

### **Top Inventions**

Today I thought we could look at some top inventions and talk about them. Of course, there are thousands to choose from. Trying to reduce this to the top 50 or even the top 20 was difficult. In the end I decided to see what I could think of. You can create your own top 20 list during this lesson. Recent inventions that people like to buy include the new iPad and iPhone from Apple. The tablet market is growing rapidly. The Kindle from Amazon is now popular for book reading. Some of us like to get our hands on the latest Samsung Galaxy or alternatively the latest Blackberry. But let's consider other good inventions. These include; the internet, email, the computer, and the telephone. What would we do today without Google, Facebook or YouTube? The camera was a good invention, as was the video camera. Women (and men) might consider the bra and contraception (Condoms and the invention of the pill) as useful inventions.

Going back in time the invention of the steam engine changed many things, as did the automobile and later the airplane. Television and cinema have been with us a while. Remote control though only arrived in 1955, as did the invention of the microwave oven. Cordless tools arrived in 1957. In 1964, the music synthesiser was invented by Robert Moog. In 1969, the smoke detector was invented followed a year later by digital music. Other useful things we take for granted today include the computer mouse (1962), the ATM – Automated Teller Machine (1969), and the cell phone (1973). The MP3 player arrived in 1998. Back in 1960 the medical profession saw the first pacemaker installed. Household items we take for granted today include the invention of the flat iron, the washing machine, the fridge and the dishwasher!

I think the invention of toothpaste was a great idea, as is tissue paper and plastic containers. What about the invention of the pen, batteries, or the light bulb? Historically there was the invention of the printing press, the bicycle and lasers. Other things to mention include mobile phones, steam engines and sewing machines. Inventions that changed the world include GPS technology, text messages and electronic money. What would we do without electricity, books, or modern medicine? The list is endless. Lastly there is the invention of the toilet!

**Category: Inventions / Technology / Creativity**  
**Level: Intermediate / Upper Intermediate**

Top Inventions – 25<sup>th</sup> March 2012

Your top 10 modern inventions

<u>Invention</u>	<u>Invented by</u>	<u>Approx year</u>
1 _____	_____	_____
2 _____	_____	_____
3 _____	_____	_____
4 _____	_____	_____
5 _____	_____	_____
6 _____	_____	_____
7 _____	_____	_____
8 _____	_____	_____
9 _____	_____	_____
10 _____	_____	_____

Your top 10 historical inventions

<u>Invention</u>	<u>Invented by</u>	<u>Approx year</u>
1 _____	_____	_____
2 _____	_____	_____
3 _____	_____	_____
4 _____	_____	_____
5 _____	_____	_____
6 _____	_____	_____
7 _____	_____	_____
8 _____	_____	_____
9 _____	_____	_____
10 _____	_____	_____

## EXERCISES

**1. Top inventions:** Think of three top inventions. Go round the room swapping details with others. Try to find out who invented them!

**2. Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

**3. Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

**4. Vocabulary:** Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

**5. The article:** Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?
- c) Go through some of the lists the class has created.
- d) Get the class to compile a list of inventions on the board!

**6. More inventions!** In pairs, think of five inventions from each of the categories listed below. Write them below. Discuss together. Which invention is best?

20 <sup>th</sup> century inventions	21 <sup>st</sup> century inventions
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
Transport inventions	Other interesting inventions
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

**7. Let's think!** In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with **Inventions**. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

Top Inventions – 25<sup>th</sup> March 2012

8. **Let's roleplay 1: LBC London:** In pairs/groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *LBC* radio studio in London. Today's interview is about: *Top inventions. 10 minutes.*

1	A journalist.
2	An inventor.
3	An inventor.
4	An inventor.

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

9. **Let's roleplay 2:** In pairs. You are in the canteen in a small factory. One of you has a great idea. The other is your work colleague. Start a conversation about 'your great idea'... *5-minutes.*

10. **Let's do 'The Article Quiz':** Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

**Student A**

- 1) What was invented in 1955?
- 2) What was invented in 1973?
- 3) Explain what a bicycle is?
- 4) What is a toilet?
- 5) What is Google?

**Student B**

- 1) What was invented in 1960?
- 2) What was invented in 1957?
- 3) Women (and men) might consider what, a great invention?
- 4) What did Robert Moog invent?
- 5) What is a Kindle?

11. **Presentation:** In pairs, groups or individually: Prepare in class or at home a two minute presentation on: '**Top inventions!**' Stand at the front of the class to give your presentation to the class. The class can vote on the best presentation.

12. **Top inventors:** In pairs think of three top inventors from your country. What did they invent? Write them below. Discuss together.

	Inventor		Invention
1	_____	1	_____
2	_____	2	_____
3	_____	3	_____

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

13. **Let's write an e-mail:** Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **Top inventions.** Your e-mail can be read out in class.

14. **Sentence starters:** Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

a) Top inventions \_\_\_\_\_

b) If I was an inventor \_\_\_\_\_

## DISCUSSION

### Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Have you ever invented anything? If yes, what?
- 3) In your opinion what is the best invention?
- 4) What is the worst invention you know of?
- 5) What invention could you live without?
- 6) What invention do you use most?
- 7) What invention is the most useful to you? Why?
- 8) What makes a good inventor?
- 9) Do you know any crazy inventors?
- 10) Do you know any crazy inventions?

### Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you've read?
- 2) Have you learnt anything in today's English lesson?
- 3) Can you think of any famous fictional inventors who were in a movie or on TV?
- 4) What is the funniest invention you have seen?
- 5) What is the wackiest invention you have seen?
- 6) Would you like to become an inventor? Why? Why not?
- 7) What is the newest invention you know about?
- 8) What would we do without all the gadgets we use today?
- 9) What are your top three favourite inventions?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

## SPEAKING

Let's discuss! An crazy fun eccentric inventor

*Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1*

20 things that make a crazy fun eccentric inventor

The teacher can moderate the session.

## GAP FILL: READING:

*Put the words into the gaps in the text.*

### Top Inventions

Today I (1)\_\_\_\_\_ we could look at some top inventions and talk about them. Of course, there are thousands to choose from. Trying to reduce this to the top 50 or even the top 20 was difficult. In the end I decided to see what I could think of. You can create your own top 20 list during this lesson. (2)\_\_\_\_\_ inventions that people like to buy include the new iPad and iPhone from Apple. The (3)\_\_\_\_\_ market is growing rapidly. The Kindle from Amazon is now popular for book reading. Some of us like to get our hands on the latest Samsung Galaxy or (4)\_\_\_\_\_ the latest Blackberry. But let's consider other good (5)\_\_\_\_\_. These include; the internet, email, the (6)\_\_\_\_\_, and the telephone. What would we do today without Google, Facebook or YouTube? The camera was a good invention, as was the video camera. Women (and men) might (7)\_\_\_\_\_ the bra and (8)\_\_\_\_\_ (Condoms and the invention of the pill) as useful inventions.

Going back in time the invention of the steam engine changed many things, as did the (1)\_\_\_\_\_ and later the airplane. Television and cinema have been with us a while. Remote control though only arrived in 1955, as did the invention of the microwave oven. (2)\_\_\_\_\_ tools arrived in 1957. In 1964, the music (3)\_\_\_\_\_ was invented by Robert Moog. In 1969, the smoke detector was invented followed a year later by digital music. Other useful things we take for granted today include the computer mouse (1962), the ATM – Automated Teller Machine (1969), and the cell phone (1973). The MP3 player arrived in 1998. Back in 1960 the medical (4)\_\_\_\_\_ saw the first (5)\_\_\_\_\_ installed. (6)\_\_\_\_\_ items we take for granted today include the invention of the flat (7)\_\_\_\_\_, the washing machine, the fridge and the (8)\_\_\_\_\_!

*contraception*

*computer*

*alternatively*

*consider*

*recent*

*thought*

*inventions*

*tablet*

*household*

*dishwasher*

*pacemaker*

*automobile*

*iron*

*synthesiser*

*cordless*

*profession*

## GRAMMAR:

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

### Top Inventions

Today I thought we (1)\_\_\_ look at (2)\_\_\_ top inventions and talk about (3)\_\_. Of course, (4)\_\_\_ are thousands to choose from. Trying to reduce this to the top 50 or (5)\_\_\_ the top 20 was difficult. In the end I decided to see what I could think of. You can create your own top 20 list during (6)\_\_\_ lesson. Recent inventions that people like to buy include the new iPad and iPhone from Apple. The tablet market is growing rapidly. The Kindle from Amazon is now popular for book reading. Some of us like to get our hands on the latest Samsung Galaxy or alternatively the latest Blackberry. But let's consider other good inventions. These include; the internet, email, the computer, and the telephone. What (7)\_\_\_ we do today without Google, Facebook or YouTube? The camera was a good invention, as was the video camera. Women (and men) (8)\_\_\_ consider the bra and contraception (Condoms and the invention of the pill) as useful inventions.

**this**

**there**

**even**

**them**

**some**

**might**

**would**

**could**

Going back in time the invention (1)\_\_\_ the steam engine changed many things, as did the automobile and later the airplane. Television and cinema have been with (2)\_\_\_ a while. Remote control though only arrived in 1955, as did the invention of the microwave oven. Cordless tools arrived in 1957. In 1964, the music synthesiser was invented (3)\_\_\_ Robert Moog. In 1969, the smoke detector was invented followed (4)\_\_\_ year later by digital music. Other useful things we take for granted today include the computer mouse (1962), the ATM – Automated Teller Machine (1969), and the cell phone (1973). The MP3 player arrived in 1998. Back in 1960 the medical profession saw the first pacemaker installed. Household items (5)\_\_\_ take (6)\_\_\_ granted today include the invention of the flat iron, the washing machine, (7)\_\_\_ fridge (8)\_\_\_ the dishwasher!

**us**

**by**

**we**

**of**

**a**

**and**

**for**

**the**



## SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings:  
**Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	contraception	11	though
2	automobile	12	consider
3	airplane	13	alternatively
4	television	14	popular
5	cordless tools	15	thought
6	music synthesiser	16	inventions
7	smoke detector	17	thousands
8	useful	18	could
9	historically	19	toilet
10	mathematics	20	lastly

## LINKS

<http://www.thebest100lists.com/best100inventions/>  
<http://bridgesandtangents.wordpress.com/2010/05/25/100-greatest-inventions-of-all-time/>  
[http://www.edinformatics.com/inventions\\_inventors/](http://www.edinformatics.com/inventions_inventors/)  
<http://www.lilith-ezine.com/articles/technology/101-Inventions.html>  
<http://sciencelay.com/technology/top-50-inventions-that-changed-the-world/>

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