

Name _____ Date _____

This text is about Robert Fulton, the man who invented the steamboat.

Adapted from "Robert Fulton"

by Hattie E. Macomber

1

Mr. Fulton married the daughter of a Mr. Walter Livingston. This Mr. Livingston had a relative who was a great man and a rich man. He was very interested in all inventions and often helped inventors with his money. He had long believed that boats could be moved by steam. At one time, the state of New York gave him the right¹ of all steamboats for twenty years. He was given the right if he would get one steamboat running within a year. But the year passed and the boat was not built. Everybody made fun of his "grand rights." At this time, our government made him our ambassador² to France. There he met Robert Fulton for the first time, and in Paris, Mr. Livingston and Mr. Fulton made a steamboat.

When it was finished, they invited their friends to come and see its trial run. Early upon the morning when they hoped to succeed, a messenger came with sad news. The new boat had broken in two. The machinery was too heavy for it, and it had sunk to the bottom of the river Seine. Mr. Fulton had not had his breakfast, but he hurried to the river and worked standing in the cold water. In twenty-four hours, he had saved the machinery, and some other parts of the boat. But it made him sick, and he never was so strong again. Of course, he felt greatly discouraged, but they went to work again. They built another boat, and this one was a success. It was sixty-six feet long, and moved by wheels on the side. Mr. Livingston and Mr. Fulton decided to try again in America upon the Hudson River.

3

Mr. Livingston was given again the same privileges by the state of New York. But this time, Mr. Fulton was his partner. They were given two years in which to make their boat. They were to make one which could go four miles an hour. It took much money, and Mr. Fulton promised to ask only a certain sum of Mr. Livingston. But this sum proved to be too small, so he went to see a friend and talked long and earnestly to him.

¹**gave him the right:** He was the only person allowed to build and sell steamboats.

²**ambassador:** a helper in another country

But the friend grew tired and told him he must go home or go to bed. Mr. Fulton wanted one thousand dollars. His friend said he would see him again. Mr. Fulton came again before the poor man had had any breakfast. He gave him no peace, and he got his money at last. Mr. Fulton was much laughed at for trying to make such a boat. The boat was called by people, "Fulton's Folly." His friends would listen politely to him, but he said he knew they did not believe in him. He often, as he walked about, heard people laugh at him. But at last the boat was done.

4

The sun rose smiling on that August morning while the world was enjoying its morning nap. Only a few people were on the shores. Gracefully the boat was moved from the Jersey shore. Those who saw were amazed. Old sailors were frightened. When they saw a boat with no sails, they thought it was an evil spirit. But the long line of black smoke which they saw was only the breath of the dear old giant, steam. This boat was called the *Clermont*. It passed the city of New York and the beautiful Highlands of the Hudson. It puffed patiently on until it reached Albany. All along the shores people watched it breathlessly. Everybody stopped laughing and cheered. The *Clermont* had gone 150 miles in thirty-two hours. Except that the ocean steamships are larger, handsomer, and more finely finished, they are much like Mr. Fulton's *Clermont*. Who can doubt Mr. Fulton's joy at his success? At last, he had found a way to make all nations know each other.

- 1 What is the connection between paragraphs 1 and 3?
 - A Livingston and Fulton invited friends to come see the boat they built together.
 - B Livingston was given the right of all steamboats by the state of New York.
 - C The people were impressed with the boats.
 - D The boats moved quickly through the water.

- 2 Which sentence explains the effect of the machinery being too heavy for the first boat?
- A "A messenger came with sad news."
 - B "The new boat had broken in two."
 - C "But it made him sick, and he never was so strong again."
 - D "They were given two years in which to make their boat."
- 3 What is the connection between paragraphs 1 and 4?
- A Fulton was elected ambassador to France.
 - B Fulton was discouraged about building a steamboat.
 - C Fulton believed he could get donations to build a steamboat.
 - D Fulton believed he could make a boat move by steam, and he did.
- 4 How does paragraph 4 connect to the rest of the text?
- A It explains the success of the steamboat after many tries.
 - B It shows how the people in the town were correct.
 - C It introduces the struggles of the inventors.
 - D It describes the setting on the river.

- 5 Which statement shows that the people thought differently about the steamboat by the end of the text?
- A "He often, as he walked about, heard people laugh at him."
 - B "Old sailors were frightened."
 - C "All along the shores people watched it breathlessly."
 - D "Everybody stopped laughing and cheered."