Inventions

Introduction ~ Superlatize this

Find the opposite pairs of adjectives below and write the superlative of each one in the space provided.

common	_____	pointless	_____
classy	_____	pricey	_____
dazzling	_____	tacky	_____
dull	_____	useful	_____
low-priced	_____	unique	_____

Activity 1 ~ Class Survey

Ask you partner the following questions and feed back to the group. Use superlatives to explain your answers.

1. What's the most useful invention for the world?
2. What invention has changed the world the most?
3. What's the most practical invention for your everyday life?
4. What invention do you wish you had come up with?
5. What is the most amazing feat of engineering?
6. What is the simplest invention that you can think of?
7. What is the most pointless invention in your opinion?
8. What popular invention is the least important to you?

Activity 2 ~ Team Gadget Face-off

In teams, test you knowledge on historical and contemporary inventions.

Who invented the following things?

1. Light bulb
2. Penicillin
3. Telephone

In which countries did these inventions originate?

4. Chess
5. Telephone
6. Pasta

7. Which of these inventions were made in the 20th Century:

a. The wire coat hanger
b. First workable adding machine
c. The minute hand on a clock
d. Scotch Tape
e. Artificial Heart
f. Band-aid

8. Galileo Galilee has two famous inventions to his credit. What are they ?

9) What was invented solely for the use of King Louis XIV of France?

10) In 1760, an Englishman, John Spilsbury invented a popular game. What was it?

Activity 3 ~ Text: Chindogu

Chindōgu (珍道具[?]) is the Japanese art of inventing ingenious everyday gadgets that, on the face of it, seem like an ideal solution to a particular problem. However, chindōgu has a distinctive feature: anyone actually attempting to use one of these inventions would find that it causes so many problems, or such significant social embarrassment, that effectively it has no utility whatsoever. Thus, chindōgu are sometimes described as "unuseless" – that is, they cannot be regarded as 'useless' in an absolute sense, since they do actually solve a problem. However, in practical terms, they cannot positively be called "useful. Anyone can create a Chindogu, as long as they respect these tenants:

1. A Chindogu cannot be for real use
2. A Chindogu must exist
3. Inherent in every Chindogu is the spirit of anarchy
4. Chindogu are tools for everyday life
5. Chindogu are not for sale
6. Humor must not be the sole reason for creating a Chindogu
7. Chindogu is not propaganda
8. Chindogu are never taboo
9. Chindogu cannot be patented
10. Chindogu are without prejudice

Activity 4 ~ Real Examples of Chindogu

You will each be given an image by your teacher. With your partner, come up with a name and the different uses for your Chindogu. Explain them to the group.

Activity 5 ~ The making of…

In partners, create the story of the invention that your teacher will give you.

Example: It was **the hottest** night of the year and I was in **the worst** club in London. The decor was **the oldest** and **the most tasteless** that I had ever seen. I was watching **the worst** dancer imaginable when he suddenly crashed into the mirror on the wall. It fell and smashed into smithereens. Everyone on the dance floor lit their lighters and started picking up the glass. At that moment, the club transformed into **the most beautiful** and dazzling club ever with shards of light reflecting onto every surface, illuminating the room. And I had **the most amazing** idea, broken glass on a hanging ball, spinning! The disco ball was born.

Activity 6 – 30 seconds Non-stop Superlativity

Each inventor will speak for 30 seconds non-stop about their invention using as many superlatives as possible. The winner is the person uses the most superlatives and makes the least mistakes and pauses. You have two minutes to think about your presentation.

Activity 7 ~ French American Center's Top Chindogu

In groups, create your own Chindogu. Each group will go before the panel of judges and present their invention, explaining its "usefulness" and various functions. Make it funny!