

INVENTOR

Easton LaChappelle is a young American inventor whose inventions have touched a lot of people's lives.

As a teenager, the subjects Easton learnt at school didn't interest him much. Instead, he was keen to learn about machines and technology. He decided to teach himself, and found there was a huge amount of information online about robots and technology. Although he didn't have much money to buy equipment, he managed to design and build a robot arm using everyday things he had at home, including toy plastic bricks.

Easton won a prize for his design, and while he was attending the Colorado Science Fair to collect it, he met a seven-year-old girl who had been born without an arm. He talked to her parents and couldn't believe it when they told him her false arm had cost over \$80,000. He knew immediately that he could produce something much more cheaply, and he decided to concentrate on making a better arm that everyone could afford. Luckily, the technology of 3D printing was becoming available at this time, and this provided him with the tools he needed to produce his robotic arms at low cost.

The robotic arm that Easton made cost only \$400 to make, and was also light, strong and simple to use. His design was soon noticed by experts, who could see its advantages over older technologies. In 2013, Easton was invited to the White House, where he used his invention to shake hands with President Obama. He was also delighted to be invited to spend some time working at NASA, helping to develop new ways to control robots in space.

All Easton's designs are available for free online, so that people all over the world who have access to a 3D printer can print their own arms, at the right size for them. Although he has become famous and now has a successful business, he is keen to stay in his home town. For his next project, Easton wants to design something to help a school friend who had an accident and became unable to walk. Easton would love to use his skills to create some robot legs that can help his friend to walk again.



EXAM TASK

- 9 Read the text about Easton LaChappelle again. For each question, choose the correct answer. ★
- 1 When Easton was a teenager,
 - A he was bored by lessons at school.
 - B he learnt about robots and technology at school.
 - C he didn't enjoy spending a lot of time online.
 - D he found a design for part of a robot online.
 - 2 How did Easton feel at the Science Fair?
 - A excited to buy a 3D printer.
 - B nervous about collecting his prize.
 - C shocked to learn the price of a girl's false arm.
 - D disappointed that he couldn't solve the problem.
 - 3 What do we learn about Easton's RoboArm in the third paragraph?
 - A It was cheap, but quite difficult to use.
 - B Experts thought that it was better than existing arms.
 - C President Obama used it to greet some guests.
 - D Scientists at NASA had noticed some problems with it.
 - 4 In the last paragraph, we learn that Easton feels
 - A hopeful that he can set up a successful business one day.
 - B proud that he might become rich and famous.
 - C keen to develop a new product to help a friend.
 - D upset that he can't travel all over the world.
 - 5 What might Easton say to other people who have good ideas?
 - A It's important to work hard at school in order to achieve your dreams.
 - B If you have a good idea, there's no limit to the amount of money you can make.
 - C You should ask for advice from experts before setting up your own business.
 - D The most important thing is to use your skills to improve people's lives.