

# Famous Inventions and Discoveries

## Activity Type

Grammar and Speaking  
Activity: information gap,  
asking and answering  
questions from prompts  
(pair work)

## Focus

Past simple passive

## Aim

To ask and answer  
questions about  
famous inventions and  
discoveries using the past  
simple passive.

## Preparation

Make one copy of the two  
worksheets for each pair  
of students.

## Level

Intermediate (B1)

## Time

25 minutes

## Introduction

In this past simple passive activity, students ask and answer questions about famous inventions and discoveries.

## Procedure

Begin by writing the following sentence on the board:

Penicillin was discovered by Alexander Fleming in Scotland in 1928.

Erase the word 'Penicillin' and elicit the question 'What was discovered by Alexander Fleming?'

Write 'Penicillin' back in the sentence.

Then erase 'Alexander Fleming' and elicit the question 'Who was penicillin discovered by?'

Write 'Alexander Fleming' back in the sentence and then repeat with the place and year.

Tell the students that they are going to ask and answer similar questions in pairs.

Divide the students into pairs (Student A and B).

Give each student a corresponding worksheet.

Tell the students not to show their worksheet to their partner.

Explain that the students are going to complete the table on their worksheet by asking their partner for the missing information using the past simple passive.

Students then take turns asking and answering the past simple passive questions they need to complete the missing information in the table.

When the students have finished, they check their answers by comparing tables with their partner.

# Famous Inventions and Discoveries

## Student A

Take turns asking your partner for the missing information and complete the table.

What was discovered by Alexander Fleming?	Who was penicillin discovered by?	Where/When was penicillin discovered?
Penicillin	Alexander Fleming	in Scotland in 1928

What?	Who?	Where?	When?
Penicillin was discovered	by Alexander Fleming	in Scotland	in 1928.
1. The ..... was invented	by Martin Cooper	.....	.....
2. The World Wide Web was invented	by Tim Berners-Lee	in England	in 1989.
3. DNA was discovered	by .....	.....	.....
4. Pluto was discovered	by Clyde Tombaugh	in the USA	in 1930.
5. .... was invented	by Ray Tomlinson	.....	.....
6. The refrigerator was invented	by James Harrison	in Australia	in 1851.
7. The age of the Earth was discovered	by .....	.....	.....
8. Radium was discovered	by Marie Curie	in France	in 1899.
9. The ..... was invented	by Philo Taylor Farnsworth	.....	.....
10. Credit cards were invented	by Frank MacNamara	in the USA	in 1950.
11. The life raft was invented	by .....	.....	.....
12. The solar system was discovered	by Nicolaus Copernicus	in Poland	in 1543.
13. .... was invented	by Alfred Nobel	.....	.....
14. The battery was invented	by Alessandro Volta	in Italy	in 1799.

## Famous Inventions and Discoveries

### Student B

Take turns asking your partner for the missing information and complete the table.

What was discovered by Alexander Fleming?	Who was penicillin discovered by?	Where/When was penicillin discovered?
Penicillin	Alexander Fleming	in Scotland in 1928

What?	Who?	Where?	When?
Penicillin was discovered	by Alexander Fleming	in Scotland	in 1928.
1. The mobile phone was invented	by Martin Cooper	in the USA	in 1973.
2. The ..... was invented	by Tim Berners-Lee	.....	.....
3. DNA was discovered	by Rosalind Franklin	in England	in 1953.
4. Pluto was discovered	by .....	.....	.....
5. Email was invented	by Ray Tomlinson	in the USA	in 1971.
6. The ..... was invented	by James Harrison	.....	.....
7. The age of the Earth was discovered	by Clair Cameron Patterson	in the USA	in 1953.
8. Radium was discovered	by .....	.....	.....
9. The television was invented	by Philo Taylor Farnsworth	in the USA	in 1927.
10. .... were invented	by Frank MacNamara	.....	.....
11. The life raft was invented	by Maria E. Beasley	in America	in 1882.
12. The solar system was discovered	by .....	.....	.....
13. Dynamite was invented	by Alfred Nobel	in Sweden	in 1867.
14. The ..... was invented	by Alessandro Volta	.....	.....