Adapted from the research article **"Re-assembling the Victorians: Steampunk, Cyborgs, and the Ethics of Industry"** by **Helena Esser**:
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More comprehensively, steampunk is understood as a popular retro-speculative aesthetic which has its origins in 1980s cyberpunk, but has experienced a new, internet-fuelled popularity and reach since around 2007. It views the nineteenth century through the lenses of Neo-Victorianism, technofantasy and retrofuturism. It has generated an active subculture whose participants utilise a perceived Victorian technophilia to fuel their own anachronistic explorations.

Steampunk is neo-Victorian insofar as it assembles Victorian architecture, fashion, music or literature into an inter-textual, hyper-Victorian collage and infuses it with anachronistic, implausible or fantastical technologies. It draws on the broad and multifaceted fictional legacy of the nineteenth century, for example Dickens's social criticism, the urban Gothic of Wilde, Stevenson, or Stoker, or the fantastic speculations of Verne and Wells. Therefore its re-stagings are often infused with romance and adventure, but may also focus on the downsides of industrial or colonial practices. Whereas the element of technofantasy may lead to the creation of airships, proto-computers or automata, steampunk's retro-futurist element imagines the alternative futures of a past that never was from the socio-cultural vantage point of the twenty-first century.

Steampunk recognises and actualises a widely-felt kinship with the nineteenth century as an age of accelerated technological development. It employs Victorian hopes and anxieties in order to reflect back our own concerns about human identity in the age of digital technology and fabricate more flexible alternatives.

Its counter-cultural core philosophy is built around a yearning for re-humanised technology that promises accessibility, vulnerability and individuation, following the credo 'Love the machine, hate the factory.' While its machines, hailed as 'real, breathing, coughing, struggling and rumbling parts of the world', become humanised, humans may in turn become mechanised or fused with technology.

In this quest to re-inject a sense of individuality and spontaneity into the machine, which involves 'imperfection' and 'chaos', steampunk responds to Marx's claim that the industrial factory drains human skill and intellect from the worker, and Ruskin's call for the return to manufacture. In accordance with this, steampunk partisans also reject the de-humanizing homogenization of technology and the consumer culture, in which only an elite of experts can operate, beneath the impermeable surfaces of digital devices, and where the user is denied access to and understanding of his or her computer, smartphone, navigation system, etc. In this way, steampunk makers mobilize a re-imagined Victorian aesthetic to resist 'the factory' as a symbol of the dominant capitalistic culture at production level and re-craft their identities as users with more agency. Much like Marx or Ruskin, steampunk buffs seek to be less alienated from the technology they use and produce.

1. 'What then, is steampunk?' asked the Catastrophone Orchestra and Arts Collective in *SteamPunk Magazine's* first issue in 2007. Since then, the answers have been manifold and vividly discussed, but many have agreed that its core philosophy might be the following: **'Love the machine, hate the factory'**.
Read the article and come up with your own definition of the movement and its various elements.
To do so, you may **highlight** the different aspects of steampunk mentioned in the text, before **summarizing** them in **simple terms**. Your definition should not be more than 150 words.

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What could you say about...

1. ... Steampunk's specific relation to time?
2. ... Steampunk and criticism?
3. ... Steampunk's focus on Victorianism? Is it only about Victorians?
4. ... Steampunk's particular vision of technology?

2. Pick one sentence in the passive voice and turn it into the active voice.

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Then select one clause in the active voice to turn it into the passive voice.

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