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## The world of science

### Starting out

1 Read about the inventions from famous novels and choose those that have become a reality.

2 Watch the video and answer the questions.

- 1 Which of the inventions in the video interests you most? Why?
- 2 Which of the inventions in the video do you think will become a reality?
- 3 Of all the inventions in the world, which do you think is the most useful? Why?



Harry threw the cloak around his shoulders... Harry looked down at his feet, but they were gone.  
*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*



Presently I am going to press the lever, and off the machine will go. It will vanish, pass into future time, and disappear.

*The Time Machine*



A faint blue light shot across it, darkening to purple, and presently she could see the image of her son, who lived on the other side of the earth, and he could see her.

*The Machine Stops*



Instead of being printed, the *Earth Chronicle* is every morning spoken to subscribers, who, in interesting conversations with reporters, statesmen, and scientists, learn the news of the day.

*In the Year 2889*



## Understanding ideas ▼

- 1 Look at the pictures and talk about how the way we live has changed over time. Discuss the reasons behind these changes.



- 2 Read the interview and find out what inventions are mentioned.

# The New Age of Invention

**Interviewer:** Good evening, and welcome to *Between the Pages*. This evening, I'll be talking to Dr Richard Fairhurst, whose new book *The New Age of Invention* has just been published. Welcome, Richard!

**Richard:** Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here.

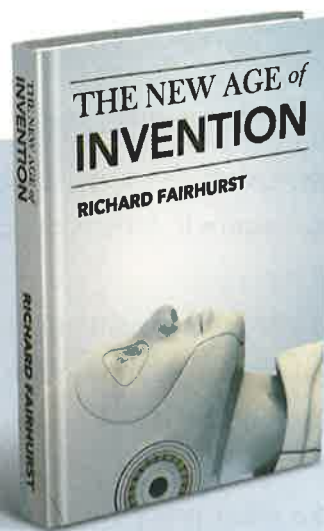
**Interviewer:** I guess you have been asked about the title of your book before. It suggests that the present day is a new age for inventions, but many people might think that the great age of invention is over.



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BETWEEN  
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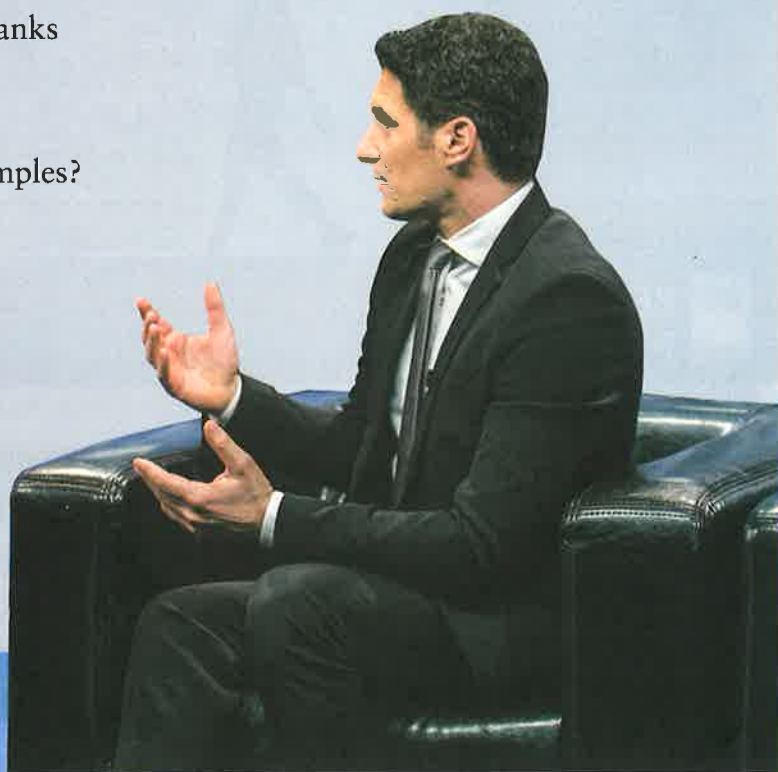
**Richard:** Well, that's an interesting point. There have been golden ages of invention throughout history. Think of the four great inventions in Ancient China: gunpowder, papermaking, printing and the compass. These things changed the world forever. Then there were the great Western inventions: the steam engine, the telephone and the radio. And now, we find ourselves in the great new age of technology.

**Interviewer:** So are most of the new great inventions tech-based?

**Richard:** A lot, yes. For example, advances in virtual reality and wearable tech, as well as the flexible battery, mean we should soon be seeing further developments. In addition, important advances have been made in medicine and environmental science thanks to increasing computer power.

**Interviewer:** Can you give us some examples?

**Richard:** Sure. New inventions like 3D printers have been used to make replacement hearts and bone parts. In terms of the environment, it is now possible to create an intelligent walking house. It is capable of using GPS technology to travel to different places, with computing technology controlling its "legs". What's more, huge advances in solar technology mean it can be eco-friendly, too.



**Interviewer:** Impressive stuff! I've also been told that you're an inventor yourself. Is that correct?

**Richard:** Yes, I am, but I'm only one member of a big team – most inventors now work as part of big international teams.

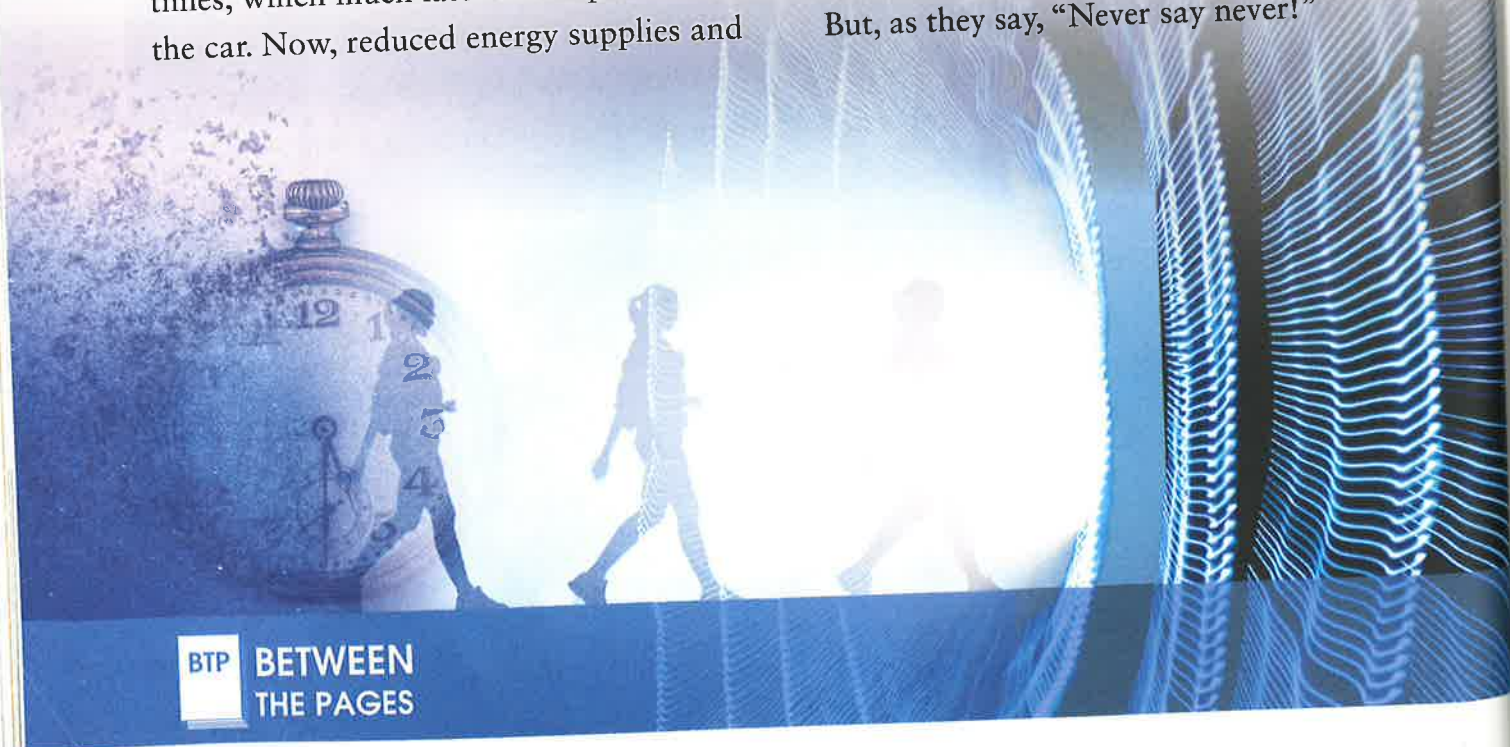
**Interviewer:** I see. So what is it that inspires us to invent things?

**Richard:** Most inventions start with recognising a problem that needs a solution. This was no doubt the reason behind the invention of the wheel in ancient times, which much later developed into the car. Now, reduced energy supplies and

environmental pollution have led to more advances in the technology of new energy vehicles. But what remains important is that we have an incredible desire to think and create, and that's the real spirit of invention.

**Interviewer:** One last question. This is the one everyone really wants to know: will anybody ever invent a time machine?

**Richard:** I think you've been watching too many movies! Nothing like this has been invented yet and I'd say we're a long way from an invention like that at the moment! But, as they say, "Never say never!"



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**3** Choose the sentences that describe Dr Fairhurst's opinions.

- 1 Inventions in Ancient China were better than those in the West.
- 2 A lot of today's great inventions are tech-based.
- 3 Today, most inventors prefer working by themselves.
- 4 The desire to solve problems inspires invention.
- 5 A time machine will definitely be invented in the future.