - Why do you think rivers were so important for people and goods in the early 1800s?
   - What problems might Robert Fulton have faced while building the *Clermont*?
   - How did Robert Fulton and Robert Livingston show perseverance?
3. Timeline Activity:
   - Create a blank timeline on a long sheet of paper or bulletin board.
   - Hand out the timeline cards with the events and dates.
   - As a class, arrange the cards in the correct order on the timeline.
   - Tape or attach the cards in place.
4. Timeline Events:
   - 1798 – Mississippi Territory was created
   - 1803 – United States purchased the Louisiana Territory from France
   - 1803 – Robert Fulton successfully tested a 74-foot side-wheeler steamboat on the Seine River in Paris, France
   - 1806 – Robert Fulton returned to America to build *The North River Steamboat of Clermont*
   - August 17, 1807 – *Clermont* made its maiden voyage along the Hudson River
   - September 4, 1807 – *Clermont* went into commercial service
5. Follow-Up Questions (After Timeline):
   - Which event happened first? Which event happened last?
   - How do you think the steamboat helped families and communities?
   - Why was it important that Robert Fulton worked with Robert Livingston?
   - How do you think perseverance, teamwork, and creativity helped them succeed?
6. Extension (Optional):
   - Students can draw a picture for one of the events and place it under the correct card on the timeline.
   - Students can write one sentence about why steamboats were important.



Building a Timeline: Rivers, Steamboats, and New Lands

Assessment

- Students correctly place the six events in order on the timeline.
- Students participate in discussion questions, showing understanding of river transportation, Robert Fulton's work, and the importance of perseverance and teamwork.

True/False Assessment

NAME: _____ DATE _____

Instructions: Read each statement carefully. If the statement is true, circle True. If the statement is false, circle False.

1. An inventor is someone who creates something completely new that has never existed before.
True / False

2. An innovator only copies what other people do and never comes up with new ideas.
True / False

3. Inventors and innovators sometimes fail the first time they try.
True / False

4. Perseverance means giving up when something is too hard.
True / False

5. Robert Fulton wanted to become an artist before he studied to be an engineer.
True / False

6. A steamboat moves by using steam from boiling water to help it travel through rivers.
True / False

7. *The Clermont* was the first steamboat Robert Fulton built that successfully carried passengers and goods.
True / False

8. Rivers helped communities connect and move goods, just like roads do today.
True / False

9. Robert Fulton worked all by himself and never asked anyone for help.
True / False

10. A visionary is a person who can imagine new ideas for the future and works to make them real.
True / False

Answer Key: True/False Assessment

1. **True** – An inventor creates something completely new.

2. **False** – An innovator improves or finds a better way to use something, not just copies it.

3. **True** – Inventors and innovators sometimes fail the first time.

4. **False** – Perseverance means not giving up when something is hard.

5. **True** – Robert Fulton first wanted to be an artist before becoming an engineer.

6. **True** – A steamboat uses steam from boiling water to move.

7. **True** – *The Clermont* was Robert Fulton's first successful steamboat.

8. **True** – Rivers helped communities connect and move goods like roads do today.

9. **False** – Robert Fulton worked with Robert Livingston to make the steamboat successful.

10. **True** – A visionary is someone who imagines new ideas for the future and works to make them real.

Resources

"Studying the past makes it possible for us to understand the human story across time."(NCSS, 1921)

"Knowledge and understanding of the past enable us to analyze the causes and consequences of events and developments and to place these in the context of the institutions, values, and beliefs of the periods in which they took place." (NCSS, 1921)

"The study of people, places, and environments enables us to understand the relationship between human populations and the physical world." (NCSS, 1921)

"Questions related to identity and development, which are important in psychology, sociology, and anthropology, are central to understanding who we are." (NCSS, 1921)

"The study of individual development and identity will help students to describe factors important to the development of personal identity." (NCSS, 1921)

- https://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Portals/46/docs/recreation/OP-CO/montgomery/pdfs/10thand11th/ahistoryofsteamboats.pdf
- https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/steamboat
- http://www.southernlancasterhistory.org/robert-fulton-birthplace
- https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/theymadeamerica/whomade/fulton_hi.html
- http://www.southernlancasterhistory.org/robert-fulton-birthplace
- https://lemelson.mit.edu/resources/robert-fulton
- https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/theymadeamerica/whomade/fulton_hi.html
- https://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Portals/46/docs/recreation/OPCO/montgomery/pdfs/10thand11th/ahistoryofsteamboats.pdf
- https://lemelson.mit.edu/resources/robert-fulton
- https://www.nytimes.com/1987/11/17/opinion/l-why-fulton-achieved-steamboat-success-003087.html
- http://www.southernlancasterhistory.org/robert-fulton-birthplace
- https://lemelson.mit.edu/resources/robert-fulton
- https://www.nytimes.com/1987/11/17/opinion/l-why-fulton-achieved-steamboat-success-003087.html

Resources

- https://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Portals/46/docs/recreation/OPCO/montgomery/pdfs/10thand11th/ahistoryofsteamboats.pdf
- http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/fulton.htm
- https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/steamboat
- https://lemelson.mit.edu/resources/robert-fulton
- https://www.sam.usace.army.mil/Portals/46/docs/recreation/OPCO/montgomery/pdfs/10thand11th/ahistoryofsteamboats.pdf

Images

Inventor



Credit: Canva Pro

Perseverance



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

Robert Fulton



Credit: Wikipedia

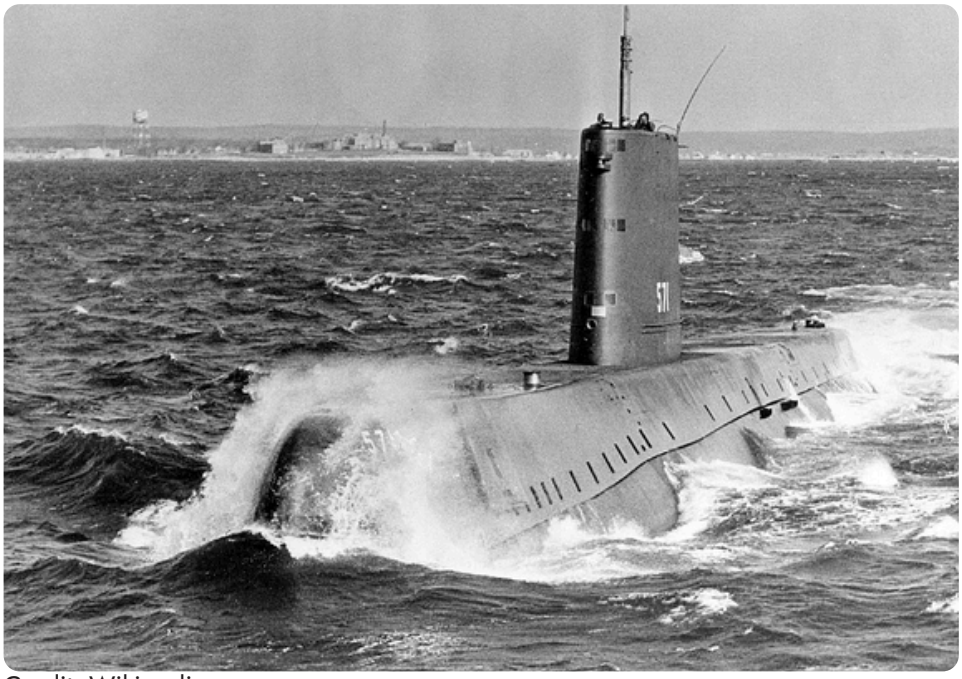
Engineer



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

Nautilus



Credit: Wikipedia

Steamboat



Credit: Canva Pro

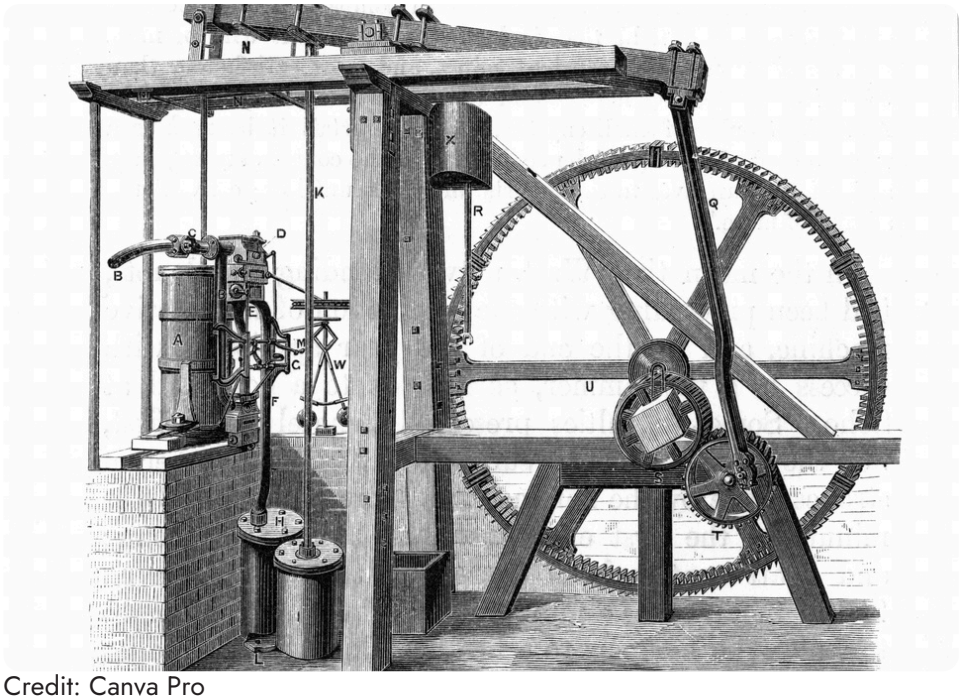
Images

Industrial Revolution



Credit: Wikipedia

Steam Engine



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

Community



Credit: Canva Pro

River Transportation



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

Robert Livingston



Credit: Wikipedia

France



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

Clermont



Credit: Wikipedia

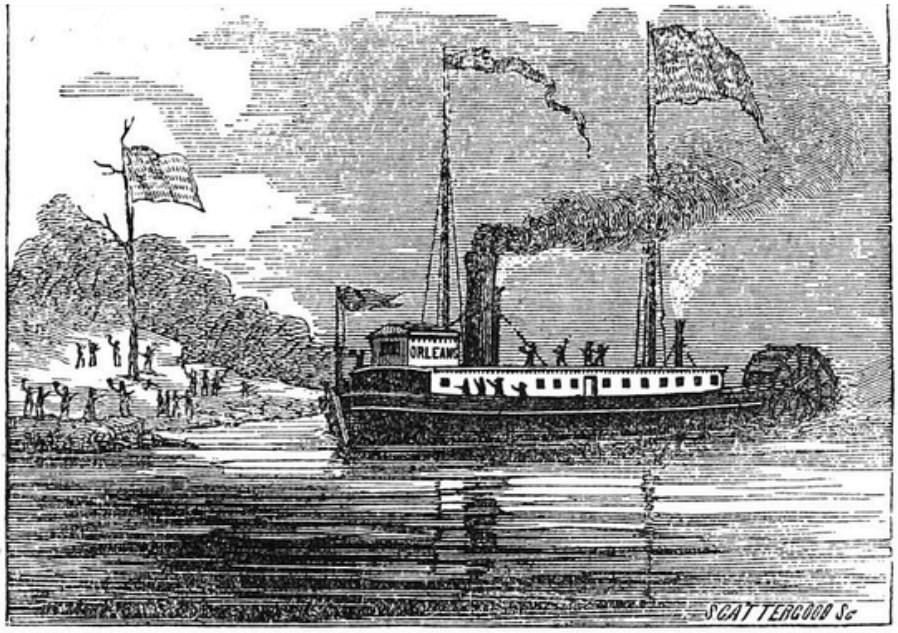
Mississippi River



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

New Orleans



FIRST BOAT BUILT ON THE WESTERN WATERS. 1812.
Credit: Wikipedia

Visionary



Credit: Canva Pro

Notes