

## CAN WE DO WITHOUT INVENTIONS?

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**Level:** Intermediate and above.

**Time:** 90 minutes.

**Aims:**

1. To teach students how to use browsers.
2. To teach vocabulary related to inventions, revise the *for + ing* structure.

**Technical requirements:** One computer per a group of 2 students, with the Internet connection.

**Knowledge:** Students should be skilled at typing the URLs.

**Procedure:**

**Pre-stage activity:**

1. Teacher asks students how people make their lives easier, then which inventions they consider to be most helpful and/or revolutionary. (expected answers: radio, computer, TV, car, bicycle, telephone, etc.)
2. Students are asked about the names of inventors of the above mentioned objects. (students don't usually know all the names)

**While-stage activities:**

1. Teacher writes three useful URLs: [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com), [www.altavista.com](http://www.altavista.com), [www.askjeeves.com](http://www.askjeeves.com). Students are asked to choose one invention and find the name of an inventor. When they've done it, they report it back to the class and the teacher.
2. Teacher distributes task sheets, students work in pairs and try to find necessary information. Should they have any difficulties using a browser, the teacher may suggest the URL for Encyclopaedia Britannica, [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)

Invention	Inventor	Date	Application
1.	Ruth Handler		
2. bicycle			
3. bikini			
4.	Levi Strauss, Jacob Davis		
5. washing machine			
6.	Frank B. Colton		
7. wheel			

8.	Gideon Sunback		
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To save time, it is suggested that one pair of students should work on one point, then give feedback so that everyone could fill in the table.

The answers are:

1. Barbie doll; 1959
2. First scheme: Leonardo DaVinci, then French, German and British inventors (Kirkpatrick Macmillan); 1490-late 18<sup>th</sup> century
3. Jacques Heim, Louis Reard; 1946
4. Blue jeans; 1873
5. Alva J.Fisher; 1908
6. First oral contraceptive; 1950s
7. Not known; over 55 hundred years old
8. Zipper; 1913

**Post-stage activity:**

1. To relax students at the end of the lesson, the teacher asks them if they know any useless inventions. Then students may go to <http://totallyabsurd.com> and choose one or two examples of absurd inventions. The teacher asks for ideas.
2. **Homework:** think about a little thing that could make your life easier, make a short note.

## **EXPLORERS – GOING BEYOND LIMITS**

**by Jarek Krajka**

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**Coursebook:** unit 1, *Opportunities Intermediate*, Harris, M., Mower, D., Sikorzynska, A. (2000), Pearson Education.

### **Objectives**

- To find out more about people performing unusual feats

- To practise reading for general idea
- To work on vocabulary connected with exploring, adventure and travel
- To learn how to use online reference tools

**Time:** two 45-minute periods

### **Resources used**

Computers, Internet websites, word-processor

### **Possible problems**

Intermediate students may find it difficult to understand some websites, which are not specially made for them, but are meant for the whole English-speaking community. Due to that, students need to not only work out meanings from the context, but use fast online dictionaries to get help. Thus, the teacher should devote some of classroom time to showing students how to use such dictionaries.

### **Before you start**

- Go to the sites of online dictionaries (<http://cambridge.dictionary.org>, [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com), <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary.htm>, <http://www.yourdictionary.com/>, <http://nhd.heinle.com/>), see which one is the fastest, the most comprehensive, the easiest for students to understand the definitions.
- Make a Web search for "dictionary +online" to find some more sites, perhaps not only monolingual but also bilingual (e.g., for Polish students, <http://galaxy.uci.agh.edu.pl/~polak/slownik/>, <http://www.poltran.com/>, <http://akson.sgh.waw.pl/~anthon/slownik.html>, <http://www.ectaco.com/online/diction.php3?lang=7>)
- Check the sites for explorers given below, to see whether the URLs have not changed and whether the sites still exist.

### **Procedure**

1. Refer to the text "The Race to the Pole" (p. 8 in the coursebook). Ask students to summarise what the text was about, as well as describe Amundsen and Scott. Ask them if they would like to be in their shoes, or become explorers.

2. Students work in pairs on creating a profile of an explorer. They could be given some prompts to talk about such as: age, sex, marital status, physical appearance, personality/character, greatest dream, biggest worry, greatest achievement, a goal to pursue, etc.
3. After that, students should be given the URL with texts about some explorers (Antarctic Explorers, Ernest Shackleton, <http://www.south-pole.com/p0000097.htm>, Robert F. Scott, <http://www.south-pole.com/p0000089.htm>, Richard E. Byrd, <http://www.south-pole.com/p0000107.htm>, Jean Baptiste Charcot, <http://www.south-pole.com/p0000096.htm>, William S. Bruce, <http://www.south-pole.com/p0000093.htm>; Space Explorers, Marc Garneau, <http://www.space-explorers.org/bios/garneau.html>, Loren W. Acton, <http://www.space-explorers.org/bios/acton.html>, Scott D. Altman, <http://www.space-explorers.org/bios/altman.html>, - go here for a list of space explorer biographies, <http://www.space-explorers.org/bios/>) and asked to read two of them. Now they have to go through the texts quickly, see whether the profile they have come up with fits particular people, and try to note the information under their headings.
4. Then it is the time to summarise chosen texts to the whole class, and using the detailed information gathered students need to retell the life and adventures of a chosen explorer. The whole class needs to listen attentively and try to decide which explorer performed the most extraordinary feats.
5. The teacher points students to some Web dictionaries (see URLs above) and shows them how to look up meaning. Students should practise toggling between two windows of the Internet browser, namely one with a text to read and the other with a dictionary lookup window. Next, they should practise highlighting words in the text, copying them, switching to the dictionary window and pasting words to get the definition. In this way, dictionary lookup is the fastest and the most effective.
6. To practise those skills, the teacher asks students to go back to one of the texts they read, find ten new words, look them up in a Web dictionary and note down the meanings.
7. As a further dictionary practice, students should find some other 10 unknown words and pass them on to another group, which would have to look them up in an online dictionary, highlight, copy and paste their definitions to a word-processor and save a document.
8. The teacher should collect documents with dictionary definitions and distribute them among students to read and learn, which would act as a further vocabulary practice. At home students should use the words and definitions to make vocabulary exercises for each other, such as complete an example sentence with an appropriate word or match a word

and a definition. When making the exercises, students should use the word-processor, practising such operations as moving the text, copying and pasting, making tables, etc. During the next class students should exchange vocabulary exercises and test their retention of the new lexis.