



# WHEN I GROW UP - INVENTOR

## WHAT IS AN INVENTOR?

About 2 million years ago, people started making tools from stone. Since then, humans have continued to think of ways to make their lives easier or better. An inventor is a person who makes new inventions: devices that perform some kind of function. The devices are mostly electrical or mechanical. Someone who designs but does not make these items can also be named an inventor.

Many inventors use knowledge of maths, science and technology to create new inventions or make changes to old inventions. For example, people have invented new ways to make clocks over history. Early clocks were sundials, later clocks used water and pendulums. Modern clocks are often electronic. Other machines such as vehicles are made of many inventions. Many inventors 'patent' their ideas. This means that legally nobody else can steal their idea. It stops others from making their invention and claiming it as their own idea.

## HOW DO I BECOME AN INVENTOR?

Anyone can be an inventor; it doesn't matter what age you are or the qualifications you have. You just need to have a great idea for something which can solve a problem, make something better or an idea for something which hasn't even been invented yet.

Eleven-year-old Frank Epperson invented the ice lolly. It was a winter's evening in 1905 when Frank decided to mix a frozen drink containing soda water, powder and water. He accidentally left the drink outside overnight, with the stirring stick in the glass. The mixture froze solid and by accident the ice lolly (or popsicle in American English) was invented.

Although it began at this time, the ice lolly didn't gain popularity until 1922 when Epperson gave it out at a fireman's ball. He originally patented the idea under, "Eppsicle," but changed the name after his children started calling it a "popsicle." Amazingly, kids came up with both the idea and the name of this invention.

## HOW CAN YOU BECOME AN INVENTOR?

Step 1: Believe in yourself.

Step 2: Find a problem worth solving.

Step 3: Do basic market research - ask people who might use your product what they think to it.

Step 4: Build a prototype and test your idea.

Step 5: Protect your idea (patent it).

Step 6: Make or license your idea.

## WHO ARE SOME FAMOUS INVENTORS AND WHAT DID THEY INVENT?

Some inventors, including Benjamin Franklin and Nikola Tesla, tinkered with many different types of inventions throughout their lives. Most other inventors focused on a particular problem to solve. The lists here group inventors by the type of inventions that they are most known for.

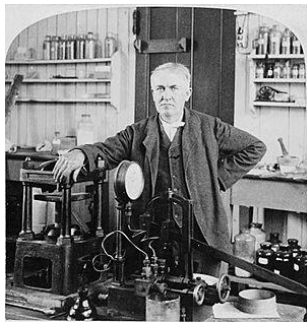
- **Nikola Tesla** invented the alternating current motor, Tesla coil and many other things.
- **Michael Faraday** was a scientist and the discoverer of electromagnetic induction, the inventor of the electric motor and the founder of electromagnetism.
- **Thomas Edison** was the inventor of the phonograph and many other things including the light bulb.



- **Karl Drais** was the inventor of the Laufmaschine ("running machine") the first bicycle.
- **Galileo** first used the telescope to view the planets and stars.
- **Alessandro Volta** was the inventor of the battery.
- **Gottlieb Daimler** was the inventor of the first four-wheel successful car.
- **Karl Benz** was the inventor of the first successful car.
- **George Stephenson** was the inventor of the improved locomotive train.
- **James Watt** was the inventor of the improved steam engine.
- **Rudolf Diesel** was the inventor of the diesel engine.
- **The Wright Brothers** invented the first aeroplane.



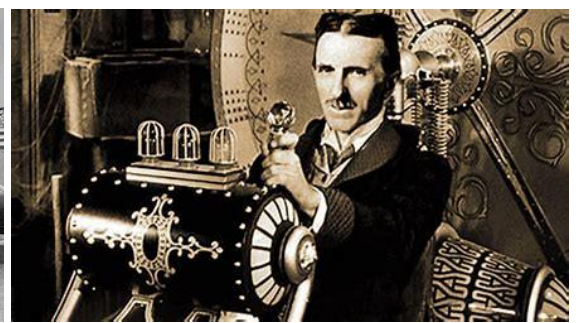
Karl Benz.



Thomas Edison in his laboratory



The Wright Brothers.



Nikola Tesla

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SCIENTIST AND AN INVENTOR?

A scientist is a person who studies nature and makes theories and discoveries as to how nature works using the scientific method. An inventor takes the laws and theories of science and puts them to practical use by humans. Many people are both scientists and inventors. For example, Isaac Newton was a scientist when he wrote about the theory of gravity, but he was also an inventor when he made the first working reflecting telescope.

FIND OUT MORE...

[Design and Technology KS2: What is an inventor like? - BBC Teach](#)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/pshe-ks1-ks2-proud-to-be-an-inventor/zrf76v4>

[Famous Scientists and Inventors for Kids - Maniacs in the Middle](#)

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What is an inventor?
2. Who can be an inventor?
3. Who invented the first aeroplane?
4. What lessons might help you to be a great inventor?
5. What was special about the invention of the popsicle?