Grades: 8
Subject: Computer Technology

PRIMARY SOURCE USED
Title: Plate, punch card, and instructions for Herman Hollerith's Electric Sorting and Tabulating Machine, ca. 1895.
Link: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mcc:@field(DOCID+@lit(mcc/023))

ACTIVITIES
1. Read the information about Hollerith’s electric tabulating machine at the link above and on the primary source image. Discuss with the class:
   - What similarities and differences do you see between Hollerith’s machine and today’s computers?
   - What are the different parts depicted in these drawings, and are they still in use today?
   - What were the intended uses for these early technological inventions? Do we still use them for the same things?
   - How many different versions did these machines go through before they worked as intended?
2. Conduct searches from the Library of Congress homepage to find more sketches and other sources for early computers. Use search terms such as tabulating machine, computer, and inventions.
3. For more information, use the links to the right.

HELPFUL LINKS
- Collection Connections for the collection Words and Deeds in American History for more classroom ideas
- Science, Medicine, Exploration, and Invention for more science-related primary sources
- Invention Item List for other early inventions and technologies
- From Carbon to Computers at the Smithsonian
- Pictorial Americana: Experiments and Inventions for more primary source images
- Science and Invention Themed Resources for Wright Brothers primary sources and more helpful links
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US TODAY?

The success of Herman Hollerith’s tabulating machine led him to found his own company, the Tabulating Machine Company, which later became International Business Machines Corporation, better known to us today as IBM. IBM tells the story of its history through online exhibits at its Web site. Just go to http://www-03.ibm.com/ibm/history/index.html to see images, view the timeline, and learn fun facts.

Have you ever seen a punched card used in an election? Did it look anything like the card that Hollerith used? In Tennessee today, there’s a debate as to whether we should continue using punched cards for our elections, as opposed to voting in paperless elections. What are the pros and cons of using punched cards?

CURRICULUM STANDARDS

Computer Technology

- 8.6.2. Students will employ technology in the development of strategies for solving problems in the real world.