6th Grade Expository: World's Fair Inventions

Task Prompt: Write an expository article to develop a thesis/controlling idea to explain the impact of the 1893 World's Fair. Using more than one source, select the most relevant information to support your thesis/controlling idea.

It Changed America… and the World

When you flick on the light switch at home or turn on the lights before going into the basement, it feels so natural. Right? Yes. But believe it or not, there was actually a time when we did not have electricity or the light-bulb. Amazing, I know, but it is true. The zippers you have on your jackets or on your tents – also not invented. But where, you ask, *were* these things invented? At the World's Fair in Chicago, along with many other innovative… and maybe slightly crazy inventions. The Chicago World's Fair influenced a huge change in everyday life. People were inventing things that made life simpler, tasks easier to accomplish. Even though technology has advanced hugely since the World's Fair in 1893, this event helped spark a creative fire in the hearts of America's inventors.

To really understand the influence of the fair, you need to know about the fair itself first. You need to understand how it was like to be there. The World's Fair was held on the site of Jackson Park, an area over six hundred acres. There were many famous visitors, such as Helen Keller and Thomas Edison. While at the fair, visitors could visit a wide variety of activities, such as sampling world food, or looking at the newest inventions of the era. The inventions that were on display at the Fair were things that not many people had seen before. A few of the inventions have become a part of our daily lives, such as the light-bulb, or the dishwasher. ("A Great Spectacle: The Chicago World's Fair of 1893")

The World's Fair was a big keystone in America's economy and technological advances. In 1871, the Great Chicago Fire took place, destroying nearly 17,450 beautiful buildings and homes. Chicago spent a lot of time rebuilding their city to become the beautiful place it had once been. They wanted to show that Chicago had really and truly been reborn ("Why Was the 1893 World's Fair So Memorable?) The development of America's economy in the mid-1800s due to the Industrial Revolution only benefited from the innovative ideas of the inventors' ideas at the Fair. How could they make machines better, faster, safer? If they made machines even better than before, they could make more goods, and therefore have a higher profit. These crazy ideas led to the invention of items such as the light-bulb and the dishwasher. ("A Great Spectacle: The Chicago World's Fair") Both of these inventions were invented to help people have a faster life, and move on from the old gas-lamps and hand-washing dishes. They were getting ready for a new era, they were preparing for the modern world.

There was also another reason that the World's fair was such a big event. It marked the 400th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in America. Having this huge showcase of some of the greatest inventions of the time was significant due to the emotional aspect of having America advance in the

technological stand-point. This demonstrated the idea of as America moved forwards in age, it also moved in advancement and culture. Thanks to the World's Fair we have some of the greatest inventions to fly us into the world we know today. ("Why Was the 1893 World's Fair so Memorable?")

If you look deeper into the details of the World's Fair, you can see some things that you might have missed just glancing over it. Most people know that Edison invented the light bulb, but what they don't know was there was quite a competition going on between him and his greatest rival "…Thomas A. Edison had patented the incandescent light-bulb only 13 years earlier, in 1880…" He was used to working with electricity, and decided to compete to win the honor of being the one to light the Fair. Unfortunately, Nicola Tesla also wanted to light the Fair. He (Nicola) won the competition by using long distance AC power. By using this new method of lighting, Nicola introduced America to a new way of lighting many bulbs at once. As many people think, Edison was the one who brought the light-bulb to today's standards, but it really was Tesla and his new way of lighting that had an impact on the modern world's electricity standards. (Simons, "Light Show")

The Chicago World's Fair was a big step in America's economy and technological advances. Inventors were creating inventions that further benefited the Industrial Revolution, making life easier for people so they could move on. The inventions made jobs easier to accomplish and moved America… and the world into modern times. Edison brought the light-bulb to life, and Tesla made it possible to light large areas up. Dish-washers allowed moms to take a break, and zippers allowed for fewer buttons having to be sewn on to shirts and jackets. These inventions were groundbreaking ideas that had never been heard, yet they are some of the reasons we are as technologically advanced as we are. The Chicago World's Fair has moved people into the modern day, and left a huge impact on America. And the world.