

History of Motor Vehicles

History of Motor Vehicles – Study Notes

1. Early Experiments (1760-1885)

Year	Inventor / Country	Key Development	Significance
1769	Nicolas-Joseph Cugnot (France)	Steam-driven “Fardier à vapeur” – a three-wheeled artillery tractor	First recorded self-propelled road vehicle
1801	Richard Trevithick (UK)	First full-scale steam carriage (road trial)	Demonstrated feasibility of steam power on roads
1832-1835	Samuel Brown (UK)	First internal-combustion (IC) engine (gas-fuel)	Early proof that combustion could drive a piston
1885	Karl Benz (Germany)	Benz Patent-Motorwagen – 3-wheel gasoline car (Patent No. 37435)	Widely regarded as the first modern automobile

2. The Birth of the Automobile Industry (1886-1914)

Period	Milestones	Impact
1886-1890	– Gottlieb Daimler builds the first high-speed gasoline engine (1885) and a four-wheel carriage (1886). – Emile Roger imports Benz cars to France, creating the first foreign market.	Set the template for the modern engine-chassis layout.
1893-1899	– Charles & Frank Duryea (USA) produce the first American gasoline car (Duryea Motor Wagon). – Panhard & Levassor (France) introduce the “system” (engine at front, rear-wheel drive, clutch, gearbox).	Established the “classic” layout that dominates today.
1901-1908	– Oldsmobile (Ransom E. Olds) launches the Curved-Dashboard Model , the first mass-produced car using an assembly line (1901). – Ford Model T (1908) – simple, cheap, reliable.	Demonstrated that automobiles could be affordable for the masses.

History of Motor Vehicles

Period	Milestones	Impact
1913?	– Ford perfects moving assembly line (1913), cutting	Revolutionized manufacturing; lowered vehicle cost dramatically.
1914	Model T production time from 12?hours to 1.5?hours.	

3. Expansion & Technological Advances (1915?1939)

Theme	Highlights
Engine Power & Reliability	• Introduction of V?type engines (e.g., Cadillac V?8, 1914). • Development of forced induction – superchargers (1930s).
Body Construction	• Shift from coach?built (wood frame) to all?steel bodies (e.g., 1934 Chrysler Airflow). • First standardized brakes (hydraulic, 1921).
Safety & Comfort	• Introduction of windshields, heaters, and electric starters (late 1910s–1920s).
Global Spread	• Growth of manufacturers in the UK (Austin, Morris), Italy (FIAT), Japan (Toyota – founded 1937 as a loom company, entered auto in 1935).
Economic Influence	• Cars become central to urban planning, road building, and the rise of suburbs.
