

Annie E. Vinton

Invention Convention

April 7th, 2009



Dear Inventor,

Congratulations! In deciding to join the Annie E. Vinton Invention Convention, you have made a decision that may bring you hours of fun and adventure. If you do your best work, your invention might be one of the three selected to go to the CT State Invention Convention on May 2nd. Please read these guidelines carefully. You will need to refer to them as you're creating your invention.

- **1. Find a problem.** As you go through your daily routine, look for things that "bug you." Perhaps the floor is cold when you get out of bed, or maybe the blankets have slipped off your bed. The little things that "bug you" are all possible problems that could lead to an invention. Make a list of as many as you can think of. You will need to refer to this list later. These questions may help you make your list:
 - **What needs improving?**
 - **What do I want to do better?**
 - **What could be done easier? Quicker?**
 - **What would make life easier for me? For others? For others with special needs?**
 - **Where do things usually go wrong?**
 - **How could things be made simpler?**

- **2. Brainstorm solutions.** Write down as many solutions as you can think of for each problem. You will refer to this list of solutions later. For example, you might want to invent different methods for keeping the blankets on your bed all night. After you have lots of solution options, you will be ready to make a decision about which solution you want to work on. At this time ask yourself these questions, and discuss the answers with an adult:
 - **Would this solution solve the problem?**

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- Is this interesting enough to me to spend lots of time finding a solution for it?
 - Is this a problem and solution something that I can do something about?
 - Can I find out some more information about this problem and solution?
- **3. Do a little research.** Now you need to make sure that this idea is invented just by you. You can look on the internet, flip through catalogs, or talk to an adult who knows a lot about it. Once you find a problem and solution you can use, you are ready to start!
 - **4. Fill out the "Intent to Invent" worksheet.** The worksheet is in this packet. Fill it out and *sign it*. It is important to tell us if an electrical outlet will be required. Bring the sheet to Ms. Barrow's Enrichment Basket. Remember, all "Intent to Invent" sheets are due on or before March 20th. Be sure to receive up inventor's log by this time, or download one from the website.
 - **5. Begin your "Inventor's Log."** You will write in the Inventor's Log every time you work on your invention ideas. To start, fill out the front page and then open the booklet to "Invention Ideas." On this page, put your three best ideas for problems and their solutions that you had written on your lists from steps 1 and 2. Put the date first, then the problem, then the idea to solve the problem.
 - **6. "Thinking it over."** Discuss your idea with your parent or teacher and decide if you need to learn more about your topic. Could it be through... Books? Magazines? The Internet? An adult? A visit? Then get started on your learning! This is called research, and it will help you make your solution even better! Write what you learned on the page entitled, "Thinking it Over," or attach your research notes to your Inventor's Log. You might attach photographs you've taken during your research.

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- **7. "Materials and Expenses."** Make a list of everything you need for your invention. This list should go on the page in your Inventor's Log marked "Materials and Expenses." You should try to use materials you can find, but if you *must* spend money you cannot spend more than \$20 on your materials.
- **8. "Steps."** Think about what you need to do to make your invention. Write down the steps as you go on the pages entitled "Steps." Put the date first, the number of the step, and what you did. Make sure your parent or guardian signs each step as you finish it! Every time you write down a step, you need to make a drawing of what your invention looks like at that time. Do this on the "Sketches" page, and write its step number. It is also a great idea to take pictures that you can put on a display board later.
- **9. Learning as you go.** Even though you already learned a lot about this invention before you started, you will learn even more as you work on it. Write the new skills and ideas that you learned in the process on the "Thinking It Over" page. This is important because you will learn something new for almost every step! If you need more room to write please attach a lined sheet of paper, putting the title of the page and the question you are answering.
- **10. Display boards.** When your steps are completed and your inventor's log is finished, it is time to make a display board. These can be purchased from Ms. Barrow or bought from an office supply store. The display board should have the name of the invention, the problem it solves and the description of how it works as well as the inventor's name, grade and school. The display cannot take up more than two feet of table space. The name of the invention should go across the top of the board. One panel should explain "How it works" and another panel explains "Problem it solves." Use pictures or drawings, written descriptions, and some information about the student inventor.
- **11. Completed projects.** As soon as your invention is finished, bring the invention and display board to Ms. Barrow in the Enrichment Room. Projects are due by April

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6th, or sooner. You will be asked to bring your inventions to the all purpose room at the end of the day on Monday, April 6th.

- **12. Practice Presentation.** You and a few other students will explain your project to a judge in a small group. Practice clearly describing your project: what is the problem and how you solved it. You also may be asked to describe how you got your idea, what steps you took in creating the invention, what you learned in the process, what materials were used, or how you did your research. Have an adult pretend to be a judge so you can explain it to them. Don't get nervous about this! You will be such an expert on the invention and will be so excited about how it works that telling about your invention will be fun!
- **Notes on Project Displays:**
 - Exhibits should be ready for viewing and judging by 9:15AM on April 7th.
 - Exhibits should be free-standing so they can be displayed on any table.
 - All titles and names should be clear, large, and neat.
 - Charts and pictures should have a clear explanation.
 - No dangerous chemicals or open flames may be displayed.
 - You must notify in advance if access to an electrical outlet is needed.
 - Contact Ms. Barrow if any special arrangements need to be made.
 - All projects should be taken home on the evening of April 7th, after the awards ceremony.
 - All participants receive a certificate of participation!
 - Selected projects will represent Vinton School at the CT Invention Convention on May 2, 2009.