

ART & D.T. Reading Comprehension – Key Stage 2 – Year 6

The History of Invention – From Sketch to Solution

Every great invention starts with a simple idea — often just a sketch on a scrap of paper. From the earliest tools made from stone to modern 3D printers, inventions have changed the way we live, work, and learn.

In the past, inventors had to rely on trial and error. They tested, failed, and tried again. Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb, once said, “I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.” This attitude shows how important persistence is in design and technology.

The process of invention often begins with identifying a problem. For example, Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone to help people communicate over long distances. He began with drawings and models before building a working version. Today, phones are far more advanced, but they all trace back to that first design.

Design and Technology (D.T.) encourages children to think like inventors. When you design a product in school, you follow many of the same steps real inventors use: research, plan, sketch, build, test, and improve. These skills are not just useful in D.T. lessons — they are useful in life.

Modern inventions, like electric cars or robotic arms in hospitals, use advanced technology and often require teams of designers, engineers, and coders. However, the first step is always creative thinking — imagining something that doesn’t yet exist.

So next time you sketch an idea or build something in class, remember: every great invention started with a single thought and a pencil.

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1. What does every great invention begin with, according to the text?
2. What does the quote by Thomas Edison suggest about inventing?
3. Why did Alexander Graham Bell invent the telephone?
4. What are some of the steps involved in designing a product at school?
5. What modern inventions are mentioned in the text?
6. What is the main purpose of Design and Technology lessons in school?
7. What does the text suggest is the most important first step in inventing something new?
8. Find a phrase from the text that shows inventing involves learning from failure.
9. What is the main difference between inventors in the past and those today?
10. Why does the author say that D.T. skills are “useful in life”?

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MARK SCHEME

1. A simple idea or a sketch.
2. That inventing takes persistence and learning from failure.
3. To help people communicate over long distances.
4. Research, plan, sketch, build, test, and improve.
5. Electric cars and robotic arms in hospitals.
6. To help children think like inventors and solve real problems.
7. Creative thinking — imagining something that doesn't yet exist.
8. "I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."
9. Inventors today often work in teams and use advanced technology, unlike many past inventors who worked alone.
10. Because they help with problem-solving, creativity, and real-world thinking.