

Nonfiction Reading Test

Child Inventors

Directions: Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

When I used to think of inventors, I pictured old men with grey beards. I pictured white lab coats and smoky beakers. I was surprised to learn that young people have created many world-changing inventions.

Like 15-year old Albert Sadacca, who invented Christmas tree lights. The year was 1917. The place was New York city. Someone was hanging candles from a Christmas tree, as was common at that time. This started a tragic fire. Sadacca's parents sold electric lighting in their shop. Young Albert thought to adapt these lights for use on Christmas trees. This turned out to be a pretty bright idea.

Another 12-year old visionary was Louis Braille. Braille was blind in both eyes. In 1819 young Louis was attending one of the world's first schools for blind children. He learned a system of touch-based literacy, but it was hard for him to write. Braille sought a better way to communicate with his classmates. He wanted to write freely, without needing special equipment. So he taught himself a system of night-writing used in the military. Then he made a few changes to it. By the time he turned 15, he had created Braille. People with visual impairments today still use Braille to read and write.

Another cool kid who changed the world was 11-year old Frank Epperson. Frank was chilling on his porch one night in 1905. He went to bed and forgot his cup of lemonade on the porch. When he woke the next morning, young Frank realized that he had created the world's first Popsicle. He would later patent the concept and trademark the name "Popsicle." Frank's idea was so successful that many people still call ANY frozen treat a Popsicle.

Speaking of cool kids, 15-year old Chester Greenwood was ice-skating one day in 1873. Naturally, as tends to happen during winter play, his ears got cold. Chester had a clever idea. He asked his grandma to sew some fur tufts to a wire loop that he had fashioned. His design worked well! He had invented earmuffs. He patented his "ear protectors" as he called them. They were manufactured in his hometown of Farmington, Maine. Greenwood's one good idea provided jobs for people in the Farmington area for 60 years.

Margaret E. Knight is another young person who became a small town hero. She is best remembered as the woman who invented the flat-bottomed paper bag. But she made her first life-saving device at the age of 12. Her brothers were working at a textile mill in town. One day she was visiting them. A loom malfunctioned and injured a worker. She thought she could make the machines safer. She invented an effective system. Her method was later used in many factories. She saved a lot of lives. And we still use the paper bag design that she created in 1868. How many lives have those saved? Am I right?

Some young people feel powerless. They feel like they are living in an adult world, created by adults for adults. But the truth is that everyone has the power to change the world. A 12 year-old girl growing up in 1868 made factories safer. A 15 year-old boy, blind in both eyes, made written communication more accessible. An 11 year-old forgot to put away his drink and it froze. Who knows what's in store for your future?

1. Which statement is FALSE?

- a) Chester Greenwood invented ear protectors.
- b) Frank Epperson invented the Popsicle.
- c) Albert Sadacca invented the flat-bottomed paper bag.
- d) Louis Braille invented a system of writing.

2. Which happened FIRST in order of time?

- a) Braille was invented.
- b) The flat-bottomed paper bag was invented.
- c) Christmas tree lights were invented.
- d) The popsicle was invented.

3. According to the text, why did Louis Braille want to invent a new system of writing?

- a) So he could help the military write secret codes.
- b) So he could communicate with his friends more easily.
- c) So he could graduate from his school.
- d) So he could write messages in the middle of the night.

4. Which best describes how Frank Epperson invented the Popsicle?

- a) He tested many different formulas before finding success.
- b) He used an old family recipe, in his family for generations.
- c) He consulted with scientists and doctors to find his idea.
- d) He created it by accident.

5. Which event caused 15-year old Albert Sadacca to invent?

- a) He saw a factory worker get injured.
- b) A candle in a Christmas tree started a fire.
- c) He left his lemonade on the porch.
- d) He was ice skating and his ears got cold.

6. Which statement about Chester Greenwood is FALSE?

- a) He helped to employ people in his town for 70 years.
- b) His grandma helped him with his invention.
- c) He patented the concept of the Popsicle.
- d) He was ice skating when he had his big idea.

7. Which caused Margaret E. Knight to invent at the age of 12?

- a) She left her lemonade on the porch.
- b) A candle in a tree started a fire.
- c) She wanted to better communicate with friends.
- d) She saw a loom worker get injured.

8. With which statement would the author of this text most likely DISAGREE?

- a) All important discoveries happen in science labs.
- b) People with disabilities have invented amazing things.
- c) Women have changed the world through invention.
- d) Children have made important discoveries.

9. Which lesson can readers learn from this text?

- a) Age and experience are necessary to do important things.
- b) Anybody, no matter how young, can change the world.
- c) Kids should leave grown-up problems to the grown-ups.
- d) Everything important has already been invented.

10. Which advice would the author MOST LIKELY give to young people?

- a) All the problems in the world have already been solved.
- b) Children should do what they are told and not ask questions.
- c) Remain curious and think of ways to solve problems.
- d) Only adults are smart enough to change the world.

1. Which of the child inventors in this text do you find to be most inspirational or significant? Why do you feel this way? Explain your answer completely.
