

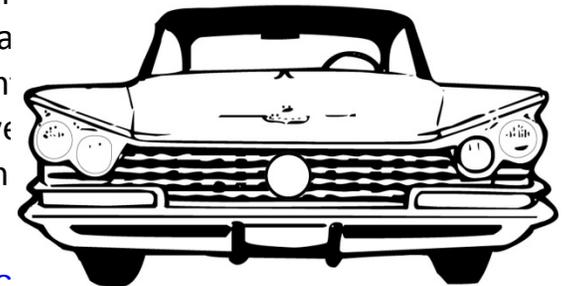
Name _____ **Organization of Text**

The Tucker Torpedo

If you are asked who the visionary automakers in history are, the name Henry Ford might come to mind. Ford had a huge impact on the automobile industry for sure—but it wasn't because of his vision about the car itself, per se; Ford's contribution was in the area of mass production. Before Ford revolutionized the automobile industry, and American life, cars were owned only by the very wealthy. Ford used the concept of the assembly line to produce his cars, lowering their cost, and thus putting them within the financial reach of the average American. Preston Tucker was a different kind of visionary – he saw, he tried to implement, a way to make the car itself (not just the method of producing them) better.

Preston Tucker was a policeman during the prohibition era, and something of an inventor. During WWII, production of cars had completely stopped as factories were used to produce war-related goods instead, and by 1945, the demand for cars in America was huge. There were long waiting lists for them, and customers were turning over money for cars that they hadn't even seen yet. But the design of the car hadn't changed at all since before the war, and Tucker was an innovator. His idea for a car, the Tucker Torpedo, was a sedan with swooping lines that looked utterly unlike any other car on the road. It was distinguished not only by its sleek design, but by a third, central headlight that could swivel to light the way around corners as the car was making a turn. Its fenders also pivoted defensively on turns. It had disc brakes, a pop-out windshield (so that passengers wouldn't be injured by shattered glass during a crash), a rear engine and a padded dashboard.

But Tucker ran into problems getting his car produced. 95% of American cars at the time were manufactured by Ford, General Motors and Chrysler, and these companies were more interested in earning a profit with a commercially viable product than they were in realizing Preston Tucker's creative genius. Tucker wasn't willing to give up any control over his car, so he attempted to raise the money required to manufacture them himself. He sold dealership rights for his cars, even though his cars had not yet been produced, a situation for which Tucker blamed the existing automobile industries, who he believed was the cause of Tucker's failure. For the next few years, until his death, Tucker continued to work on



Name _____ **Organization of Text**

So who was more visionary in the end, Henry Ford or Preston Tucker? Some people think that Preston Tucker was nothing more than a scam artist, and that may be true; but he did know how to make a car, and to this day the few Tuckers that exist in the world are highly prized by collectors. In fact, a Tucker sold in 2012 for \$2.9 million.

1. How is this article organized? Circle the correct answer.

Cause & Effect

Chronological

Spatial/Descriptive

Compare/Contrast

Sequence/Process

2. Explain your answer to question #1, citing evidence from the text.
