

What if it had never been invented?

1. Discuss the questions.

- What are some important inventions in the areas below?
 - communication
 - healthcare
 - energy
 - entertainment
 - other sphere of your interest
- Which inventions do you find most useful?
- What are some inventions that are useful for others but not for you?

2. Rank these inventions from the least to most important. Then, watch a [video](https://youtu.be/bNUfZ3_VkuE) [https://youtu.be/bNUfZ3_VkuE] (to 02:35) and check your ideas.

- refrigerator
- compass
- plumbing
- paper
- printing press

3. Watch the [video](#) again (to 02:35) and match each sentence beginning with the correct ending.

- A. Had the Han dynasty not come up with their famous invention,
- B. If the compass hadn't been invented,
- C. If this household appliance wasn't common,
- D. If one man hadn't combined two existing technologies to create something innovative,
- E. If there was no plumbing,

- 1. the age of discovery could have started much later.
- 2. books might still cost a fortune.
- 3. the living conditions of many people across the globe might not have improved.
- 4. we would eat and live differently.
- 5. we wouldn't have maps, paper currency or books.

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4. Look at the sentences about inventions (A–E) again. Then, match them with the points (1–6) below. More than one match might be possible for some sentences.

- A. Had the Han dynasty not come up with their famous invention, we wouldn't have maps, paper currency or books.
- B. If the compass hadn't been invented, the age of discovery could have started much later.
- C. If this household appliance wasn't common, we would eat and live differently.
- D. If one man hadn't combined two existing technologies to create something innovative, books might still cost a fortune.
- E. If there was no plumbing, the living conditions of many people across the globe might not have improved.

- 1. a hypothetical situation referring to the present (second conditional)
- 2. an action/event in the past that affects another past action/event (third conditional)
- 3. an action/event in the past that affects the situation in the present (mixed conditional: third + second)
- 4. a situation/statement that is true now or in general and that might affect past events (mixed conditional: second + third)
- 5. a structure that can be used instead of *if*+ subject + past perfect
- 6. an alternative to *would*

5. Complete the sentences about other inventions (shown in the rest of the video) using the verbs in the boxes in the correct form.

achieve

be

cycle

develop

invent

- A. If penicillin _____, millions of people in the 20th century would have died from bacterial infections.
- B. Had the engine not been invented, people _____ more nowadays.
- C. Modern transportation _____ as quickly as it did if there was no wheel.
- D. If there was no telephone, communication over long distances _____ much harder in the 20th century.
- E. We _____ many technological advancements over the past century if there was no electricity.

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6. Discuss the questions.

- Why did people invent things in the past? Do they do it nowadays for the same reasons?
- When a revolutionary invention comes along, should it be adopted straight away or should we first test its potential for malicious misuse?
- Why do some groundbreaking inventions fail to gain popularity, while others quickly become a hit?
- Can you think of any inventions that were initially rejected or criticized but later became widely accepted?
- Why might some inventions be associated with people who didn't invent them?

7. Watch a [video](https://youtu.be/b9qZWG-07M8) [https://youtu.be/b9qZWG-07M8] (to 01:59) and correct the statements.

- A. Steve Jobs invented a device we know today as the computer mouse.
- B. NASA tested Engelbart's invention and found it inefficient.
- C. Steve Jobs worked directly with Engelbart to improve the mouse.
- D. Engelbart became wealthy from the profits of the computer mouse.
- E. Being ahead of its time is enough for an idea to become successful.

8. Complete the sentences based on the story from the video using your own ideas and conditional structures.

EXAMPLE: If Douglas Engelbart hadn't invented the computer mouse...
someone else, like Steve Jobs, might have invented it.

OR

we would use a different tool to work on a laptop.

- A. A mouse wouldn't be a common household object if _____
- B. Douglas Engelbart might have improved his invention had _____
- C. Engelbart's descendants would be wealthy if _____
- D. Stories about the truth behind some inventions would remain unknown if _____
- E. If original inventors always received due credit for their inventions _____

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9. Read the stories about some famous inventions. Then, answer the questions below.

One of the biggest inventors of all time, Nikola Tesla, experimented with wireless electricity transmission in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His vision was to provide free energy to the world. However, his financial backers withdrew support.

- If energy had become free in the 19th century, how would our lives be different?
- If governments today were more open to revolutionary ideas, would Tesla's dream have a better chance of becoming reality now?
- What would Tesla think of modern technology and its role in the world if he was alive today?

In 1989, computer scientist Timothy Berners-Lee developed the World Wide Web with the goal to create a system for sharing information more efficiently among researchers. However, he has since voiced concerns about the web's misuse (e.g. spreading misinformation).

- If Berners-Lee hadn't shared his invention for free, would the internet have grown as quickly?
- What might have happened if Berners-Lee had sold his invention to a private company?
- If more regulations had been in place earlier, would the internet be a safer space today?



10. In pairs, decide who is Student A and who is Student B. Create three questions based on your text using different conditional structures. Then, ask the questions to your partner and answer their questions.

Student A

ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, is a large language model designed to understand and generate human-like text. Introduced in 2022, it quickly became a global phenomenon. However, it raises important questions about ethical usage, misinformation and the future of human-AI interaction.

Student B

Electric cars were invented in the 19th century but lost out to petrol-powered cars by the mid-20th century. In the 21st century, they were brought back. Innovators like Elon Musk led the way, but challenges like battery pollution, limited number of charging stations and resistance from traditional car companies remain.