

Things That Have Changed the World

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We have come a long way since the stone wheel, the house in the cave, dinosaurs ... So, let's take a look at some of the "things" that may have made this planet of ours a different place: Events, incidents, discoveries, inventions and so on. There is no doubt that the invention of the wheel facilitated such vital developments as transport, and travel, but there must be more factors that have contributed too.

Activity A

Ask your students to think of inventions/discoveries that have changed the world, for good or for bad. I got these:

- Pollution
- The engine
- Penicillin
- Fire
- The contraceptive pill (changed the traditional large family)
- Waterworks, piping, plumbing (where would we put our waste water?)
- Glasses
- Music
- The mop (put an end to the back-breaking task of pushing a cloth along floors)
- Printing
- The car
- Wars
- The computer
- Watches
- Radio
- X-rays

If your students need help, you should give them a few typical examples from above, to get the ball rolling. They must have reasons for their decisions and be prepared to take comments from the other pupils.

You can show my list after they have finished; it may inspire further dialogue.

The list of items is potentially infinite, because one could say that, for example, fashion, hairdryers, lighters have made a small contribution to the march of the world-anything goes if it fosters talk.

Activity B

Inventions and developments that have made the world worse.

The students can pick some of the apparently "positive" things they came up with and go on to make a list of their negative aspects.

For example, the car:

Positive aspects Negative aspects Travel It can kill Business It pollutes the air Visiting It creates noise Quick

Activity C

Things that have changed my life.

Wrap up the class with discussing this question.