

Inventions





Rebecca Schroeder used glow-in-the-dark material that can be found in many products, some of which are silly.

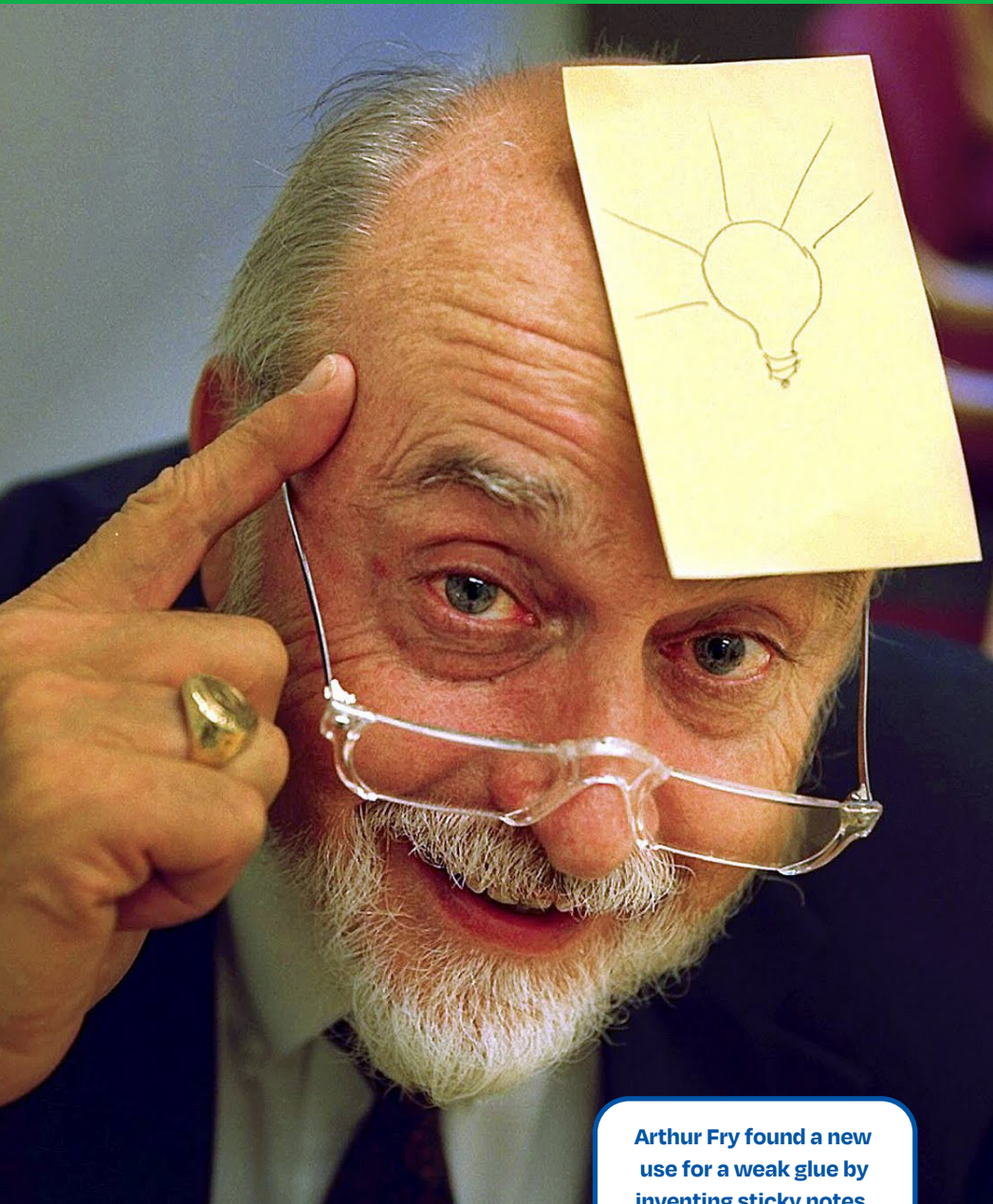
What is an invention?

Today, we travel by car, watch television, and turn on lights. Not long ago, though, none of these things existed. Each once is an invention, and each has changed the world.

Sometimes inventions are created when people try to solve a problem. When Rebecca Schroeder couldn't see to do her homework in the car after dark, she invented a glow-in-the-dark clipboard. Today, nurses in hospitals use this invention. Late at night, hospital nurses can see to write notes without waking sick people because Rebecca Schroeder had a problem she solved by inventing something.

Key Notes:

What is one reason people invent things?



Arthur Fry found a new use for a weak glue by inventing sticky notes.

Finding the Right Use

Sometimes researchers don't know they have invented something useful. A researcher named Spencer Silver created glue that was too weak to hold things together for a long time. Silver stopped working on the glue, but Arthur Fry thought he could use it.

Fry often lost his place in his songbook at church, so he put the weak glue on little pieces of paper and stuck them on the pages of his songbook. The little pieces of paper helped Fry find his place, and the weak glue didn't harm the songbook. That's how sticky notes were created.

Key Notes:

What problem did Arthur Fry have?



Kevlar® vests can help to protect people who serve our communities and country.

An Invention That Saves Lives

In 1964, an inventor was looking for a way to make car tires stronger. Nothing she tried worked well. Then, she made something unlike any material anyone had made. This new material was five times stronger than steel. This material, which became known as Kevlar, made car tires stronger and safer.

Kevlar can be used to save lives, too. It is used in helmets that people wear when they ride bikes, ski, or do other sports. These helmets keep people safe when they fall or hit their head. The Kevlar in the helmet protects the head inside it.

Key Notes:

What is Kevlar?



Calculators have changed since the first ones were invented.

An Invention That Keeps Changing

Some inventions, like calculators, keep getting better. Calculators are like adding machines. People use them to add numbers and to solve other kinds of math problems.

At first, calculators were so huge they took up a whole room. The first calculators were also very expensive, and it took many people to use them.

Today, all that has changed. Calculators are no longer expensive. People can buy them for a few dollars. They are small, too. Some are smaller than a person's hand. These days, most people can buy and use calculators. Like many useful inventions, calculators keep getting better.

Key Notes:

Why might an invention keep changing?

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