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Activity One

The novel, **Black Beauty**, is set in the 1860's. Much about the world has changed during the century and a half since Anna Sewell wrote this novel. One of the most significant changes has been in the area of transportation. During **Black Beauty's** lifetime the horse was the chief means of travel, as the automobile was still several years from being invented.

Your task is to investigate the origins of motorized highway transportation. Write a brief report outlining the early attempts at replacing the horse and buggy with the "horseless carriage".

Here are some questions for you to consider:

- What vehicle was invented *before* the automobile, the success of which led to the invention of the automobile?
 - When and where was the automobile first invented? Who invented it?
 - What were the features of the first automobile?
- How long did it take for motorized vehicles to replace the horse and buggy?
- What factors made it possible for cars to eventually become so popular that the horse and buggy virtually disappeared?

You may wish to include labeled pictures of early motorized vehicles and their inventors in your report. Use the space below to make jot notes of the information you find.

Challenge question:

What do you think transportation will look like in the future?
Is it remotely possible that someday we may have to go back to the horse and buggy?

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Activity Two

Black Beauty's colleague, Captain, tells Black Beauty about his harrowing adventures in the Crimean War. This particular war is another example of the many conflicts that have long been forgotten by most people. Like all wars, however, many brave soldiers (like Captain's master) gave their lives fighting for a cause that they believed in.

**Your task is to research the basic facts of the Crimean War.
Write a brief report of your findings, one to two pages in length.**

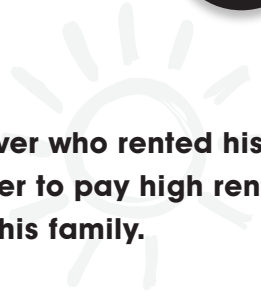
Questions for you to consider:

- Which countries participated in the war?
 - When did the conflict take place?
 - Where was the war fought?
- What was the background and causes of the war? (Why was it fought?)
 - What were the outcomes of the war?
- What were some of the lasting changes in the world that resulted from the war (for example, borders of countries, important issues, etc.)?
- What is the Victoria Cross? How many were awarded during the Crimean War? Who was it awarded to?
 - Any other issues which you determine to be of interest

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Activity Three



Chapter Thirty-nine tells the heartbreaking story of Seedy Sam, a cab driver who rented his horses and cab from a greedy individual named Skinner. Forced by Skinner to pay high rent, Sam was driven to desperation, trying to provide for himself and his family.

Workers who lived during this time often found themselves in the most desperate of situations, through no fault of their own. In Great Britain during the 1800's there was little in the way of help for people who were poor. There were no trade unions to protect workers' rights, no unemployment insurance, or government welfare of any kind.

This assignment is in two parts.

Your First Task:

With another student, consider the plight of workers like Seedy Sam, and come up with a list of specific recommendations to protect such people from rich men like Skinner. You will be making these recommendations to the British parliament, so you may wish to have them enact laws for the betterment of the lives of Britain's poorest families.

Your Second Task:

Imagine how Seedy Sam's life would have been different if your recommendations were in place at the time Anna Sewell wrote Black Beauty. Write a one-paragraph description of how you think his life would have been different.

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Activity Four

A number of different horse-drawn carriages are mentioned in this novel. These carriages varied greatly in both size and purpose.

Choose one of the following carriages that were active during the time when the novel, Black Beauty, was written.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> phaeton | <input type="checkbox"/> cab (cabriolet) | <input type="checkbox"/> surrey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> stagecoach | <input type="checkbox"/> chaise | <input type="checkbox"/> hackney |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hansom | <input type="checkbox"/> sulky | |

Then, investigate the history and appearance of the vehicle you have chosen, and write a report of your findings. You may wish to include a sketch of the carriage of your choice, and explain why you chose to research this particular model.

Here are some questions for you to consider:

- What was the specific purpose of this horse-drawn carriage?
(What was it used for?)
 - When and where was it in active use?
(Was it ever popular in your own country?)
- What were the advantages that this carriage possessed?
 - What were its disadvantages?
 - How many horses were required to pull it?
 - When did its popularity decline and why?
- Was this carriage mentioned in the novel *Black Beauty*?
- Based on your research findings, how accurately was this carriage portrayed in the novel? Give evidence from the novel to support your answer.

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Activity Five

For this activity, imagine that you are going to take Black Beauty for a ride in the country. Unfortunately Black Beauty's groom is nowhere to be found, so you must outfit the horse with saddle, bridle, and all of the necessary equipment you need to undertake your ride.

Think about everything you require for a safe and comfortable ride. You will need to do some research to complete this activity, either using books from the library or information you can find on the Internet.



With the aid of a labeled diagram, illustrate all of the equipment Black Beauty will need for this ride. Make sure, as well, that you label all the parts of the riding saddle that the great horse will be using. For at least three items, you must also indicate their purpose. Write a brief paragraph of explanation for each item.

Present your information on a display board, or as a booklet. Your information should be well-organized, and your illustrations neat and clearly labeled. (Remember: Black Beauty will not require a bearing rein!)

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Activity Six

Even today, the people of England take great pride in their long and glorious history – of which the royal family has long been an important part. The kings and queens of England, however, are simply a part of what is called the peerage system of that country.

Below the royal family, peers (also known as “nobility”) are divided into five ranks:

1. Duke
2. Marquess
3. Earl
4. Viscount
5. Baron

If a person is not part of the peerage system, then he or she is a “commoner”.

For centuries, England has been a nation that puts a lot of importance on which **social class** a person belongs to (upper, middle, lower). Many people are, in fact, given titles before their name to indicate the importance of their social standing. Former Beatle, Paul McCartney, for instance, is now called *Sir* Paul McCartney.

Your task is to investigate England’s peerage system further and present your findings in a report.

First, choose one aspect of the peerage system that is of interest to you. You may investigate the origins of the system, privileges of a particular rank, or another topic of your choice.

Then, find out why the peerage system is so important in English society.

Conclude your report by stating your own opinion as to whether you think this system is a good one or not, stating a reason for your opinion.
