

new jersey 350

innovation • diversity • liberty

Campbell's Soup

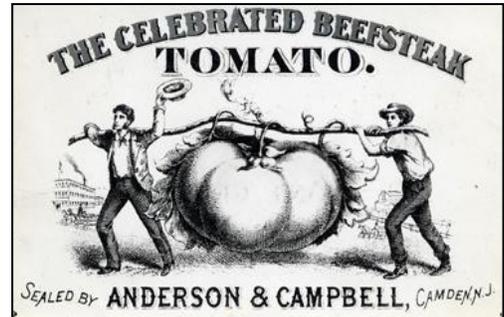
Target Age: Middle School
Time Period: 20th Century
Featured County: Camden
NJ 350th Theme: Innovation

NJ Common Core Standards:

Social Studies: 6.1.P.B.1, 6.1.4.B.4, 6.1.4.B.5,
6.1.4.C.5

Social Studies Skills: Chronological Thinking,
Presentational Skills

Language Arts Literacy: 3.1 Reading, 3.2 Writing



Courtesy of New Jersey State Archives; Department of State

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: The New-Jersey based Campbell's Soup Company is one of the most recognizable brands in the world. How did technology and marketing contribute to this success, and what impact did this company have on its local economy?

BACKGROUND:

The Campbell Soup Company was founded in 1869 by fruit merchant Joseph Campbell and icebox manufacturer Abraham Anderson as a small canning company in Camden, New Jersey. They started out packing three products: French peas, fancy asparagus, and beefsteak tomatoes, then expanded to other vegetables, jellies, soups, condiments, and mincemeat.

In 1897, Dr. John T. Dorrance joined the company and invented condensed soup, a product that changed the way Americans ate and turned *Campbell's* into a household name. Condensed soups were lighter than ready-to-eat soups, and therefore could be transported at a lower cost giving Campbell's a major competitive advantage. The new product proved so popular that, in 1922, the company formally adopted "Soup" as its middle name and became the Campbell's Soup Company.

The company's success was also New Jersey's success, as Campbell's Soup became one of the largest employers in the south Jersey region, providing jobs to farmers, truck drivers, machine operators, produce inspectors, factory line workers, artists, merchants, and storekeepers. The company, in other words, contributed to the local economy, the growth of towns, and the region's way of life.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the company's profits continued to expand and its brand became recognized on the national and international stage, especially after Andy Warhol included the iconic red and white soup can in his 1962 work "Campbell Soup Cans." That design was just one of many marketing innovations, including the Campbell Kids and the "mmm mmm good" campaign, which has enabled Campbell's to remain one of the most successful companies in the United States. Currently, Campbell's has added a variety of new soups and packaging, as well as entering into social media and smartphone apps, in order to maintain its success.

But after 1970, canned soup consumption began to decline. In 1980, Campbell's closed its Camden factory, in part to save on labor costs. At the time, it was one of the largest employers in the region, and while the company headquarters remains in Camden, its soups are now produced all around the world.

ACTIVITY:

This activity asks students to consider how Campbell's success relied on the residents of south New Jersey. In 1897, Campbell's Soup patented its recipe for condensed soup. The first seven slides of the PowerPoint associated with this activity demonstrate the various stages of production. Have students work in small groups to create flow charts tracing the effects of this innovation (a link to a sample flow chart appears in the "For More Information" section of this classroom activity). Who are the people in each of these slides? What kinds of work are they performing? Ask students to be as descriptive as possible—are there men and women, children or adults? Where are they working, in a field, in a factory or elsewhere? What kinds of tools are they using to complete their tasks?

Now ask students to consider what would happen if those jobs were no longer available. Do any of them know anyone who was out of work for a while? What does this mean to the person and their family? What would happen if this happened to many families in the same region?

Creating the product is half the battle—selling it to the public is the other half. To extend this activity, use slides 8 and 9 of the associated PowerPoint show a range of advertising images used to sell soup over the years. The most popular of these was undoubtedly the Campbell Soup Kids, introduced in 1904. These iconic characters have sold the soup, but also have become a product on their own. People have been collecting plates, dolls, Christmas ornaments that bear the images of the kids.

Ask students if they have ever seen the Campbell Soup Kids, and if their parents, grandparents or other relatives collect them. If they say yes, then have the students share these stories. If no, ask them about other collectibles they may have seen. Follow up with a discussion of why people collect things.

Using computers, have your students go to Google images (or similar search engines), and search "Campbell Soup Kids." Direct the students to explore the images for a few minutes. Then have the students participate in a Think/ Pair/ Share activity.

Think: Pick one image and examine it closely. Pick out 5 details from the picture.

Pair: Now have two students work together, sharing their 5 details. Did they have any details in common? Why did they choose the details?

Share: Direct the class in a full discussion, listing details about the pictures and the kids. Ask them to identify the common details. What qualities do the students think the company wants them to believe about Campbell soup, based upon the details the students identified?

As an additional homework assignment, you might have students compare this marketing campaign with those of other common goods from their homes, where there is a mascot to sell the product. A quick kitchen search will yield a host of results.

FOLLOW-UP:

The story is that one day, the artist Andy Warhol asked his friend what he should paint next. His friend's response was to suggest painting the most common, recognizable artifact he could imagine, and in 1962 that was a can of Campbell's Soup. Warhol painted 32 cans, a piece of art originally valued at \$1,000, and now worth over 15 million dollars. It is housed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

To prepare students for the discussion on Warhol, ask them for a definition of "art." Write the variety of responses on the board and have the class come to some common agreement on the definition. Definitions can include examples of art they have seen, discussion of why art is made, where it is displayed, and whether it has to have a purpose.

Project an image of Warhol's Soup Can (located, for example, online at: http://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/andy-warhol-campbells-soup-cans-1962). Ask the students if they think it is art? Discuss why or why not.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?***Places You Can Visit***

Campbell's Soup International Headquarters: <http://www.campbellsoupcompany.com>

Museum of Modern Art: http://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/andy-warhol-campbells-soup-cans-1962.

Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens, Winterthur Museum, Wilmington, DE:
<http://www.winterthur.org/?p=557>

Additional Classroom Activities

The Warhol Museum: http://edu.warhol.org/aract_soup.html

Albright-Knox Art Gallery: <http://www.albrightknox.org/education/lesson-plans/lesson:can-it/>

For More Information

To learn more about Andy Warhol and the Campbell's Soup can, visit:

- http://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/andy-warhol-campbells-soup-cans-1962
- <http://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2013/february/22/the-fascinating-story-behind-andy-warhols-soup-cans/>

Campbell Soup Kids: http://inventors.about.com/od/foodrelatedinventions/a/Campbell_Soup.htm

Flow-chart template (for the stages of production activity): [http://www.studenthandouts.com/01-Web-Pages/New%20Folder%20\(2\)/5-Steps.html](http://www.studenthandouts.com/01-Web-Pages/New%20Folder%20(2)/5-Steps.html)

CREDIT INFORMATION:

In Classroom Activity:

Pg. 1: Label on the can of “The Celebrated Beefsteak Tomato,” NJ Canning 4446,
New Jersey State Archives, Department of State.

In PowerPoint:

Listed with each image on the PowerPoint slide.

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