**Student’s Worksheet 1**

**Inventions and innovations – contrasting points and explanations**

Invention and innovation are important features of society and business. While they are often used to mean the same thing, there are in fact some key distinctions between the two. An invention is about creating something new, which could be a new method, system or object. This can involve researching and brainstorming to identify potential problems or needs and then developing a solution that addresses those needs.In contrast, innovation takes an invention and turns it into something useful, practical or valuable. That is, an invention can lead to innovation, whereas not all inventions are innovative, as they may not find a market or solve a problem effectively.

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* [**Teacher use**] Slips to cut up for organising activity:

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| --- |
| **Innovation** |
| Finding new ways to use or adapt existing products or technology |
| Adding value to something which exists |
| Focused on the concept of ‘how’ |
| Electric cars |
| Touchscreen smartphones |
| Flatscreen TVs |
| **Invention** |
| Creating a completely new idea, concept, method or product |
| Entirely original |
| Focused on the concept of ‘what’ |
| The telephone |
| The car |
| The internet |

**Student’s Worksheet 2**

**Language practice – introducing explanations**

**The sentences below can all be used to explain or justify an opinion. Complete the sentences using words from the box.**

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| --- |
| **illustration point this which reason** |

By **1.** …………….. I mean that it should be seen as a set of tools.

It’s for this **2.** …………………… that every innovation strategy fails if followed too rigidly.

This is an excellent **3.** …………………… of what has been called ‘open innovation’, **4.** ……………. means deliberately expanding your skill domain beyond a particular area of expertise when you’re faced with a really tough problem.

The **5.** ………………. being made was that a relatively straightforward solution was to hand.

**Student’s Worksheet 3**

**Sample Linguaskill Business Reading task**

**This is a full Linguaskill Business Reading gapped-text sentences task on the topic of *Innovation in business*.**

**Read the text. Choose the correct sentence for each gap. You do not need to use three of the sentences.**

**Innovation in business**

*What businesses should do to ensure that they are able to remain relevant and competitive*

One of the best stories about innovation I ever heard came to me from a senior executive at a leading tech firm. His company had won a million-dollar contract to design a sensor that could detect pollutants at very small concentrations underwater.

**1**. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

To tackle it, the firm set up a team of the very best microchip designers, and they started putting their heads together. About 45 minutes into their first working session, the marine biologist assigned to their team walked in with a bag of clams and put the edible sea creatures on the table. Seeing the confused looks of the chip designers, he explained that clams can detect pollutants at just a few parts per million, and when that happens, they open their shells.

**2.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Indeed, they didn’t really need a fancy chip to detect pollutants – just a simple one that could detect when clams open their shells, which is a sign of them trying to filter the pollutants from the water. ‘They saved $999,000 and ate the clams for dinner,’ the executive told me. This is an excellent illustration of what has been called ‘open innovation’, which means deliberately expanding your skill domain beyond a particular area of expertise when you’re faced with a really tough problem.

**3.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Many believe it’s just this kind of unusual collaboration that’s key to innovation in business. Open innovation is only one way to solve a problem, however. It’s important for businesses to recognise that there’s no one ‘true’ path to innovation.

**4.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Yet all too often, these possibilities are ignored by organisational leaders. They lock themselves into one type of strategy and say, ‘This is how we innovate.’ It may work for a while, but eventually they find themselves stuck in a set of solutions that don’t fit the problems they need to solve. Essentially, their organisations become square-peg companies in a round-hole world and lose relevance. We need to start treating innovation like any other area of business.

**5.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This would be like having an array of marketing tactics or several sources of financing, for example, rather than trying to make do with one for every eventuality in the life of a business.

1. By this, I mean that it should be seen as a set of tools, each designed to accomplish specific objectives.
2. The point being made was that a relatively straightforward solution was to hand.
3. For these types of problems, conventional strategies are usually effective.
4. In my example, it involved putting a marine biologist in a room with microchip specialists.
5. It’s for this reason that every innovation strategy fails if followed too rigidly.
6. This was an unusually complex problem with no immediately obvious solution.
7. So, innovation begins by asking how well we can define the problem.
8. It could be said that there are as many ways to approach it as there are issues to be addressed.