

Inventions & Innovations

Before & After Visit Activity Sheets

Racine Heritage Museum

Before Your Visit:

1. Think like an inventor. Discuss what you need to do in order to be an inventor or innovator. You must:
 - **Brainstorm:** respect all ideas from other people in your group — there is no such thing as a bad idea
 - **Change and improve these ideas:** change plans and piggyback ideas as you work
 - **Observe:** watch carefully what is happening and try to anticipate what will happen next
 - **Invent using odds and ends** (or whatever is available): use materials that are easiest for you to get
2. Create a timeline of inventions. How did each change the quality of life? What resources were used for each invention?
3. Research different terms. What do they mean and how do they relate to invention: machine, horsepower, gears, energy and piston.
4. Have students bring in pictures of different types of machines in everyday life. Look at the difference between large and small machines, analyze how they make it easier to do something or faster to get somewhere.

After Your Visit:

1. Have your students share their Museum activities with the class.
2. Have your students design their own invention, improving on an existing one. Talk to parents, other students, etc... to get ideas for possible inventions. Why did they choose this invention to improve upon? What materials did they use? Ask students to now critically look at their inventions — what problems might arise with this design, color, weight, etc? Rethink and redesign the invention.
3. Research a Racine County invention or company. Have students present their inventions or companies to the class.
4. Have students visit some of the following websites:
 - **www.inventorsmuseum.com**
catch current interviews with featured inventors, take the Inventors IQ Test and search the collection of inventors from all walks of life and discipline
 - **www.enchantedlearning.com**
learn how and when common items were invented, from adhesive tape to the zipper. Includes entries for both inventors and inventions.
 - **colitz.com/site/wacky.htm**
this site keeps you on the cutting edge with the latest - and wackiest - patents from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Links provide information on patenting and inventing.

