FIVE inventions that made the modern world

1 Camera We take photos on our phones and share them with our friends in seconds. But when the first camera was invented in 1827, it took eight hours to develop the photos! In 1888, the American George Eastman invented the 'Kodak photographic machine' which was smaller and had flexible film. Suddenly ordinary people could take photos. Early photos were in black and white, but colour film was introduced in the 1930s.

2 Combustion engine Imagine if there were no cars, motorbikes, lorries or buses! The combustion engine was invented by a German, Nikolaus Otto, in 1878. And another German, Karl Benz, built the first car in 1885 using Otto's new engine. In 1888, his wife Bertha was the first long-distance driver of this three-wheeled car. She drove their teenage sons on a 106-kilometre trip. It was a long journey because the car went at 16 km an hour! And Bertha had to repair the car during the trip!

3 Light bulb Is it getting dark? Well, turn on the light! The first successful light bulb was invented in 1879 by the American inventor, Thomas Edison. A light bulb is a glass bulb which is filled with gas and has a thin wire inside it. The wires in the earlier light bulbs burnt quickly, so Edison tried thousands of different wires before he found the right one! Edison is also famous for developing the world's first electric lighting system, which was in New York.

4 Laser When you play a DVD or a CD, buy things at a cash desk, download music or send an email you are using a laser. Albert Einstein predicted laser technology, but it was developed 40 years later in 1960 by an American called Theodore Maiman. A laser is a concentrated beam of light and it has thousands of uses in medicine, computing, industry, astronomy and medicine. In future lasers may help us produce solar energy.

5 Antibiotics If we're ill with an infection, the doctor gives us antibiotics. They are a miracle drug. Antibiotics are a living substance which we get from mould. But they were discovered by accident. In 1928, a Scottish scientist called Alexander Fleming noticed that mould killed bacteria in his laboratory. He realised that they could cure illnesses, and made a medicine called penicillin.

1 Match the pictures with the inventions in the text.

a

☐

b

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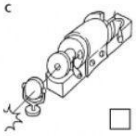
c

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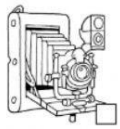
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e

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2 Read the article and complete the table.

Invention or discovery	Inventor(s) & nationality	Date of invention or discovery
camera	George Eastman, American	1888
combustion engine	Nikolaus Otto, ...	.....
car	....., German	.....
.....	....., American	1879
laser	Theodore Maiman, ...	.....
.....	Alexander Fleming, ...	1928

3 Match the word on the left side to its definition on the right side.

1. The first camera ●
2. Kodak photographic machine ●
3. George Eastman ●
4. Colour film ●
5. Nikolaus Otto ●
6. Karl Benz ●
7. First long distane trip ●
8. The journey in this trip ●
9. Thomas Edison ●
10. A light bulb ●
11. In New York ●
12. Theodore Maiman ●
13. Antibiotics ●
14. Alexander Fleming ●

● A. was 106 km long
● B. realised that by using antibiotics could cure illensses
● C. is filled with gas and has a thin wire
● D. developed laser technology
● E. it took 8 hours to see the photo
● F. was invented in 1888 and had a flexible film
● G. invented Kodak camera
● H. took 6 hour and 37,5 minutes.
● I. are living substance discovered by accident
● J.
● K. the people could use electric lightning system
● L. used Otto´s engine to build firts car
● M. invented combustion engine
● N. invented light bulb in 1879
● O. was used from 1930.

LIVEWORKSHEETS