

## Inventions

Last month, the British Invention Show was held in London. How easy is it for an inventor to find the money to back a new idea?

1 Match the inventions in Box 1 with their inventor in Box 2. Create sentences using the word 'invented', e.g. 'Bell invented the telephone'.

|        |                        |               |                |
|--------|------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Box 1: | dynamite               | the telephone | electric lamp  |
|        | television             | ballpoint pen | the computer   |
|        | bagless vacuum cleaner |               | the hovercraft |

|        |         |           |       |
|--------|---------|-----------|-------|
| Box 2: | Babbage | Baird     | Bell  |
|        | Biro    | Cockerell | Dyson |
|        | Nobel   | Edison    |       |

2 Scan the transcript of a business programme and underline the names of any inventions you can find.

### The British Invention Show

"Good evening. In tonight's business programme, we report on the sixth British Invention Show which was held last month in London. The exhibition attracted inventors from around the globe, including entrants from the USA, China, Australia, Malaysia, Croatia, Iran, Algeria and India. In all, some two hundred inventors were in competition for several awards, including the prestigious World Invention Award. The show attracted many visitors. Some were looking for innovative products to add to their current product range. Visitors included buyers, manufacturers, investors, other inventors and even the general public.

Just what kind of inventions were on show? What are the latest gadgets and ideas? Take a look at the Loc8ter. Do you keep losing your keys? Perhaps you really need a device like this which allows you to find objects such as mobile phones and keys up to 180 metres away. On tonight's programme, we look at some of the inventions on show, including this pedal-powered generator which can charge a phone battery;

this folding robot for use in manufacturing; and for the busy executive, a golf training aid to help you perfect your swing.

The image of an inventor is sometimes one of a slightly mad professor with wacky ideas. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Consider last year's winner: a solar-powered hospital that can be fitted into the back of truck. This now looks set to be of real use and importance in war zones. Or this wind-up radio which has changed the lives of millions of people in some of the world's poorest countries.

First of course you need a good idea – something that people actually want. Not only do you need a lot of belief in your product, you need a lot of persistence. The whole process from invention to research, design and production is long and hard; not to mention obtaining a patent for your invention. The inventors all want to find one thing: a backer with deep pockets. Now, we're going over live to Astrid in Dortmund as the German-speaking countries of Austria, Germany, and Switzerland get ready to celebrate Inventor's day on November 9 ..."

3 Read the whole transcript. What do you learn about the show? What do you need to be an inventor?

4 Find the following words in the transcript from their definitions.

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| (a) admired and respected by people  | (paragraph 1) |
| (b) new, original and advanced   | (paragraph 1) |
| (c) small tools or pieces of equipment that do something really useful or impressive     | (paragraph 2) |
| (d) the ability to continue to do something in a determined way                          | (paragraph 4) |
| (e) a document giving only the inventor the legal right to sell the invention for a time | (paragraph 4) |
| (f) someone who gives help or money to a plan  | (paragraph 4) |

(Definitions from or based on: *Macmillan English Dictionary* Text © Bloomsbury Publishing Plc 2002)

5 Work in small groups and think of an invention for the next show. Write down its name, use, description and possible price. Include a drawing if possible. Be ready to present your idea to the class.