

Humanity's greatest invention, according to seventh grade students

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When I read that Ecologist Magazine is co-sponsoring an essay contest on the topic *What is Humanity's worst Invention?*, it reminded me of a related essay exercise assigned to seventh-graders by a friend of mine. The students (typically thirteen years of age) were given the topic *What is humanity's greatest invention or discovery?* Here are some of the greatest inventions and discoveries of all time, according to these students:

pencils	airplanes	vaccines	refrigerators
pets	craftsman tools	steam engines	iPods
alarm clocks	laptops	shoes	transportation
computers	microbes	medicine	microphones
tomatoes	cars	light bulbs	batteries
fire	hair products	toilets	spear tips
marrying a princess		incandescent light	

Some sentences written in support of these claims:

- The invention of the light bulb has literally shed light on the world.
- The first car ever invented was the Mercedes around the early 1800s.
- You might have to actually wash the plates (without electricity).
- The car was first invented by Harrison Ford.
- the one thing that makes nerds drool when they here [sic] it's [sic] name: videogames
- We all know that IPODS have a great deal of greatness.
- A light bulb comes with a switch to turn it off.
- All they had to eat was tin biscuits.
- What if someone discovers a machine to make you love forever? You couldn't have that without electricity!

- The light bulb helps in many different ways.
- This really cool pen could write and use the calculator
- Wagons can have horses pull them while riding in them.
- It can be used for evil purposes such as bombs.
- Thomas Edison was a very smart, experimental man.
- Cars make it possible for people to have space time.
- Without electricity, housework would take all day!
- The computer has easily beat out the dog in the man's best friend race these days.
- The riders are throwing themselves off cliffs and hitting trees. These are happy people.
- The cat will be even more helpful in the future.
- Many school assignments would be close to impossible, or even cancelled if computers were never invented.
- The airplane was invented by the Wright brothers.
- When the astronauts go up into the black space.
- Without these things (electricity) there wouldn't be a AC/DC or Led Zeppelin and that would be torture.
- If you forgot to make your mom a birthday cake, you would need a light bulb to read the recipe
- Back then the only domesticated animals were calvary, poultry and livestock.
- Cars are good because they are the fastest way in and out for the C.I.A.
- The tomato, I believe is a harmless fruit that has been around for hundreds of years.
- When the cavemen were around they probably didn't stress good hygiene, but they did likely emphasize beauty. Cavemen and women used bones from animals as hair rollers or ornaments and used animal fat for gel in their hair.
- If you open your heart to a cat and love it forever, it will eventually love you back.

That last one is my favorite. There's something poetic about it.

Update 1pm: It should have gone without saying that these are hardly representative samples of the students' work but rather the most amusing ones.

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