

American Entrepreneur: Madam C.J. Walker - Lesson Plan



Objectives: Students will identify the attributes that helped Madam C.J. Walker succeed as an entrepreneur. Compare and contrast Walker and Turnbo for similarities and differences in backgrounds and business methods.

Materials:

1) Two maps of cities associated with Walker (provided);

- [National Park Service Website](#)

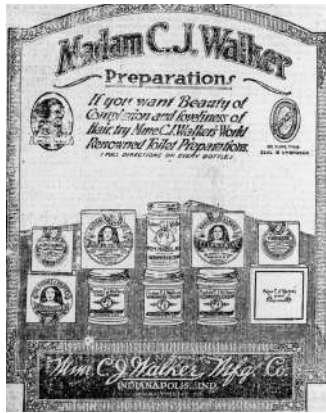
2) Readings about the life of Madam CJ Walker (provided);

- [History of Madam CJ Walker](#)
- [How she made her products](#)
- [Biography](#)
- [Madam CJ Walker Museum](#)

3) Video clips about Madam CJ Walker

- [PBS interview about Netflix series covering the life of Madam CJ Walker.](#)
- [CSPAN Video](#)
- [Smithsonian Magazine](#)

4) Two advertisements for Madam Walker beauty preparations

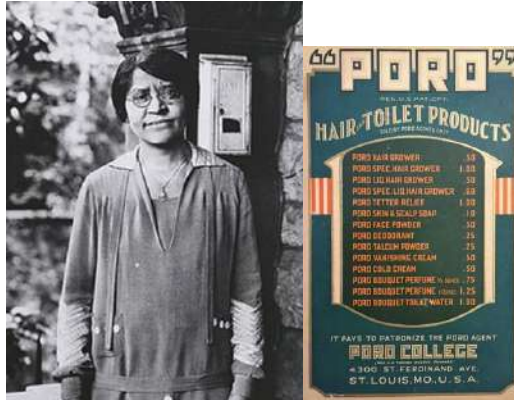


5) Photographs and a drawing of Madam Walker, Walker Manufacturing buildings.



Activity 1: Comparing Walker and Annie Turnbo Malone

Annie Turnbo Malone- Competitor



Have students discuss the careers of Madam C. J. Walker and Annie Turnbo Malone, using the following questions as a guide:

1. What personality and character traits do Walker and Turnbo share?
2. Why do you think both Walker and Turnbo were successful as business owners? What similarities and differences can you list about how they conducted their enterprises?
3. In what ways did the Walker and Turnbo businesses benefit society?
4. Is it still possible for individuals to achieve such success? Why or why not? (Reflect on the successes of Apple computers, William Gates and the Microsoft Corporation, or Sam Walton who founded Wal-Mart stores.)

Activity 2: Changes in Advertising

1. Students will have noted that advertisements for the Walker products and the Golden Rule Store are quite different from those that are run in newspapers and magazines today.
2. Gather up a collection of fairly recent magazines and newspapers (the students can help) and have students work in groups with at least 10 different kinds of ads.

3. Have them categorize advertisements for beauty products and services and for Penney's or similar stores such as Montgomery Ward.
4. Students can establish their own categories or you might suggest grouping together advertisements with an emphasis on price, quality, style, convenience, or importance to specific ethnic or age groups.
5. Have students also make lists of particular design patterns in ads that they find attractive or compelling. Ask them to compare and contrast the recent advertisements with the Walker or Penney ads.
6. Discuss the findings of each group, and then have each student develop an ad for a product or store to be shown to the class and perhaps displayed on a bulletin board.

Activity 3: Starting a Business

1. Have students work in groups of four or five to brainstorm ideas for a new business that would be successful in today's society.
2. Have them consider the special needs of different groups of people, the types of products or services that would improve their lives, and the ways in which a new business might be developed in their own community.
3. Have them consider whether they would develop a new product or a new way of merchandising an existing line of related products.
4. After the groups have decided on the type of business they would like to start, have them draw up a list of steps they would have to take to make the business successful.
5. Explain how science, technology, and or engineering would be needed to develop the product.
6. Have each group explain their ideas to the full class.

Activity 4: Researching a Local Business

- Have students choose a local business that is very successful or a business that is part of a nationwide chain and conduct research into its founding and operation.
- Have them first develop a research plan and divide up tasks among class members
- Some students can conduct interviews with the owners and workers of the business and with customers. Others can do research on the business in the local history section of their public library. They can use city or county business

directories to see how long the business has operated and at what addresses. Stories in old newspapers will probably describe when the business was opened and what changes have been made over the years.

- Students will probably also be able to find newspaper advertisements placed by the company.
- After the research has been conducted and discussed by the class, have them compare the information they have found with the origins of both the Madam C. J. Walker Manufacturing Company and the J. C. Penney Company.
- Ask them whether any buildings associated with these businesses remain.
- If so, do they think it would be important to preserve the buildings as part of their community's history, like the Walker building in Indianapolis and the Penney buildings in Kemmerer?

Activity 5: Research women who are notables in the field of science engineering who are also entrepreneurs.

