

FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING A CASE STUDY

In this unit, we have used several examples to show how people brought about changes and how those changes affected people. Now use what you have learned to build your own case study. Use this outline to complete the unit with your case study. You can deal with the distant past or the recent past. Start by looking for changes that took place in your own metropolitan area. You could profile a change from the point of view of its impact on your own neighborhood today or at some time in the past.

Here are the steps to follow:

1. Choose a change that you think is important. It could be the introduction of an invention, such as the cotton gin, or the introduction of an idea, such as interchangeable parts. The only limit on the kind of change you choose is that a city played an important role in its development. That is not much of a limit, you'll find.
2. Use this list to collect information about this change. (It is the same list we used to organize the case studies in this unit, so it stresses the same ideas.) Be sure to use primary sources if possible—the statements of people who took part in the change. If it is a recent change, you can interview people who were involved in this change—and whom it affects today.
 - a. Who brought about this change? (Who was the entrepreneur or innovator?)
 - b. Why did this person want to make this change?
 - c. What city was most important in the development of this change?
 - d. How did the innovator get funds to support the change?
 - e. What groups or kinds of individuals resisted the change—and why?
 - f. What groups or kinds of individuals supported or helped to bring about the change—and why?
 - g. What did this change create—what did it bring into the economy? (Consider kinds of jobs, products, and ways of working and living. Look beyond the first change for secondary changes. Just as the automobile led to many changes in the ways people live, every change leads to other changes as people respond to it.)
 - h. What did this change destroy? (Consider the same kinds of things listed for question g—jobs, products, ways of working and living. And look for secondary destruction, too.)
3. Then organize your study.
4. Write a conclusion. Explain your views on: the importance of this change for your own area's economic development; what lessons for economic development plans this study suggests.