

BEST INVENTIONS



BEST INVENTIONS OF 2023

Explore some of the year's most interesting innovations.

LEXILE: 880L

SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS) STANDARD: Science, Technology, and Society

COMMON CORE (CCSS) STANDARDS: RI.6-8.1, RI.6-8.3, RI.6-8.5, W.6-8.2

ENGAGE THE READER

Tell students that they'll be reading about inventions that came out this year. Then have them think of a tool, device, or other object they use every day. Make a list on the board. Ask: Why do you think these things were invented? Where might the ideas have come from? How do inventions come about? Why do people invent things? What makes an invention innovative?

QUESTIONS FOR CLOSE READING AND DISCUSSION

- Which of the year's inventions do you find the most interesting, and why?
- Which of these inventions do you think will have the greatest impact on people's lives? Explain.
- Are there any inventions on this list that we can live without? Explain. How should we measure the usefulness of a new invention?

EXTEND LEARNING

Encourage your students' inventive thinking. Divide them into small groups. Have each group choose one of the year's best inventions and come up with ideas for how that invention might be developed. Maybe it could be improved. Students might ask themselves: What problem was this invention made to solve? What other problems might it be made to solve? How could the invention be made more effective? How might it be made useful to more people? Each group should take notes as it work out its ideas. Have the groups illustrate the developments they'd make. The illustration should include written descriptions of each change.

Have the groups present their work to the class. Then start a discussion by asking: What have you learned about invention? What do you think drives progress in technology?

COVER STORY QUIZ + ANSWER KEY

The cover quiz can be found on page 3 of this guide.

To create a digital quiz, you can use our template [here](#).

1. B (RI.3) **2. A** (RI.7) **3. D** (RI.6) **4. D** (RI.1) **5. C** (RI.2)

6. B (RI.9) **7. Answers will vary.** (W.1)



TECH INDUSTRY SHAKE-UP

The CEO of OpenAI was fired, then rehired. It happened over disagreements about how to safely build artificial intelligence.

SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS) STANDARD: Science, Technology, and Society

COMMON CORE (CCSS) STANDARDS: RI.6-8.1, RI.6-8.3, RI.6-8.5, RI.6-8.8

BEFORE READING

Tell students that they'll read about a debate over how artificial intelligence should be introduced to society. Ask: What do you know about artificial intelligence? What is ChatGPT? (You may need to explain that ChatGPT is a chatbot, a computer program that uses AI to imitate thinking and writing.) What kinds of AI do you use every day? Do you think AI is useful? Explain. How do you think AI will affect our society?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think OpenAI's board fired Sam Altman? Do you think firing him was a good idea? Explain.
- Why do you think the company's employees objected to Altman's firing? What might happen to the company without him? Refer to clues in the article.
- How might your life be affected by the decisions that tech companies make?



WORD OF THE YEAR

Merriam-Webster has announced its 2023 word of the year: **authentic**.

SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS) STANDARD: Culture

COMMON CORE (CCSS) STANDARDS: RI.6-8.1, RI.6-8.4, RI.6-8.6, SL.6-8.1

BEFORE READING

Ask: What does *authentic* mean? How can you tell when something, or someone, is authentic? Why should we care about authenticity? What makes being authentic important?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think *authentic* has been used so much lately? Where have you come across the word recently?
- What might the frequent use of *authentic* tell us about our culture? Explain.
- Do you agree that the rise of AI is cause for worry about authenticity? Why or why not?

CLOSING ACTIVITY

Have students make a list of words they've been hearing a lot lately. These might be words heard in the news, in advertisements, or in conversation. They might be words that are particular to their age group or friends, or words that are popping up in songs. Make a list of these words on the board. For each one, ask: What does this word mean? Why do you think it's used so often? What might the word's use tell us about ourselves, about what we want or value?

Name _____ Date _____

Use this week's cover story, "Best Inventions of 2023," to answer the questions below. For questions 1–6, circle the letter next to the best answer. If you need more space to write your response to question 7, use the back of this page.

<p>1. How does whiter paint work to reduce air-conditioner use?</p> <p>A. Sunlight warms the area surrounding the paint.</p> <p>B. The paint reflects almost all the sunlight into space.</p> <p>C. The paint absorbs heat from the sun.</p> <p>D. The paint is very lightweight.</p>	<p>4. How fast can you walk with Moonwalkers?</p> <p>A. more than twice as fast as the average gait</p> <p>B. 110 miles per hour</p> <p>C. up to seven miles per hour</p> <p>D. both A and C</p>
<p>2. How does the photograph support the information in the section "Virtual Animals"?</p> <p>A. It shows how people can interact with the animals at the Hologram Zoo.</p> <p>B. It illustrates what a herd of stampeding elephants looks like.</p> <p>C. It compares animals at the Hologram Zoo to those in captivity.</p> <p>D. It highlights the many different animals at the zoo.</p>	<p>5. What could be another title for the "Stopping Fires"?</p> <p>A. "Clearing the Air"</p> <p>B. "Smoke on the Rise"</p> <p>C. "Fire Spotter"</p> <p>D. "A New 911"</p>
<p>3. What does Jim Dukhovny, CEO of Alef Aeronautics, believe about other flying cars?</p> <p>A. They should have two seats instead of four.</p> <p>B. They should fly at 110 miles per hour.</p> <p>C. They should be parked in garages.</p> <p>D. They don't look like regular cars.</p>	<p>6. What do LifeStraw Max and Moxie have in common?</p> <p>A. They are both meant for use in conflict zones.</p> <p>B. They both help supply people with basic needs.</p> <p>C. They both strip water of bacteria and viruses.</p> <p>D. They are both used on other planets.</p>

7. Which invention do you think is the best of 2023? Explain.
