
Henry Shaw

Missouri Botanical Garden

By M. Karen Hubbard

LESSON DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students will explore the concept of a niche market as they explore the contributions of entrepreneur Henry Shaw. Students will read the story of Henry Shaw who went from being a prosperous entrepreneur owning a hardware business in early St. Louis to developing a garden which is now world renowned.

ECONOMIC CONCEPTS

- entrepreneur
- market
- niche market

RELATED CONCEPTS

- reading comprehension
- map reading
- writing composition

MATERIALS

- One copy of “Henry Shaw” reading for each student
- One copy of Activity 1 – “Entrepreneurs Grow Businesses and Communities” for each student

TIME

- 45 minutes

PROCEDURE

1. Teacher could introduce the reading to the students by asking what the students want to be when they grow up, whether or not they would like to get married and have children, and, what they would like to do with their “free time”. Ask if any of the students have heard of the Missouri Botanical Garden or Tower Grove Park. Distribute the story of Henry Shaw and explain that the students are going to read about an entrepreneur who started the Missouri Botanical Garden and Tower Grove Park in St. Louis, Missouri.
2. Explain that an “entrepreneur” is someone who thinks of a good or service that someone would like to buy and produces it. An entrepreneur takes a risk that people will not like the good or service, and that all of the time, effort, and money he or she has spent to make the product will have been for nothing.

3. When the reading is completed, ask the following questions:

- When and where was Henry Shaw born? (1800, Sheffield, England)
- Why did he come to St. Louis, Missouri? (Shaw heard that the area was growing rapidly and he needed a place to sell his father's knives.)
- How big was St. Louis when Henry arrived? (City stretched one mile along the Mississippi River and about three blocks deep.)

4. Explain that Henry Shaw had found a “niche market”. A **market** is anytime producers and consumers make an exchange. For example, you go to a store to buy lemons. The producer brought the lemons to the store and you went to the store to get the lemons. Another example is buying a book on the Internet or exchanging a cupcake for candy in the lunchroom. Encourage students to name other goods and services they have purchased. Instruct them to include where or how the purchases were made.

5. A **niche market** is one in which producers provide a good/service that is appealing to a very specific group of consumers. For example, an entrepreneur could produce children's books written in Russian for Russian families who have just come to the United States. Ask students to think of goods or services that might be produced for a niche market (person riding a bike around downtown areas picking up and delivering packages, gourmet dog biscuits for dog owners)

6. Continue the discussion:

- If you have a United States map in the classroom, ask the students to look at the map and try to give some reasons why St. Louis was growing rapidly. (1. Located on the Mississippi River – goods could be shipped from the West down the river to St. Louis to sell; 2. St. Louis is located about half way between the east and west coast so it was a good place for people to stop for supplies that were coming from the east and going west.)
- What kind of business did Henry Shaw open in St. Louis? (hardware store – explain that a hardware store sells supplies like hammers, nails, saws, etc.)
- Why was the hardware store called a niche market? (St. Louis was the last place people could buy hardware supplies like hammers, nails, saws, before they went west and St. Louis were a growing city so people needed hardware to build new buildings and use on their farms.)

7. Explain that “profit” is the money that an entrepreneur has left over after all the bills of the business are paid. This is the money the entrepreneur spends on food, clothing, shelter, entertainment, investing back into the company, etc.

- Why did Shaw have so much money? (He never married and did not spend much money.)
- What did he do with his money/profit? (He invested his money/profit in buying land.)
- What did he do in 1839? (He felt that he was so wealthy that he was able to retire at the age of forty.)

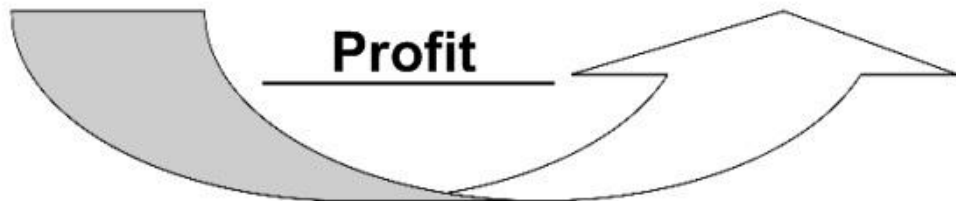
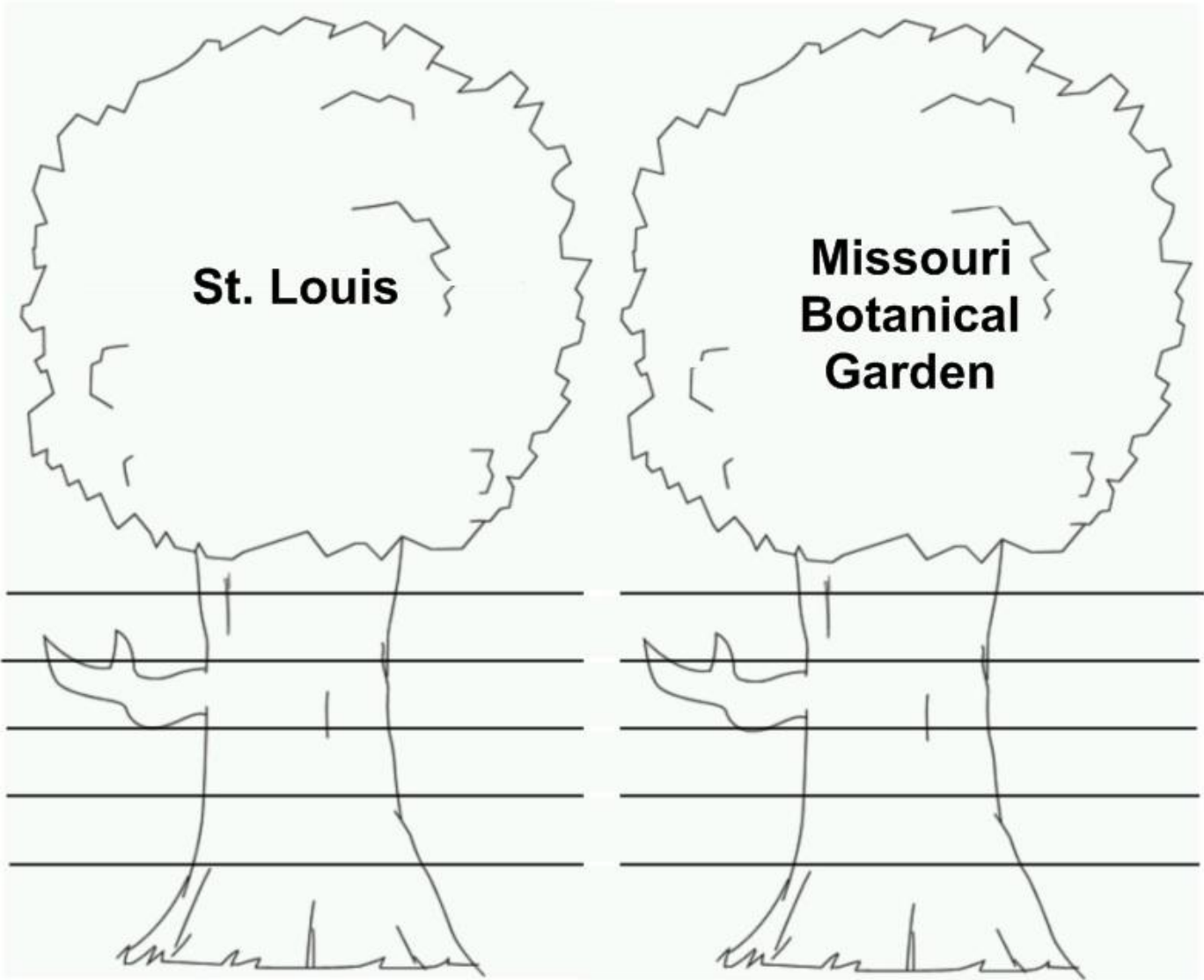
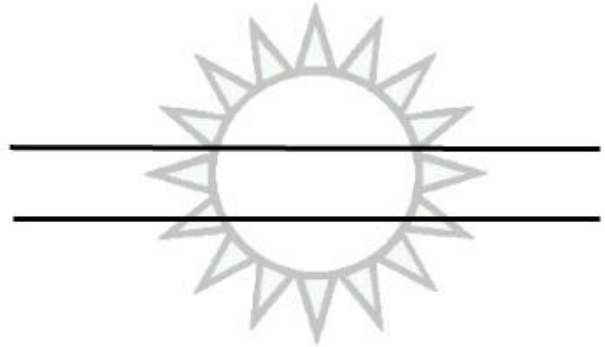
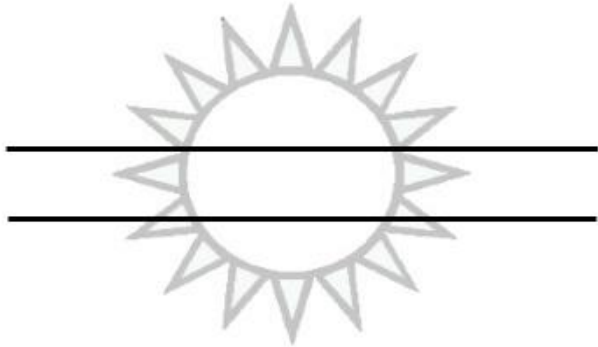
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- What did he do when he retired? (He was able to travel to visit his family as well as for pleasure; he had time to study botany.)
 - What is botany? (The study of plants.)
 - What was the first thing he did when he returned to St. Louis? (He built a new home and called it the Tower Grove House.)
 - What did Shaw do after he built his home? (He worked with famous botanists – people who study plants – and built a garden around his home.)
 - Where did he get the money to build a garden? (He got it from the profit he earned from his business.)
 - What happened in 1859 and why? (Shaw’s garden became officially known as Missouri Botanical Garden because he opened the garden to the public.)
 - What does it continue to be to this day? (center for botanical research, education and flower displays)
 - What did he do with the land next to the Garden? (Shaw donated 190 acres of land to the city of St. Louis for Tower Grove Park and helped with the construction.)
 - What are some other things he did? (He gave a school to the city, gave land for a hospital, an endowment of real estate to Washington University that gives \$5,000 a year income to organize and maintain the School of Botany in order to have a Ph.D. program. He also helped found the Missouri Historical Society – now located in Forest Park.)
 - When did he die and how old was Shaw? (1889, 90 years old)
 - Where is he buried? (Buried on the Garden grounds near his Tower Grove House.)
8. Distribute the activity sheet to the students. Ask them to fold the sheet in half lengthwise so there is a tree on either side of the fold. Tell the students that trees need the sun to grow just like cities need entrepreneurs to grow. Ask:
- If the tree on the left represents “St. Louis”, who do you think the sun represents from our reading? (Henry Shaw – tell students to put “Henry Shaw” on the sun and “entrepreneur” under his name.)
9. Tell the students to write a few sentences on the lines on the tree trunk about how entrepreneur, Henry Shaw helped the city of St. Louis to grow. Ask a few students to read their sentences and the rest of the class to add anything which they have written differently.
10. At the bottom of the page, ask the students why they think the arrow with “Profit” written on it is pointing toward “Missouri Botanical Garden.” (Shaw used the money he earned from the hardware business to start and maintain the Garden.)
11. Tell the students that trees need the sun to grow just like entrepreneurs help start cultural places (for example: zoos, art museums, symphonies, gardens). Ask:
- If the tree on the right represents the Missouri Botanical Garden, who do you think the sun represents from our reading? (Henry Shaw – tell students to put “Henry Shaw” on the sun and “entrepreneur” under his name.)

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12. Tell the students to write a few sentences on the lines on the tree trunk about how entrepreneur Henry Shaw used the profit from his hardware store and helped start the Missouri Botanical Garden which supports research, educational programs, and plant displays. Ask a few students to read their sentences and ask the rest of the class to add anything which they have written differently.

 13. Instruct half of the students to write a paragraph on the back of the activity sheet about what they think would have happened if Henry Shaw would have stayed in New Orleans and tried to sell his fathers knives there, and the other half of the class write a paragraph on what would happen if he had gotten married in St. Louis and had a family. When the students are finished, have them compare their ideas of what would have happened to Shaw if he had made different decisions in his life.

Name _____

Entrepreneurs Grow Businesses and Communities



SUGGESTED ANSWERS

Entrepreneurs Grow Businesses and Communities



Henry Shaw
Entrepreneur



Henry Shaw
Entrepreneur



St. Louis

Henry Shaw sold goods like tools, hammers, nails, etc. to people who were living and working in St. Louis to build their homes, businesses, and farms.



Missouri Botanical Garden

Henry Shaw bought the land, built his home on it, and worked with botanists to build a garden around his house. He opened the garden to the public in 1859.



Profit

Henry Shaw

Missouri Botanical Garden

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Henry Shaw was born on June 13, 1800, and was the oldest of four children. His family lived in Sheffield, England. When he became of age, he was sent away to boarding school. His father's business was not doing too well financially, so the family had to bring Henry home from boarding school. He started to help his father, Joseph Shaw, with the business. They went to Quebec, Canada, where the father had done well selling metal grates which were made in Sheffield, England. Shaw's father had borrowed money to finance selling Sheffield knives in New Orleans. The knives were lost or misplaced so Henry's father sent Henry, a teenager, to New Orleans to obtain and sell the knives. People there were not buying many things at the time so Henry took the knives to an area he heard was growing rapidly – St. Louis. He arrived in St. Louis on May 3, 1819, when he was eighteen. The city was about fifty years old and stretched for about one mile along the river and three blocks deep.

Starting out in the city, he was able to establish a successful hardware store selling high quality cutlery and other metal products to people who were living in St. Louis: farmers, soldiers, and pioneers going west. He never married and did not spend much money so he invested much of his money in real estate, and made a fortune as St. Louis was expanding at the time. In 1839, when he reached the age of forty, he was so wealthy that he was able to retire, but that would not stop his pursuits. His retirement just allowed him to shift his attention to his great interest in botany (study of plants).

Before he started on developing his land, he traveled to visit family as well as for pleasure. When Henry Shaw came back to St. Louis, he had a new home built for him. He called it Tower Grove House. Then, working with leading botanists (people who study plants), Shaw planned and built a garden around his home. As the garden became bigger and more elaborate, he decided to open it to the public and even extended the hospitality of his home. Missouri Botanical Garden was officially founded in 1859 and continues to this day to be a center for botanical research and education.

In 1870, Henry Shaw donated, to the City of St. Louis, 190 acres of land next to the garden for Tower Grove Park. He also helped with its construction. He gave the city a school as well as land for a hospital. In 1885, he gave an endowment of improved real estate to Washington University that yields \$5,000 yearly income to organize and maintain the School of Botany which enabled it to have a Ph.D. program. His efforts also helped to found the Missouri Historical Society.

Shaw personally oversaw the development of the garden for the next thirty years until his death in 1889 at the age of 90. He is buried near his Tower Grove House in the Garden. He gave most of his property to the City of St. Louis and his works are still appreciated to this day.

Today, the Garden is a not-for-profit charitable trust with a mission to discover and share knowledge about plants and their environment in order to preserve and enrich life. Its three functions are research, education, and horticultural display. Not-for-profit organization is an incorporated association, club, or society which operates exclusively for educational, charitable, social welfare, civic improvement, pleasure, recreational, or any other purpose except profit. The shareholders or trustees do not benefit financially. Almost all not-for-profit do not pay federal income taxes.