

Max Morath Chart



(paraphrased from [An Interview with Max Morath](#), from the website [The American Experience – WayBack U.S. History for Kids – Technology in 1900](#), accessed through the EDSITEment-reviewed website [The Internet Public Library-Youth Division](#). See citation below.)

QUESTIONS FOR MAX MORATH	ANSWERS
<p>1. What one piece of technology did kids most want in 1900?</p>	<p>Probably a phonograph, which is similar to today's record player. But in 1900, there was a limited range of music available. On a phonograph, kids could hear some opera singers and maybe some marching bands or folk singers. Also, the sound quality of phonograph records was not nearly as good as it is today with CDs and MP3s. You have to remember that to kids in 1900, it would have been amazing just to listen to recorded music in their homes.</p>
<p>2. What were the most commonly used types of technology used by kids in 1900?</p>	<p>Well, the average kid would not have used much technology at all. Many children from poor or nearly poor families were working by age 10 in sweatshops and factories. This is where they experienced technology in the form of heavy machinery. Unfortunately, this type of technology was very dangerous to the people who used it.</p>
<p>3. How many kids had access to what we call "modern" technology, like the telephone, for example?</p>	<p>In 1900, only very wealthy people had access to "modern" technology—electric lights, a telephone, an indoor bathroom with hot running water, and central heat. For entertainment purposes, wealthy families almost certainly had a piano and maybe an automobile. However, most homes in 1900 were still heated with a coal or wood-burning stove.</p>
<p>4. Did most people have lights in their homes?</p>	<p>Not really. In rural areas, and in small towns, most people used kerosene lamps or candles to light their homes. In cities, people lit their homes with natural gas flames. Only newer towns were electrified, but electricity was coming on strong.</p>
<p>5. How many people had cars in 1900?</p>	<p>Very few. Most people who knew about the automobile said it would never be anything more than a toy of the rich. Most people relied on horses and ponies for transportation in 1900.</p>
<p>6. How did technology make life different for kids who lived on farms vs. kids who lived in cities?</p>	<p>In the 1900s, farm life was pretty much the same as it had been a hundred years before, meaning there was little or no technology. Kids started work on the farm as soon as they were big enough to pick up a hoe. And it was hard work. In contrast to the difficulties and toil of farm life, by 1900 cities were thriving, largely because of new technologies. Cities were exciting and offered more job opportunities, so many young people left the farm.</p>
<p>7. What did kids in 1900 do to have fun?</p>	<p>Most people entertained themselves at home through music, games and stories. There was neither radio nor TV. A few people had phonographs, and wealthy children might have a few mechanical toys. Musical instruments—guitars, banjos, mandolins, and especially the piano—were the great pieces of entertainment technology at the time.</p>
<p>8. Were there many technological breakthroughs around 1900?</p>	<p>There were many technological breakthroughs either in or around 1900. The telephone, motion pictures (movies), the electric light, the automobile, and later on, the radio and the airplane all came about during this time. When people first saw these things, or heard them, they were amazed. No one had ever thought such things were possible, and these inventions changed life in the United States for good.</p>

[An Interview with Max Morath](#), from [The American Experience – WayBack U.S. History for Kids – Technology in 1900](#), PBS Kids Online. WBGH Educational Foundation. 1998-1999.