

## The History of Anything



### Warm up

- What is your favourite invention and why?
- Can you think of something we use every day that has an interesting history?
- Which modern invention has had the greatest impact on the world?
- What is the oldest invention that you still use today?
- Which invention would be the hardest to live without?
- Which historical inventor do you admire the most?
- Which invention do you think will become obsolete in the future?
- If you could improve one invention, which one would it be and how?



### Quiz

<p>When was ice cream invented?</p> <p>a) 500 BC</p> <p>b) 1300 AD</p> <p>c) 1600 AD</p> <p>d) 1800 AD</p>	<p>What was the first patented paperclip design called?</p> <p>a) The Clipster</p> <p>b) The Binder</p> <p>c) The Gem</p> <p>d) The Loop</p>
<p>Who invented the telephone?</p> <p>a) Thomas Edison</p> <p>b) Alexander Graham Bell</p> <p>c) Nikola Tesla</p> <p>d) Guglielmo Marconi</p>	<p>Which country invented fireworks?</p> <p>a) China</p> <p>b) Italy</p> <p>c) USA</p> <p>d) India</p>

<p>What year was the first email sent?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) 1942</li> <li>b) 1953</li> <li><b>c) 1971</b></li> <li>d) 1992</li> </ul>	<p>Who is credited with inventing the light bulb?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Nikola Tesla</li> <li>b) Alexander Graham Bell</li> <li><b>c) Thomas Edison</b></li> <li>d) Benjamin Franklin</li> </ul>
<p>What was the original purpose of the Internet?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Online shopping</li> <li><b>b) Military communication</b></li> <li>c) Social networking</li> <li>d) Research and Education</li> </ul>	<p>Which video game series features a plumber?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Sonic</li> <li>b) Pac Man</li> <li>c) Donkey Kong</li> <li><b>d) Super Mario</b></li> </ul>
<p>What did the Wright brothers invent in 1903?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The submarine</li> <li>b) The steam engine</li> <li><b>c) The airplane</b></li> <li>d) The automobile</li> </ul>	<p>Which wearable device, introduced in 2015, tracks fitness from your wrist?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Fitbit</li> <li><b>b) Apple Watch</b></li> <li>c) Garmin</li> <li>d) Samsung Gear</li> </ul>
<p>When was the first text message sent?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) 1972</li> <li>b) 1982</li> <li><b>c) 1992</b></li> <li>d) 2002</li> </ul>	<p>When was the first photograph taken?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) 1750</li> <li><b>b) 1826</b></li> <li>c) 1901</li> <li>d) 1926</li> </ul>

## Past Simple vs. Past Continuous

**Past Simple:** Used to state a specific event or action that happened and was completed in the past.

For regular verbs: base form + "-ed" (e.g., invented, discovered)

For irregular verbs: past tense forms (e.g., was/were, began, brought)

Example: Thomas Edison invented the phonograph in 1877. (This focuses on the completion of the action of the invention.)

**Past Continuous:** Used to describe an ongoing action or background action that was happening at a specific time in the past.

Form of "to be" (was/were) + present participle ("-ing" form of the verb)

Example: While Alexander Graham Bell was inventing the telephone, he faced many challenges. (This sets the scene and background for the invention process.)



### 1. Complete the phrases in the past simple or past continuous.

1. Thomas Edison **invented** (invent) the light bulb in 1879.
2. While Marie Curie **was conducting** (conduct) her research, she discovered radium.
3. Alexander Fleming **discovered** (discover) penicillin accidentally in 1928.
4. When the Wright brothers **were developing** (develop) the first successful airplane, they faced numerous challenges.
5. Nikola Tesla **invented** (invent) the alternating current (AC) system of electricity.
6. While Steve Jobs **was developing** (develop) the first iPhone, he envisioned a new era of mobile technology.
7. Marie Curie **received** (receive) two Nobel Prizes for her groundbreaking work in physics and chemistry.
8. Albert Einstein **published** (publish) his theory of relativity in 1915, which transformed our understanding of the universe.
9. Leonardo da Vinci **Painted** (paint) the Mona Lisa during the Renaissance period.
10. Isaac Newton **discovered** (discover) the laws of motion and gravity in the 17th century.



2. Work in pairs. Read one of the texts below, then summarize the history you read in your own words from memory to your partner.

## Student A: The Surprising History of Potato Chips

Potato chips, a beloved snack enjoyed worldwide, have a surprisingly accidental origin story. It all began in 1853, in Saratoga Springs, New York. A chef named George Crum was working at Moon's Lake House, a popular resort at the time. One day, a customer ordered French fries and complained that they were too thick and soft.

Chef Crum, known for his short temper, decided to teach the customer a lesson. He sliced the potatoes incredibly thin, almost transparent and fried them until they were crispy and golden brown. Little did he know, this impulsive act would lead to the creation of one of the world's favourite snacks.

As the chips were cooking, the tantalizing aroma caught the attention of other diners in the restaurant. Curious, they requested to try Crum's new creation. To their delight, they found the chips deliciously crunchy and flavourful.

Word of these crispy potato slices spread quickly beyond Saratoga Springs. Soon, other restaurants and snack vendors began to replicate Crum's invention. Initially known as "Saratoga Chips," they quickly gained popularity across the United States.

In 1860, Crum opened his own restaurant, "Crum's House," where he continued to serve his famous potato chips. Despite their humble beginnings as a prank, potato chips evolved into a staple snack loved by people of all ages.

Today, potato chips come in countless flavours and varieties, but they all trace their roots back to that fateful day in Saratoga Springs when Chef George Crum unintentionally created a culinary phenomenon.



## Student B: The Accidental Invention of the Sandwich

The sandwich, a beloved and versatile meal enjoyed worldwide, has a surprisingly funny origin story. Legend has it that in the 18th century, John Montagu, the 4th Earl of Sandwich, was known for his love of gambling. One day, during an intense gambling session, he was playing cards for hours without taking a break to eat.

His servant, noticing Lord Sandwich's dilemma, came up with a creative solution. He took slices of roast beef and placed them between two pieces of bread. This allowed Lord Sandwich to continue playing cards without getting his hands greasy or interrupting the game for a full meal.

While Lord Sandwich was enjoying his newfound invention, other players at the table became curious. They requested "the same as Sandwich," and soon, the concept of eating meat between slices of bread caught on.



Word of this convenient and portable meal spread quickly throughout England. People began ordering "the same as Sandwich," which was later shortened to simply "sandwich."

John Montagu was credited with inventing the sandwich, although it was likely his servant who actually assembled the first one. Nonetheless, Lord Sandwich's name became forever associated with this now-iconic culinary creation.

Today, sandwiches come in endless varieties, from classic ham and cheese to gourmet creations. They remain a popular choice for quick and satisfying meals, thanks to the accidental innovation of a hungry Earl and his clever servant.



### 3. Discuss the following questions as a class.

- a) What was George Crum's job, and where did he work when he invented potato chips? **George Crum was a chef at Moon's Lake House in Saratoga Springs.**
- b) How did customers react to the first potato chips, and what happened next? **Customers loved the crispy potato chips, and the snack quickly gained popularity.**

- c) Why did John Montagu's servant create the sandwich, and what was the result? **John Montagu's servant created the sandwich to allow him to eat while gambling without getting greasy hands.**
- d) How did the name "sandwich" originate? **John Montagu's servant created the sandwich because the Earl was too absorbed in gambling to take breaks for meals. The servant's idea allowed Montagu to eat conveniently without interrupting his game.**
- e) What was the original name of potato chips, and why did it change? **Potato chips were originally called "Saratoga Chips," a name that changed as the snack spread and became known more broadly.**
- f) How do you think George Crum and John Montagu felt about their inventions becoming famous?
- g) Compare the two stories. What are the similarities and differences in how these two foods were invented?
- h) Which story did you find more interesting, and why?
- i) How do these stories highlight the importance of creativity and thinking outside the box



4. You are going to watch a video that contains the following vocabulary. Match each word to its definition

1. archaeological evidence	D	A. Having a nice smell.
2. cultivated	E	B. Making a lot of money.
3. mythical	C	C. Only existing in stories or legends.
4. monopoly	H	D. Found through digging up and studying old things.
5. export goods	F	E. Grown or developed on purpose.
6. aromatic	A	F. Products sold to other countries.
7. colonial influence	J	G. Full of danger.
8. lucrative	B	H. Total control over a product or service.

9. perilous		I. A basic product that can be bought and sold.
10. commodity		J. The impact of one country taking control of another.



5. Watch the video [The History of Tea](#)<sup>1</sup> and answer the following questions.

1. What is the ancient legend about the discovery of tea involving Shennong?

According to the legend, Shennong, a divine farmer, accidentally poisoned himself 72 times. While he was near death, a tea leaf drifted into his mouth, and it revived him. This is said to be how tea was discovered.



2. According to archaeological evidence, how long ago was tea first cultivated in China?

Tea was first cultivated in China about 6,000 years ago.

3. How was tea originally consumed before it became a drink?

Tea was initially eaten as a vegetable or cooked with grain porridge.

4. What significant change in tea consumption happened around 1,500 years ago?

About 1,500 years ago, tea began to be consumed as a drink rather than as food, through a method involving heating, grinding into powder, and mixing with hot water to create a beverage.

5. What impact did the Tang Dynasty have on the spread of tea?

During the Tang Dynasty in the 9th century, tea was introduced to Japan by a Japanese monk.

6. When and how did tea reach Japan?

Tea reached Japan in the 9th century when a Japanese monk brought the first tea plant from China.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ted.com/talks/shunan\\_teng\\_the\\_history\\_of\\_tea/transcript?trigger=15s&subtitle=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/shunan_teng_the_history_of_tea/transcript?trigger=15s&subtitle=en)

7. How did Queen Catherine of Braganza contribute to the popularity of tea in England?

Queen Catherine of Braganza made tea popular among the English aristocracy when she married King Charles II in 1661.

8. Why did the British East India Company want to grow tea themselves, and how did they achieve this?

The British East India Company wanted to grow tea to control the market better. They achieved this by sending botanist Robert Fortune to steal tea plants and workers from China and smuggle them to India.

9. What were the consequences of Britain's trade proposal involving opium for China?

Britain's proposal to trade tea for opium led to widespread addiction in China, which triggered the First Opium War and weakened China's global standing.

10. How did competition among Western trading companies influence the tea trade?

Intense competition among Western trading companies led to the creation of the clipper ship, which raced to bring tea back to Europe quickly, maximizing profits.



6. Create a short presentation on *the history of anything*.

In pairs or small groups, research the history of a topic of your choice and create a presentation for your class. The topic is completely up to you; it could be, for example, the history of ice cream, the bicycle, the internet, or any other subject that interests you. You can make posters if you are in class, create PowerPoint presentations, show pictures, or even just talk about your topic. Be creative and use any method that works best for you.

