

1. Discoveries and Inventions

On April 25th, 1874, radio pioneer Guglielmo Marconi was born. On April 26th, 1452, painter and inventor Leonardo da Vinci was born and on April 27th, 1791, inventor of the Morse Code Samuel Morse was born. Can you guess what this week's theme is? There are two pages to print. Click here to get your copies.

<http://www.insideout.net/warehouse/worksheets/April/IO043S-invention.pdf>
<http://www.insideout.net/warehouse/worksheets/April/IO043S-invention.rtf>

Level

Pre-intermediate and upwards

How to use the lesson

1. Divide your class into pairs or small groups. Give each student in the class a copy of Worksheet 1.
2. Ask your students to first discuss who invented what and then to write in the name of the product in the left-hand column. Explain that it is not necessary for them to write in any dates (right-hand column) yet. This stage should not take any more than two or three minutes as most students will only know a handful of these people.
3. Conduct an open-class discussion on who invented what. Accept all ideas but offer no answers at this stage.

With stronger classes ask students to predict when they think each of the inventions was made, to within ten years. Then hand out Worksheet 2 and give them a time limit to check their answers and find the missing information (5 minutes for Intermediate, 3 minutes for Upper Intermediate). If you haven't asked students to guess the dates of the inventions they can just find the dates on Worksheet 2.

4. Check answers in open class.

Answers

1. The telephone / 1876
2. The motorcycle / 1885
3. Tea bags / 1908
4. The zip / 1913
5. The aeroplane / 1903 (December 17)
6. X-rays / 1895
7. The ballpoint pen* / 1935
8. Liquid paper / 1951
9. The aqualung / 1943
10. The aerosol spray can / 1927
11. Jeans / 1873
12. Adhesive tape* / 1930
13. The sandwich* / 1762

14. The safety pin / 1849

Notes

- *In the UK, we still call ballpoint pens by the name of the inventors, biro.
- *Although many people call adhesive tape by the name of the company *Scotch*, in the UK we know it by another brand name, *Sellotape*.
- * The son of the current Earl of Sandwich has just started up a new business – he sells upmarket sandwiches to businesses in London.

Follow up

Discuss which of these discoveries and inventions your students feel was the least and which they feel was the most important for the development of mankind.

For more inventors and possible research subjects, see the websites below.

2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://inventors.about.com/cs/famousinventors/index.htm?once=true&>
an a-z of international inventors plus loads of links

<http://web.mit.edu/invent/www/archive.html>
inventors searchable by inventor or invention

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/inventors/indexb.shtml>
more inventors searchable by name or invention