

Invent Your Own Time Saver

GOAL: To think creatively in order to invent a new machine that will make work easier or save time.

In places like Burkina Faso, the Multifunctional Platform (MFP) provides electricity for refrigeration and lighting, pounds grains into flour, pumps well water, and even provides energy to cook food. All this helps to save time by making jobs easier than they would be if performed by hand (for instance, when the MFP pounds grain into flour, it saves girls and women from using a pestle and mortar). By saving time, the MFP frees up girls to go to school and frees up women to spend their time and energy on other things, like health and childcare, and doing jobs to make money. If you could invent something to make work easier and save time, what would it be? Follow these steps to find out!

1. Think about a boring, time-consuming, or difficult job that you have to do (or that someone else you know has to do). For instance, shoveling snow. A lot of people like snow, but not a like like shoveling it!
2. Think about the different parts or steps there are to the job. For example, to shovel snow, you need to (1) get the shovel, (2) take the shovel to your driveway, (3) push the shovel into the snow to scoop up a pile of snow, (4) dump the pile of snow beside the driveway, and (5) repeat until the driveway is clear of snow.
3. Brainstorm things that could make the job easier and quicker to complete. Remember, when you're brainstorming, no idea is too crazy. Hmm... would you like snow fairies to swoop down with magical mini-shovels to shovel the driveway for you?
4. Review your list of ideas. Does one stand out more than the others? Does one of them give you an appropriate idea about how to make your job easier? Remember, you get to decide whether the idea needs to be actually doable or make believe.
5. Depending on the job you've chosen and the type of time-saving device you've decided to invent, you can choose to make a model of your machine using things around your house, or you can draw a picture of it and label the various parts, explaining what they do.
6. Once you've finished building or drawing your time-saving invention, you may want to share it with others. Can you publish it in your school newspaper or make a poster to put on your classroom wall? Also, make sure to email it to owl@owlkids.com. You may see it in the pages of OWL Magazine!

