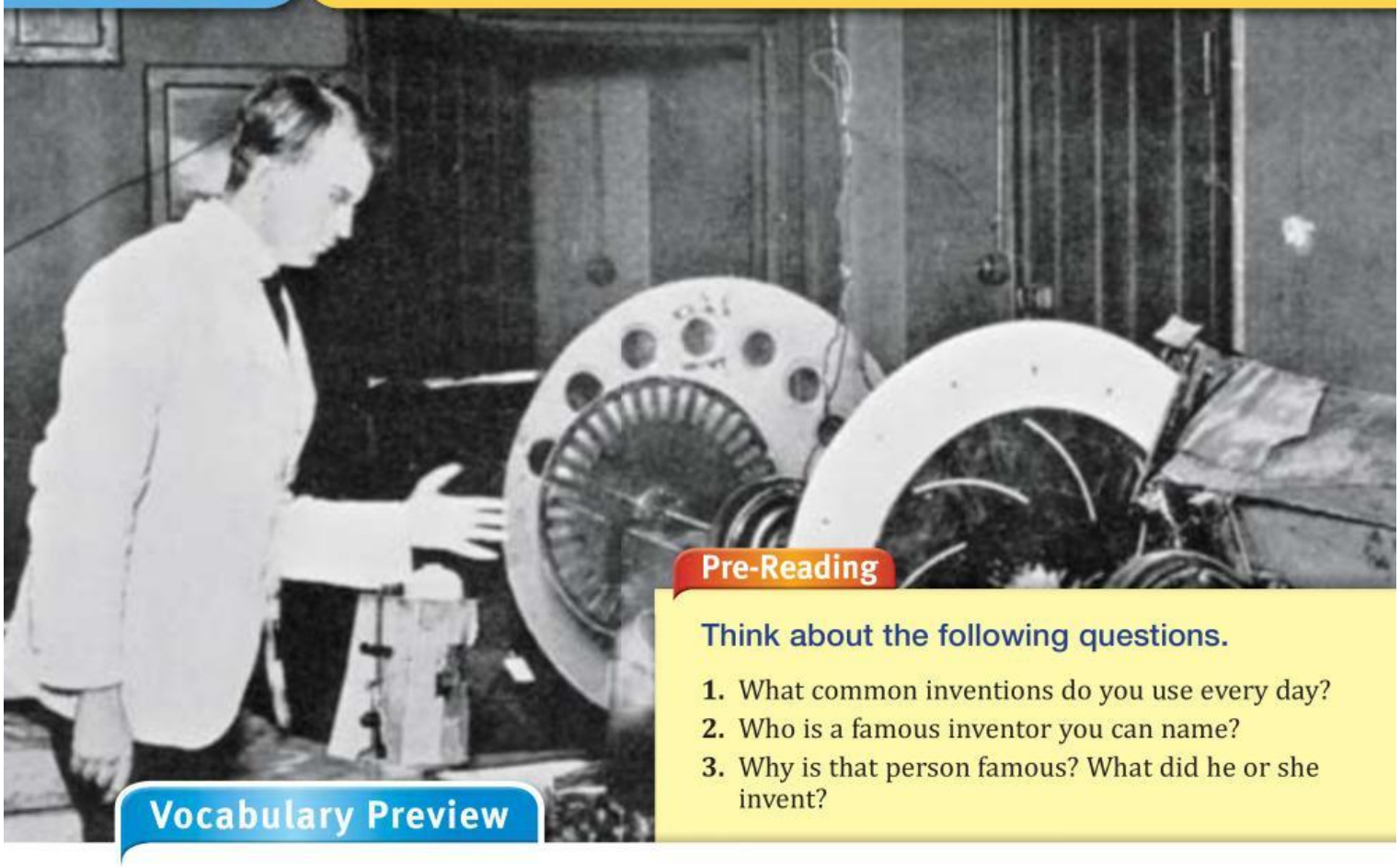
20 Weird Inventions



Pre-Reading

Think about the following questions.

1. What common inventions do you use every day?
2. Who is a famous inventor you can name?
3. Why is that person famous? What did he or she invent?

Vocabulary Preview

Write the letter of the word or phrase with the same meaning as the underlined word.

a.	makes; creates	d.	giving water through pipes or channels
b.	the science of matter and energy	e.	regularly repeated up-and-down movements
c.	very strange	f.	disagree with; say that I'm wrong

1. ___ Don't <u>contradict</u> me. I know what the answer is.
2. ___ In <u>physics</u>, you study about things like electricity and force.
3. ___ <u>Irrigation</u> is necessary when growing crops in a dry climate.
4. ___ Light <u>waves</u> travel very fast.
5. ___ Underwear for chickens is a <u>bizarre</u> idea.
6. ___ Porsche <u>designs</u> expensive, high-quality cars.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

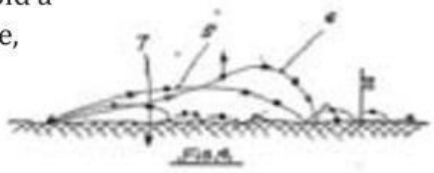
Weird Inventions

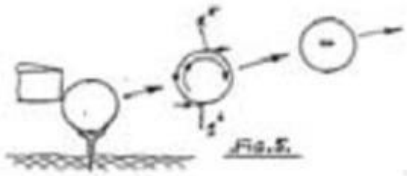
Track 39

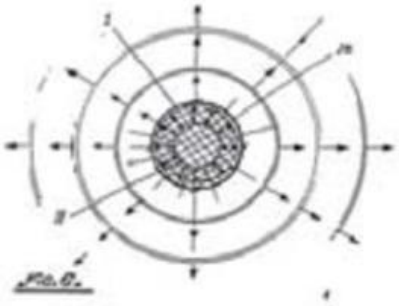
Have you ever thought about inventing something? Did you worry that your idea was too strange or unrealistic? Well, maybe you should think again.

Strange or unrealistic ideas never stopped Arthur Pedrick. Pedrick was a British inventor. Originally a government clerk, he spent his **retirement** in the 1960s and 1970s developing new and unusual ideas. Some of these ideas contradicted basic physics, but that didn't stop Pedrick. One of his strangest ideas was a plan to connect large **tubes** from the continent of Australia all the way to Antarctica, a distance of 10,000 km! These tubes would carry giant ice balls from Antarctica to Australia. This ice would then melt in the Australian desert, and the water would be used in irrigation. Another of Pedrick's inventions was a radio-controlled golf ball. A golfer could change the speed and direction of the golf ball by small **flaps**, controlled by computer chips. Using radio waves, the golfer could also find lost golf balls. Arthur Pedrick had thousands of bizarre ideas for inventions, most of which were never built.

Though many of Pedrick's inventions were never developed, a lot of other strange ideas were. In 1989, a company designed and sold a theft-prevention device for expensive cars. As part of this device, several tubes were attached to the bottom of a car. If someone tried to steal the car, super hot flames would come out of the tubes and burn the car thief. Some people who were not thieves, however, were seriously injured. They **accidentally** set off the device by walking past the car. Other strange inventions include underwear for dogs and pens with drinkable ink. The underwear keeps dogs from making a mess when they go out for a walk. Also, if you are ever thirsty during a test, a pen with drinkable ink would be very **handy**!







If you have an idea that seems a little out in left field, don't let that stop you from trying it. You'll be in good company.

Reading Time _____ minutes _____ seconds 336 words

4 *retirement*: the time in life after finishing work, usually at 65

6 *tube*: a pipe

11 *flap*: a thin flat piece that can go up and down

20 *accidentally*: not intentionally; in an unplanned way

25 *handy*: useful

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Reading Comprehension

Choose the best answer.

1. What is the main idea of the reading?

a. Inventions are necessary for a good life.
b. Some inventions are very strange.
c. Some devices can help reduce crime.
d. Inventing something is easy.

2. What can be said about Arthur Pedrick?

a. He made a lot of money from his inventions.
b. He was a good scientist.
c. He was more interested in creativity than facts.
d. He was often bored.

3. According to the reading, how was Pedrick's plan to bring water to Australia probably unrealistic?

a. Australia doesn't need water.
b. Australia and Antarctica are too far away.
c. Tubes are not strong enough.
d. The plan was too expensive.

4. What was the problem with the theft prevention device?

a. It was too big.
b. It hurt other people besides thieves.
c. It didn't work.
d. Only bicycles could use it.

5. In the reading, what is implied when a dog "makes a mess"?

a. It goes to the bathroom.
b. It spreads its food around.
c. It digs in the dirt.
d. It has dirty hair.

Idiomatic Expressions

Find these idioms in the reading.

- **set off** [to turn on; to start]
  The thief opened the window and set off an alarm.
- **out in left field** [strange; unrelated to other things]
  She is a little out in left field, but fun to go out dancing with.
- **be in good company** [to be like others; to be not the only one in some situation]
  You are in good company getting that award. Einstein also won it long ago.

Fill in the blank with one of the above idioms. Change its form if necessary.

1. His theories are _____. He thinks that aliens are controlling the government.

2. If you are left-handed, you _____. Many geniuses are, too.

3. What _____ her _____? She suddenly started crying.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Summary

Scan the passage and complete the chart with the correct information.

direction of golf balls	**flames from tubes**	**from making a mess**
if students get thirsty	**injured people**	**the balls would melt**

Invention	Notes
• Tubes to connect Antarctica to Australia	• to carry ice balls to the Australian desert, where 1 _____ (never made)
• Radio-controlled golf balls	• to change the speed and 2 _____ and to find balls if they are lost (never made)
• A theft-protection device for cars	• to burn thieves with 3 _____ on the bottom of cars (made, but 4 _____ who weren't thieves)
• Underwear for dogs	• to keep dogs 5 _____ when they go for a walk (made)
• A pen with drinkable ink	• to drink 6 _____ during a test (made)



Listening

I Didn't Know That!

Track 40

Listen to the dialog and complete each sentence.

1. Thomas Edison did not invent _____.
2. Thomas Edison invented _____ and _____.
3. Without him, we would not have _____ companies or _____.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Discussion

Discuss the following questions.

1. Why do you think people invent things?
2. What is an invention or device developed in your country?
3. If you could invent or create something, what would it be? What would it do?

Grammar

Past Subjunctives with or without If-Clause

If + S + past form of verb, S + past form of auxiliary verb (would, could, should, or might). We can use subjunctive mood without an *if*-clause when the subject of the sentence includes a supposition.

If someone (tries / tried) to steal the car, super hot flames would come out of the tubes and burn the car thief.
One of his strangest ideas was a plan to connect large tubes from the continent of Australia all the way to Antarctica! These tubes (would carry / carried) giant ice balls from Antarctica to Australia.

Writing

Write your own short paragraph by answering the questions below.

My Invention

(1) What would you like to invent? **(2)** Why? **(3)** How would this invention help people? **(4)** Do you think this will ever be invented? **(5)** Why or why not?

Example

I would like to invent a time machine. With a time machine, I could go back in time and see many interesting events in history. A time machine could help people by letting them fix past mistakes. Unfortunately, I think this will never be invented. It may contradict laws of physics.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Vocabulary and Idiom Review

A. Choose the best word or phrase to fill in the blank.

1. What a(n) _____ looking dog. It has very short legs and an extremely long body!
a. thirsty b. serious c. unrealistic d. bizarre

2. By controlling the small _____ on the wings, the pilot could land his plane.
a. flaps b. mobs c. tubes d. connections

3. How do you _____ the DVD player to the TV?
a. connect b. prevent c. research d. determine

4. I'm _____. Let's go get a soda.
a. melting b. thirsty c. super d. serious

5. Patients in hospitals often get blood through a(n) _____ into their veins.
a. flap b. tube c. experiment d. researcher

6. Einstein discovered many things in his studies of _____.
a. medicine b. physics c. reality d. climate

7. He _____ broke his sister's favorite glass.
a. seriously b. surprisingly c. accidentally d. traditionally

B. Choose the correct form of the word to fill in the blank.

8. Farmers often have to _____ their crops.
a. irrigate b. irrigation c. irrigated

9. Stones can't float on water. That _____ a law of nature.
a. contradicts b. contradiction c. contradictory

10. Gianni Versace was a famous _____.
a. designer b. design c. designing

LIVEWORKSHEETS