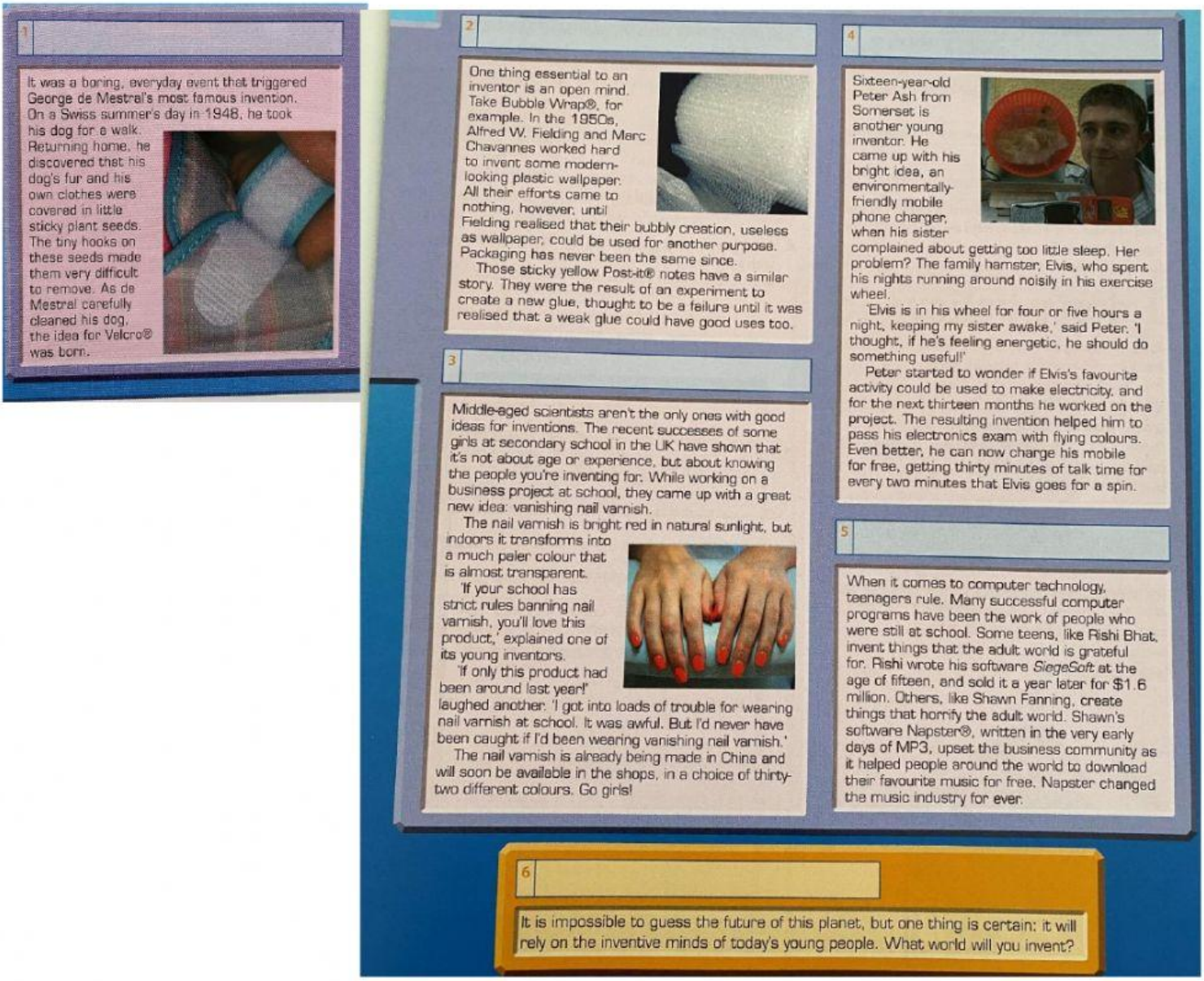
GREAT IDEAS, GREAT INVENTIONS

I. Read this article and write the letter for the best heading for each section. There are two headings you don't need to use.

A. Bending the rules
B. The digital age
C. That eureka moment
D. Life in the fast lane
E. Shaping the future
F. Unusual results
G. In a spin
H. A big mistake



1

It was a boring, everyday event that triggered George de Mestral's most famous invention. On a Swiss summer's day in 1948, he took his dog for a walk. Returning home, he discovered that his dog's fur and his own clothes were covered in little sticky plant seeds. The tiny hooks on these seeds made them very difficult to remove. As de Mestral carefully cleaned his dog, the idea for Velcro® was born.

2

One thing essential to an inventor is an open mind. Take Bubble Wrap®, for example. In the 1950s, Alfred W. Fielding and Marc Chavannes worked hard to invent some modern-looking plastic wallpaper. All their efforts came to nothing, however, until Fielding realised that their bubbly creation, useless as wallpaper, could be used for another purpose. Packaging has never been the same since.

Those sticky yellow Post-it® notes have a similar story. They were the result of an experiment to create a new glue, thought to be a failure until it was realised that a weak glue could have good uses too.

3

Middle-aged scientists aren't the only ones with good ideas for inventions. The recent successes of some girls at secondary school in the UK have shown that it's not about age or experience, but about knowing the people you're inventing for. While working on a business project at school, they came up with a great new idea: vanishing nail varnish.

The nail varnish is bright red in natural sunlight, but indoors it transforms into a much paler colour that is almost transparent.

'If your school has strict rules banning nail varnish, you'll love this product,' explained one of its young inventors.

'If only this product had been around last year!' laughed another. 'I got into loads of trouble for wearing nail varnish at school. It was awful. But I'd never have been caught if I'd been wearing vanishing nail varnish.'

The nail varnish is already being made in China and will soon be available in the shops, in a choice of thirty-two different colours. Go girls!

4

Sixteen-year-old Peter Ash from Somerset is another young inventor. He came up with his bright idea, an environmentally-friendly mobile phone charger, when his sister complained about getting too little sleep. Her problem? The family hamster, Elvis, who spent his nights running around noisily in his exercise wheel.

'Elvis is in his wheel for four or five hours a night, keeping my sister awake,' said Peter. 'I thought, if he's feeling energetic, he should do something useful!'

Peter started to wonder if Elvis's favourite activity could be used to make electricity, and for the next thirteen months he worked on the project. The resulting invention helped him to pass his electronics exam with flying colours. Even better, he can now charge his mobile for free, getting thirty minutes of talk time for every two minutes that Elvis goes for a spin.

5

When it comes to computer technology, teenagers rule. Many successful computer programs have been the work of people who were still at school. Some teens, like Rishi Bhat, invent things that the adult world is grateful for. Rishi wrote his software *SiegeSoft* at the age of fifteen, and sold it a year later for $1.6 million. Others, like Shawn Fanning, create things that horrify the adult world. Shawn's software Napster®, written in the very early days of MP3, upset the business community as it helped people around the world to download their favourite music for free. Napster changed the music industry for ever.

6

It is impossible to guess the future of this planet, but one thing is certain: it will rely on the inventive minds of today's young people. What world will you invent?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

II. Write the NUMBER. Which invention....

a. resembles something which can be observed in nature?
b. transformed the way money was earned in a certain business?
c. came up as a solution to strict rules?
d. resulted into an exceptional mark at school?
e. was the result of taking care of a pet?
f. changed a traditional process?
g. was developed because of a dynamic domestic animal?
h. solves a common teenagers' problem?
i. was targeted at a different audience than the one of its creator?
j. was unsuccessful at its beginning?

LIVEWORKSHEETS