



# INNOVATION

***“Creativity is thinking up new things. Innovation is doing new things.”***

Theodore Levitt (1925 – (2006), American economist and Harvard professor

## 1. Innovation Discussion

1. What is innovation?
2. Who is the most innovative person you can think of? What makes them so innovative? What qualities do they have?
3. Which are the most innovative companies? Why are they so innovative?
4. How innovative would you say you are?
5. How innovative is the company you work for?
6. What is the best idea you have ever had?
7. What innovative changes can you suggest for the place you work?
8. What innovations help you in your daily life? How would your life be different without these?

## 2. Innovation Vocabulary

- **to meet a need** (verb) – *to provide what is needed.*
- **to revolutionise** (verb) – *to change something fundamentally; to make a major change.*
- **(to make/have) a breakthrough** (noun) – *an important discovery.*
- **(to) pioneer** (verb, noun) – *to be the first to do or use something and lead the way for others.*
- **eureka moment** (noun) – *the sensation of suddenly understanding a previously incomprehensible problem or concept.*
- **R&D (research and development)** (noun) – *activities to create new and innovative products or knowledge.*

**Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun)**

1. Investing in \_\_\_\_\_ is a great way for a company to come up with new ideas.
2. Isaac Newton had a \_\_\_\_\_ when an apple fell on his head leading to his discovery of gravity.
3. The discovery of penicillin was a major \_\_\_\_\_ in medicine.
4. Social media has \_\_\_\_\_ the way businesses interact with their customers.
5. If your product \_\_\_\_\_ of your customers, you will have guaranteed success.
6. Henry Ford was not only a \_\_\_\_\_ of the automobile industry and industry in general, but he was also a \_\_\_\_\_ of 'welfare capitalism', designed to improve the lives of his workers.

### **Innovation vocabulary comprehension questions**

1. When did you last make a breakthrough in your job?
2. Is it always necessary for an innovation to meet a need? What needs does your company meet?
3. Which innovations have revolutionised the world?
4. Have you ever had a Eureka moment?
5. Who are some pioneers in business? What did they pioneer?
6. Does your company have an R&D department? If not, how does it develop new ideas?

### 3. Video: Original Thinkers

You are going to watch a TED Talk by Adam Grant called "The surprising habits of original thinkers."

Watch the video here: <https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/business-english-conversation-lesson-plan-innovation/>

Watch the video and after, discuss the following questions:

1. When do you come up with your best ideas?
2. Do you tend to procrastinate, or do you prefer to complete your work well ahead of time? Where would you put yourself on the 'panic-monster to instant gratification monkey' scale?
3. When do you procrastinate the most? Why do you procrastinate?
4. Have you ever doubted an idea that you had? Was it self-doubt or idea-doubt?
5. What web browser do you use? Do you think this can determine your creativity? What else could be an indicator of someone's creativity?
6. Do you agree that procrastination can help create better ideas?

### 4. Innovation Conversation Questions

1. How can businesses encourage innovation?
2. Are there really any new ideas anymore? Or are they merely copies and improvements on previous ideas?
3. Why do some people say the best way to kill an idea is to take it to a meeting? Is this true?
4. How innovative are the businesses in your country?
5. Are some cultures more innovative than others? Which countries are the most innovative?
6. Why are some countries more innovative than others? Do government policies affect how innovative a country is?
7. Can innovation be taught? Or is it something you are born with?
8. What kind of innovations will we see in the future?

### 5. Innovation Writing Task

Think of an innovative solution to a problem where you work, or an innovative way to improve your company's performance in a certain area. Write an email to your line manager outlining your idea and what results it could produce.