

### Unit 24 A new year

#### Before you read

The article is about things people have invented. Can you guess when people first created the following items? Put them in order from the oldest (1) to the newest (5). Then read the article to see if you were right.

- \_\_\_\_\_ the bicycle
- \_\_\_\_\_ jeans
- \_\_\_\_\_ the sandwich
- \_\_\_\_\_ sneakers
- 1   the umbrella

#### Read the article

##### Ideas and Inventions

Humans have a natural desire to create new things and to use them to make their lives easier or better. The idea of inventing things—the bicycle, clothes or shoes, the sandwich, the umbrella—is as old as people.

The oldest invention in the list above is the umbrella. People in Assyria, China, Egypt, and Greece used umbrellas 4,000 years ago. They made them from paper and used them for protection from the sun. The Chinese were the first to make umbrellas to use in the rain. They used wax to make the paper waterproof.

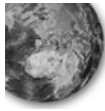
One day in 1762, John Montagu, the fourth Earl of Sandwich in England, was too busy to sit down and eat his dinner. He asked his cook to put the meat inside some bread to save him time. This was the first sandwich.

In the mid-1700s early versions of what would become the bicycle existed. The vehicle had two wheels, but the rider used his feet to push it forward. In 1861, Pierre Michaux, from France, and his son Ernest added pedals and a crank so a person could ride without touching their feet to the ground. This was the first modern bicycle.

Blue jeans were invented later. Levi Strauss, a German immigrant, traveled to San Francisco in 1853. He wanted to sell things to people coming to California looking for gold. One thing that people really needed was strong work clothes. Strauss made pants from canvas, a rough heavy fabric, but they weren't comfortable. He then tried using a heavy cotton fabric from France, called *serge de Nimes*. (Later people just called it *denim*.) Jacob Davis, a customer at Strauss's store, offered the idea of using metal pieces to keep the pockets from ripping off. In 1873, Strauss and Davis got a patent from the U.S. government to protect the idea of their design.

The newest invention on this list is sneakers. On January 24, 1899 Humphrey O'Sullivan received the first patent for a rubber sole (bottom) for shoes. (Before this, shoes usually had leather soles.) Some of these shoe companies joined together to form a large company called U.S. Rubber. Their first brand of sneakers, Keds, was introduced in 1917.

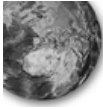
It's fun to imagine what kinds of inventions there will be in the future. But one thing is certain: people love to try out new ideas and they will continue to invent new things.



### Build your reading skills: Identifying pronoun references

Read the article again. Identify the word or words that each pronoun refers to. Circle the correct answer.

1. Humans have a natural desire to make new things and to use them to make their lives easier or better.
  - a. natural desire
  - b. new things
  - c. their lives
2. People in Assyria, China, Egypt, and Greece used umbrellas 4,000 years ago. They made them from paper.
  - a. people
  - b. paper
  - c. umbrellas
3. The Chinese were the first people to make umbrellas to use in the rain. They used wax to make the paper waterproof.
  - a. the Chinese
  - b. umbrellas
  - c. people who used umbrellas
4. One day in 1762, Montagu was too busy to sit down and eat his dinner. He asked his cook to put the meat inside the bread to save him time.
  - a. the cook
  - b. the sandwich
  - c. John Montagu
5. One thing that people really needed was strong clothes to wear when they worked.
  - a. people
  - b. one thing
  - c. strong clothes



### Check your comprehension

Circle the letter of the answer that completes each sentence.

1. People first used umbrellas when \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. it was raining
  - b. it was sunny
  - c. they were in China
2. John Montagu invented the sandwich because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. he was busy
  - b. he was the cook
  - c. he was bored
3. Pierre and Ernest Michaux made \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. bicycle without wheels
  - b. the first vehicle with two wheels
  - c. the first modern bicycle
4. Levi Strauss moved to California because he wanted to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. look for gold
  - b. make blue jeans
  - c. sell things
5. People first bought sneakers called Keds \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. in 1899
  - b. from Humphrey O'Sullivan
  - c. in 1917