

# Inventions: Then and Now

**Inventions**<sup>1</sup> solve problems and help make our lives easier. The Wright brothers invented the first airplane in 1903. The first flight traveled about half the length of a football field and lasted 12 seconds. Today's airplanes can travel long distances. Look at the ways that some inventions have changed over the years.

**Discover how some inventions have changed over time.**

## Telephone



### Then

Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876. The first phone had a trumpet-shaped part that was used to speak and to listen.



### Now

Many people carry small cell phones. They have no wires, unlike earlier phones. Cell phones let people talk all over the world.

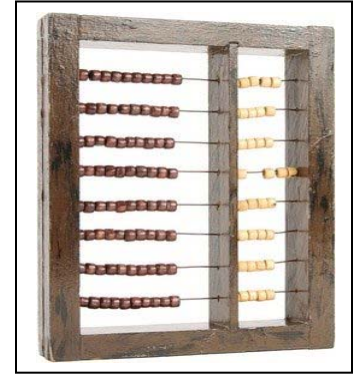
<sup>1</sup> **invention:** something created for the first time.

## Reading Passage

## Calculator

**Then**

The first calculator was invented in Asia nearly 500 years ago. People moved beads on a wooden rack to help them count.

**Now**

Calculators come in many shapes and sizes. They can even be part of other inventions, including computers, watches, and cell phones.

## Television

**Then**

Television became popular in the 1950s. The first TVs did not have a remote control. The screens showed pictures in black and white, and the sound was poor.

**Now**

Many modern TVs have flat screens. Some can be hung on a wall. Today's televisions have very clear, colored pictures, and excellent sound.

## Reading Passage

## Clock



### Then

Long ago, people kept track of time by recording the movement of the sun across the sky. The first clock was called a **sundial**<sup>2</sup>.

### Now

Clocks keep time for us. With a quick glance at a clock or watch, we know the time of day. What time is it now?



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<sup>2</sup> **sundial**: a device to show the time of day by the position of the shadow cast on a marked plate or disk usually by an object with a straight edge.