

Mystery Continents

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. Then write the answers to numbers 3, 4, and 5.

1. According to Alfred Wegener, when Pangaea broke up, _____.
 (A) it became molten rock
 (B) the tectonic plates melted
 (C) South America and Africa joined together
 (D) the continents floated apart
2. In 1912, Alfred Wegener came up with a theory called _____.
 (A) plate tectonics
 (B) continental tectonics
 (C) plate drift
 (D) continental drift
3. What is the theory of plate tectonics? What does it explain?

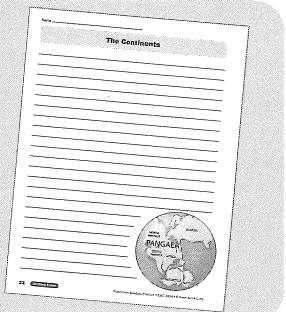
4. What is the main idea of paragraph 1?

5. Alfred Wegener lived until 1930, before scientists explained how continents move.
 How do you think he would have felt about the new theory of plate tectonics?

Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

Use what you have learned to explain the theory of plate tectonics in more detail.



Labor Unions

Level 1 ■

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

Sit-Down Strike

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. 1–5.

Autoworkers Unite

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. 1–5.

GM and the UAW, 1936

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. 1–5.

Flint Sit-Down Strike

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. 1–5.

Words to Know

Sit-Down Strike

Autoworkers Unite

GM and the UAW, 1936

Flint Sit-Down Strike

Assemble the Unit

Reproduce and distribute one copy for each student:

- Visual Literacy page: Autoworkers Sit Down, page 41
- Level 1, 2, or 3 Reading Selection and Reading Comprehension page and the corresponding Words to Know list
- Graphic Organizer of your choosing, provided on pages 180–186
- Writing Form: GM and the UAW, 1936, page 42

Introduce the Topic

Read aloud and discuss the timeline. Explain that the Flint Sit-Down Strike of 1936 is historic because it established the right to join the United Auto Workers union (UAW). Tell students that they will read to find out how and why the strike occurred.

Read and Respond

Form leveled groups and review the Words to Know lists with each group of students. Instruct each group to read their selection individually, in pairs, or as a group. Have students complete the Reading Comprehension page for their selection.

Write About the Topic

Read aloud the leveled writing prompt for each group. Tell students to use the Graphic Organizer to plan their writing. Direct students to use their Writing Form to respond to their prompt.

Level 2 ■■

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

Sit-Down Strike

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. 1–5.

Autoworkers Unite

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. 1–5.

GM and the UAW, 1936

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. 1–5.

Flint Sit-Down Strike

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. 1–5.

Words to Know

Sit-Down Strike

Autoworkers Unite

GM and the UAW, 1936

Flint Sit-Down Strike

Level 3 ■■■

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

Sit-Down Strike

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. 1–5.

Autoworkers Unite

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. 1–5.

GM and the UAW, 1936

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. 1–5.

Flint Sit-Down Strike

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. 1–5.

Words to Know

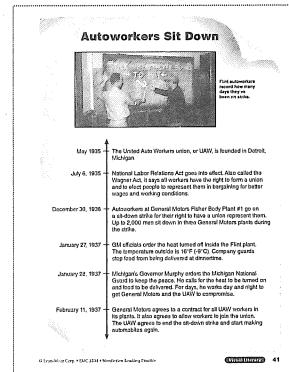
Sit-Down Strike

Autoworkers Unite

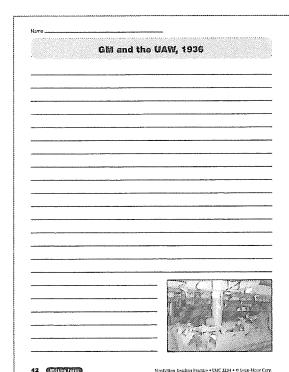
GM and the UAW, 1936

Flint Sit-Down Strike

Visual Literacy

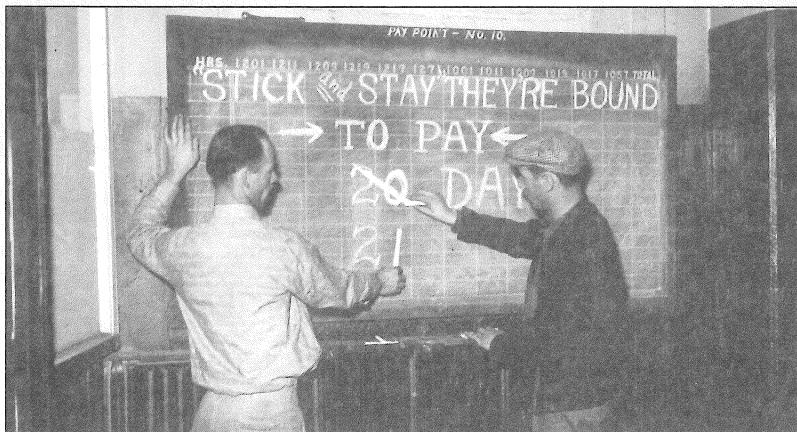


Visual Literacy



Writing Form

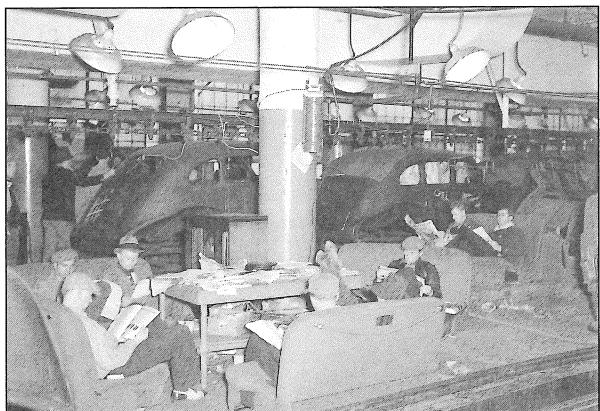
Autoworkers Sit Down



Flint autoworkers record how many days they've been on strike.

- May 1935 — The United Auto Workers union, or UAW, is founded in Detroit, Michigan.
- July 6, 1935 — National Labor Relations Act goes into effect. Also called the Wagner Act, it says all workers have the right to form a union and to elect people to represent them in bargaining for better wages and working conditions.
- December 30, 1936 — Autoworkers at General Motors Fisher Body Plant #1 go on a sit-down strike for their right to have a union represent them. Up to 2,000 men sit down in three General Motors plants during the strike.
- January 27, 1937 — GM officials order the heat turned off inside the Flint plant. The temperature outside is 16°F (-9°C). Company guards stop food from being delivered at dinnertime.
- January 28, 1937 — Michigan's Governor Murphy orders the Michigan National Guard to keep the peace. He calls for the heat to be turned on and food to be delivered. For days, he works day and night to get General Motors and the UAW to compromise.
- February 11, 1937 — General Motors agrees to a contract for all UAW workers in its plants. It also agrees to allow workers to join the union. The UAW agrees to end the sit-down strike and start making automobiles again.

GM and the UAW, 1936



Words to Know

Sit-Down Strike

sit-down strike
treatment
organize
labor unions
bargain
employers
corporations
managers
autoworkers
collapsed
trespassing
damaging

Labor Unions ■



Words to Know

Autoworkers Unite

autoworkers
unite
organize
labor unions
bargain
employers
corporations
assembly line
collapsed
trespassing
damage
sit-down strike

Labor Unions ■ ■

Words to Know

Flint Sit-Down Strike

sit-down strike
treatment
organize
labor unions
bargain
employers
corporations
managers
autoworkers
trespassing

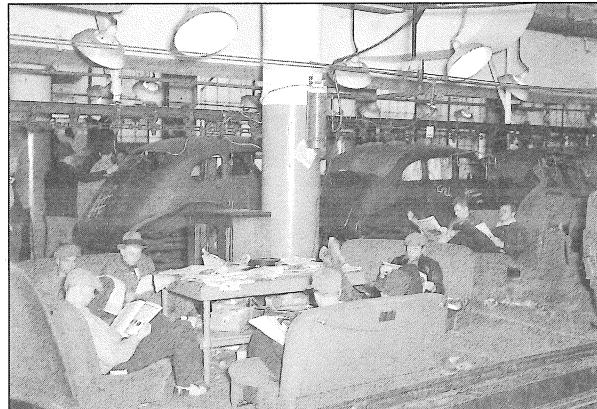
Labor Unions ■ ■ ■

Sit-Down Strike

History was made in the cold winter of 1936–37. It was hard times across America, and many millions of people were out of work. Those who had jobs did not want to lose them.

Fair Treatment for Workers

In 1935, the U.S. Congress had passed a law called the Wagner Act, which said workers could join or organize labor unions. The union could bargain with employers for better wages and working conditions. Big corporations did not like the Wagner Act. Managers felt they knew best how to run their companies. They fired workers who talked about a union.



Autoworkers during the sit-down strike

The Assembly Line

General Motors was one of the largest manufacturing companies in the world. At GM, autoworkers worked on the assembly line. Wages were fair for the times. The average worker made 76 cents an hour. Many of them stood in one place all day, repeating the same motions. Auto plants were cold in winter and hot in summer. During a heat wave in the summer of 1936, workers collapsed. Workers were not allowed to talk during lunch. They couldn't go to the restroom if there was no one to stand in for them. Workers worried about the "speedup." Managers speeded up the line when more autos were needed, forcing workers to work faster. People who could not keep up were fired.

Flint Sit-Down Strike

On December 30, 1936, the workers at General Motors Fisher Body Plant #1, in Flint, Michigan, sat down. The work stopped, but the workers did not leave. The company said the workers were trespassing on company property. But forcing them to leave might have resulted in angry workers damaging the plant.

The union sprang into action. The United Auto Workers, or UAW, did not have many members yet. But they had been planning a sit-down strike. They brought in food for the sit-downers. The strike went on for days. GM turned off the heat in the plant and tried to keep the food from being delivered. The governor of Michigan sent in the National Guard to keep the peace. President Roosevelt made phone calls to GM and the UAW. He urged them to settle their differences.

The strike lasted 44 days. At last, GM managers signed a contract giving autoworkers a 5 percent pay increase. GM would not stop workers from joining the union, and workers could talk at lunch. Everyone went back to making automobiles, and before long, the UAW had 100,000 members.

Sit-Down Strike

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. Then write the answers to numbers 3, 4, and 5.

1. Assembly line work _____.
 - (A) requires doing the same thing over and over
 - (B) gave workers plenty of breaks during the day
 - (C) was done entirely by machines
 - (D) meant easy working conditions for everyone

 2. During the sit-down strike, the workers _____.
 - (A) kept the assembly line moving
 - (B) went home only for meals
 - (C) risked losing their jobs
 - (D) all left the plant and went home

 3. What information supports the view that autoworkers worked under difficult conditions?
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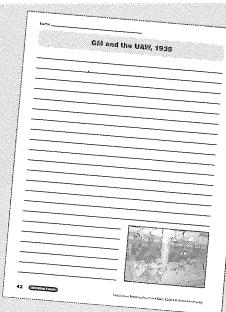
4. What data could be used to draw the conclusion that workers were happy with the results of the sit-down strike?
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5. Do you agree with the actions GM took during the strike?
-
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Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

Discuss some of the pros and cons of producing automobiles on an assembly line in the 1930s.



Autoworkers Unite

During the Great Depression, many millions of people were out of work. People who had jobs did not want to lose them. In 1935, Congress passed the Wagner Act. It said workers could join or organize labor unions. They could bargain as a group with their employers for better wages and working conditions.

Big corporations were not happy with the Wagner Act. Corporation managers felt that they should be able to set wages. They did not want their workers to join unions. They fired workers who were heard talking about organizing a union.

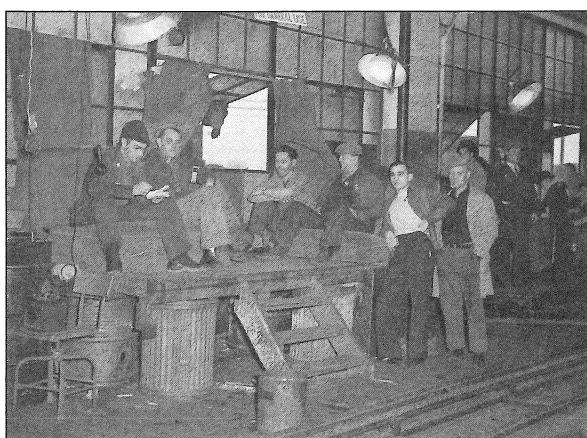
Working on the Assembly Line

When people were asked how happy they were in their jobs, automobile workers were at the bottom of the scale. Autoworkers worked on assembly lines in noisy plants that were cold in winter and hot in summer. During a heat wave in the summer of 1936, workers collapsed. Workers were not allowed to talk during their brief lunch breaks. When the company speeded up the line, they were forced to work faster. People who could not keep up were fired.

Flint, Michigan, December 30, 1936

Autoworkers at General Motors Fisher Body Plant #1 put down their tools and sat down. GM (General Motors) was one of the largest manufacturing companies in the world. Their average worker earned a fair wage for the time—76 cents an hour. The company said the workers were trespassing on company property. But forcing the strikers out might have resulted in damage to the plant.

The United Auto Workers (UAW) had been planning a sit-down strike. They brought in food for the workers. The strike went on for days. Then one January day, General Motors wouldn't allow food into the plant, and turned off the heat. Governor Murphy had to send in the National Guard to keep the peace. President Roosevelt made phone calls to GM and the UAW, urging them to settle the strike.



Autoworkers taking a break during the strike

A Strike for the History Books

The strike lasted 44 days. At last, General Motors managers signed a contract for all their workers. Workers received a 5 percent pay increase. They were allowed to talk in the lunchroom. GM workers could join the UAW. The Flint Sit-Down Strike ended and workers went back to making new automobiles. Soon, 100,000 GM workers joined the union.

Autoworkers Unite

Fill in the circle by the correct answer. Then write the answers to numbers 3, 4, and 5.

1. The Wagner Act was intended to _____.

- (A) make it easier for people to find a job
- (B) stop labor unions
- (C) help workers to get fair treatment
- (D) give corporations more power

2. Trespassing is the same as _____.

- (A) passing through
- (B) entering without permission
- (C) camping out
- (D) owning property

3. Why do you suppose workers were not allowed to talk during lunch?
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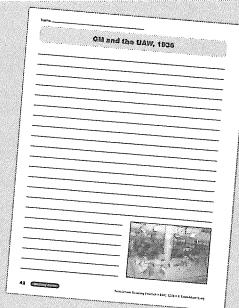
4. What data supports the conclusion that autoworkers were pleased with how the union handled the strike?
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5. What is your opinion of working conditions on the assembly line in 1936? Support your opinion with information from the text.
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Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

Write about the Flint Sit-Down Strike from the point of view of an autoworker or a company manager. Explain your thoughts.



Flint Sit-Down Strike

It was hard times during the 1930s, and many millions of people were out of work. People who had jobs did not want to lose them. Congress passed the Wagner Act to help workers receive fair treatment. It said workers could join or organize labor unions to bargain with employers for better wages and working conditions.

Big corporations did not like the Wagner Act. Managers felt that they knew best how to run their companies, and they set the wages for their workers. They fired workers who talked about organizing a union.

Working on the Assembly Line

Automobiles were manufactured on assembly lines. As an automobile moved along the line, autoworkers added pieces. Many of the workers stood in one place repeating the same motions. Auto plants were cold in winter and hot in summer. During a heat wave in the summer of 1936, workers collapsed. Workers were not allowed to talk during lunch. They couldn't go to the restroom if there was no one to stand in for them on the line. They feared the "speedup," when managers speeded up the line. If you couldn't keep up, you were fired.

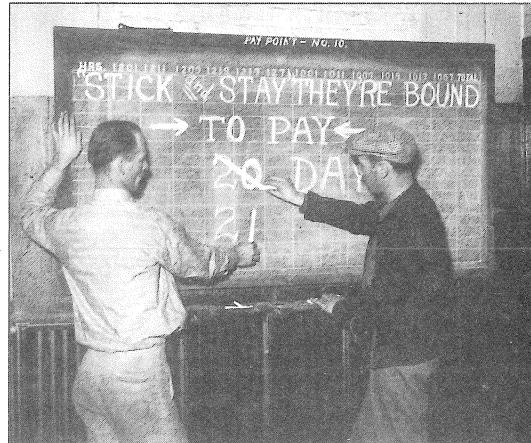
General Motors, Flint, Michigan

On December 30, 1936, autoworkers at General Motors Fisher Body Plant #1 stopped working and sat down. GM was one of the largest manufacturing companies in the world. Their average worker earned 76 cents an hour—a fair wage in 1936. GM said the workers were trespassing on company property. But forcing the sit-downers to leave might have resulted in damage to the plant.

The United Auto Workers union (UAW) had been planning a sit-down strike. They brought in food for the workers. Many wives of the sit-downers brought food baskets to their husbands. The strike went on for days. Then one January day, GM wouldn't allow food into the plant, and turned off the heat. Governor Murphy had to send in the Michigan National Guard to keep the peace. President Roosevelt made phone calls to GM and the UAW, urging them to settle the strike.

"The Most Important Strike in American History"

The Flint Sit-Down Strike lasted for 44 days. To end it, General Motors managers signed a contract giving workers a 5 percent pay increase. Workers would be able to talk in the lunchroom, and GM would not stop them from joining the UAW. Autoworkers went back to making new automobiles. Soon, 100,000 GM workers joined the UAW.



Flint autoworkers record how many days they've been on strike.