



invent, OKLAHOMA!



Log It!



When beginning the invention process, it's important to keep an Inventor's Log or Journal. Recording your work will help you develop your invention and protect it when completed.

Your log should include everything that is related to your project. The list below includes some of the items that might be recorded in your log. If you think of others, add them to your log, and remember to record your thoughts and ideas every time you work on your project.

JOURNAL PAGE

• Ideas for inventions

• Problems

• Possible solutions

• Plans

1. What am I going to invent?

2. What steps will I need to take?

3. What materials will I need?

4. What will the materials cost?

• 5. What problems might occur?

6. How will I present my project?

• Resources

1. Books

2. Other references

3. People

• Drawings of possible solutions

• Results of interviews

• Results of surveys

• Can you think of others?

Brainstorm

Brainstorming is a process of creative thinking used by an individual or by a group of people to generate numerous ideas. Brainstorming is the most important element in each of the stages of inventive thinking.

Coaching Tips

One of the best ways to collect ideas for developing an invention is to take a survey. Make sure to survey a variety of people of all different ages and occupations. The more people you talk to, the more ideas you will get.

1. What does not work as well as you would like it to work?
2. What task(s) would you like to see made easier?
3. What problem(s) would you like to see solved?
4. If you could invent something to make your life easier, what would you invent?
5. What is the most annoying problem:
 - at home?
 - at school?
 - at work?
 - at the airport?
 - on the road?
 - at the supermarket?
 - at the bank?
 - at the shopping center?
 - other





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Protecting Your Intellectual Property

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is one of the most unusual branches of the U.S. government. The staff of about 4,000 is trained in all branches of science and examines every application to determine whether a patent may be granted.

This task involves exhaustive research. Not only must the examiners search U.S. and foreign patents to find if a similar patent has been issued, but they must study scientific books and publications to discover whether the idea has ever been described. Previous publication, invention or use prevents a patent from being issued. In addition to issuing patents, since 1870 the Patent and Trademark Office has been in charge of registering trademarks, the business community's most valuable asset. More than 1,600,000 trademarks have been issued.

In its earlier days, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office had the responsibility of administering copyright matters, collecting and publishing agricultural information; and even collecting meteorological data. For some years, it was the custodian not only of the famous old Patent Office models—the delight of visitors to Washington for many years—but of the Declaration of Independence and other historical documents and relics. By publishing and distributing copies of every U.S. patent, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office has made available to the public the world's greatest scientific and mechanical library.

Patents in Brief

The patent application process can be complex and the Patent and Trademark Office cannot assist in the preparation of application papers. The Office strongly advises prospective applicants to engage the services of a patent attorney or agent. Although the USPTO cannot recommend any particular attorney or agent and does not control their fees, the Office maintains a roster of approximately 31,000 patent attorneys and agents registered to practice before the Office. This roster is available for inspection at Patent and Trademark Depository Libraries and can be accessed on the web at www.uspto.gov.

How would you describe your invention?

Generate fifteen keywords that describe your idea. Search for these words on the U.S. Patent website. Try some different combinations. What patents do you find? Are any similar to your invention? List them below:

Patent Search Tips

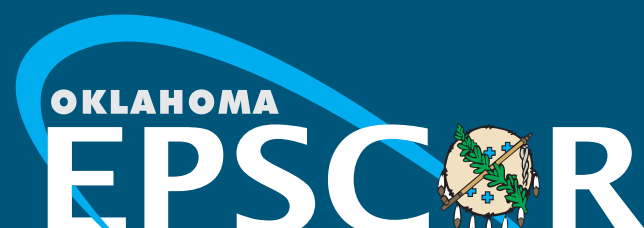
When you arrive at the search page you will see that on the left, you can enter two different search words. On the right, there are pull-down menus that show what part of the patent text you would like to search. Unless you are searching for a very specific term, select "Title" from both pull-down menus. Type in your search words, then click "search." Example: If you are inventing a raincoat to be worn by dogs, in Term 1 you might type "dogs," and in Term 2 you might type "coat." To find different kinds of results, change the settings.

Print Resources

- Carrow, Robert S. *Put a Fan In Your Hat: Inventions, Contraptions, and Gadgets Kids Can Build*. New York: Learning Triangle Press, 1997.
- Erlbach, Arlene. *The Kids' Invention Book*. New York: Lerner Publications, 1997.
- Hauser, Jill Frankel. *Gizmos & Gadgets: Creating Science Contraptions That Work & Knowing Why*. New York: Williamson Publishers, 1999.
- Murphy, Jim. *Weird and Wacky Inventions*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1978.
- St. George, Judith, and David Small. *So You Want to Be an Inventor?* New York: Penguin Putnam, 2002.
- Thimmesh, Catherine. *Girls Think of Everything—Stories of Ingenious Inventions by Women*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000.
- Tomecek, Stephen M. *What a Great Idea! Inventions That Changed the World*. New York: Scholastic, 2003.

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$E=mc^2$