In 1907, Henry Ford announced his goal for the Ford Motor Company: to create "a motor car for the great multitude." At that time, automobiles were expensive, custom-made machines.

Ford's engineers took the first step towards this goal by designing the Model T, a simple, sturdy car, offering no factory options -- not even a choice of color. The Model T, first produced in 1908, kept the same design until the last one -- number 15,000,000 -- rolled off the line in 1927.

From the start, the Model T was less expensive than most other cars, but it was still not attainable for the "multitude." Ford realized he'd need a more efficient way to produce the car in order to lower the price. He and his team looked at other industries and found four principles that would further their goal: interchangeable parts, continuous flow, division of labor, and reducing wasted effort.

Using interchangeable parts meant making the individual pieces of the car the same every time. That way any valve would fit any engine, any steering wheel would fit any chassis. This meant improving the machinery and cutting tools used to make the parts. But once the machines were adjusted, a low-skilled laborer could operate them, replacing the skilled craftsperson who formerly made the parts by hand.

To improve the flow of the work, it needed to be arranged so that as one task was finished, another began, with minimum time spent in set-up. Ford was inspired by the meat-packing houses of Chicago and a grain mill conveyor belt he had seen. If he brought the work to the workers, they spent less time moving about.

Then he divided the labor by breaking the assembly of the Model T into 84 distinct steps. Each worker was trained to do just one of these steps.

Ford called in Frederick Taylor, the creator of "scientific management," to do time and motion studies to determine the exact speed at which the work should proceed and the exact motions workers should use to accomplish their tasks.

Ford put these principles into play gradually over five years, fine-tuning and testing as he went along. In 1913, they came together in the first moving assembly line ever used for large-scale manufacturing. Ford produced cars at a record-breaking rate. That meant he could lower the price and still make a good profit by selling more cars. Ford had another notion, rather original in its time: the workers were also potential consumers! In 1914, Ford workers' wages were raised to $5 a day -- an excellent wage -- and they soon proved him right by buying their own Model Ts. Ford was called "a traitor to his class" by other industrialists and professionals, but he held firm in believing that well-paid workers would put up with dull work, be loyal, and buy his cars.

Ford's manufacturing principles were adopted by countless other industries. Henry Ford went beyond his 1907 goal of making cars affordable for all; he changed the habits of a nation, and shaped its very character.
Henry Ford developed a system for creating an affordable car for the masses. For the following essay, think about an area in your life that you would like to figure out a system for and then conduct some research online and interviews to help in that area. Then follow the guidelines below to write your essay.

Due Date:

Essays are due on _______________________________ at the beginning of the class period.

Paper Set-up:

- Typed
- 2+ pages
- MLA Format

Choose an area of your life that you would like to figure out a system for:

- How to Become a Better Student
- How to Become a Better Son/Daughter
- How to Become a Better Citizen
- How to Become a Better Athlete
- How to Become a Better Friend
- How to Become a Better Boyfriend/Girlfriend
- How to Become a Better Employee
- How to Become Better at _______________________

Required Content:

- Title – Come up with a creative title
- Paragraph #1 – In your own words, define what a system is. Discuss how figuring out a system can help you become more successful.
- Paragraph #2 – Discuss what area of your life you would like to figure out a system for and why.
- Paragraph #3 – Based on your research (online research and interviews with people who have some expertise in that area), what specific steps will you need to take to improve in your chosen area? In other words, what system can you put in place to become more successful?
- Paragraph #4 – Evaluate the advice that you wrote in paragraph #3. Does the advice make sense? If so, discuss why. If not, discuss what you feel should be included in the system.
- Paragraph #5 – Discuss what has kept you from improving in this area of your life up until now. How will you begin to implement change to make this system a part of your everyday life?