

GREAT INVENTIONS



THE SHOEMAKER AND THE SHOE



It may be hard to believe, but not everyone in the world wears shoes. They have to go barefoot even when walking across dangerous or unpaved areas. I tried to imagine what I would do if I had to go barefoot. I don't know if I would be able to do it. That's why I decided to write the essay the teacher assigned about shoemakers, those skilled people whose job it is to make and repair footwear.



The shoemaker's craft began thousands of years ago when cavemen began to cover the soles of their feet with furs and skins to protect them from the ground where they walked and weather conditions.

Unfortunately, none of these original shoes have been discovered. The oldest shoe in the world was found in Armenia, Europe. It was made of animal skin and dates back more than 5000 years. It is believed that the Olmec civilization in Mexico used shoes in their daily lives more than 5000 years ago. This is known because of small drawings found showing figures or characters wearing a kind of footwear.



The shoemaker's importance grew because it helped people not having to walk barefoot. It soon became an indispensable profession.



Soon large companies were created where several shoemakers gathered to work together to make their own brand or stamp of shoes. Thanks to the industrial revolution, shoemakers began using machines that allowed them to manufacture a greater number of shoes in less time. This allowed them to earn more money faster. Even with machines, it takes a lot of manual labor and skill because there are some parts that the machines are not able to do.

The quality of the shoe depends on the type of leather used, the dyes used, and the finishes used. The design of the shoe is also important. There are large companies dedicated exclusively to designing shoes: high heels, low heels, square toe, pointed toe, round toe, square toe, and triangular toe. Some have buckles, ties, or laces. All these designs change over time because fashion trends are always changing.



Shoemakers can be divided into two main groups: the cobblers who patch or repair shoes that have broken or deteriorated, and the shoemakers who construct the shoe.



Both groups are important. The cobbler can fix the shoes we have so we don't have to buy new ones. The shoemaker can create new shoes.



One of the most famous shoemakers in the world of fashion is Manolo Blahnik, a Spanish fashion designer. Although he started out studying law, he ended up studying art. That artistic urge led him to open his first shoe store in 1973, and he has not stopped working yet.



His shoes are worn by some of the most famous actresses and models in the world. You might be surprised to know that he is one of the richest shoemakers in the world.

Other shoemakers of great fame are those who create special shoes or boots for different sports or disciplines. For example, some shoemakers manufacture riding boots, which are important when riding a horse. These boots have to protect your legs when you are on the horse, and they have to be comfortable enough to ride easily.



An interesting fact, the most expensive shoe in the world cost around three million American dollars and was decorated with thousands of precious stones.

What about you? How many pairs of shoes do you have? What are your favorite shoes? Why? Would you buy shoes that cost millions of dollars?



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Answer the questions.

1. Why are shoemakers important?

- a. Thanks to them we have shoemakers.
- b. Thanks to them we don't have to wear shoes.
- c. Thanks to them we have shoe stores.
- d. Thanks to them we can wear shoes.



2. What is the synonym for repair?

- a. mend
- b. fix
- c. patch up
- d. All the answers are correct.

3. What were the shoemaker's guilds for?

- a. to get organized
- b. to fix shoes
- c. to examine the shoemakers
- d. It does not say in the story.



4. Why are machines work faster than people?

- a. They are automated.
- b. They don't waste time talking to other people.
- c. They are smarter than the other machines.
- d. Machines are slower than people.

5. Have you ever taken shoes to the shoemaker to fix them? Why?

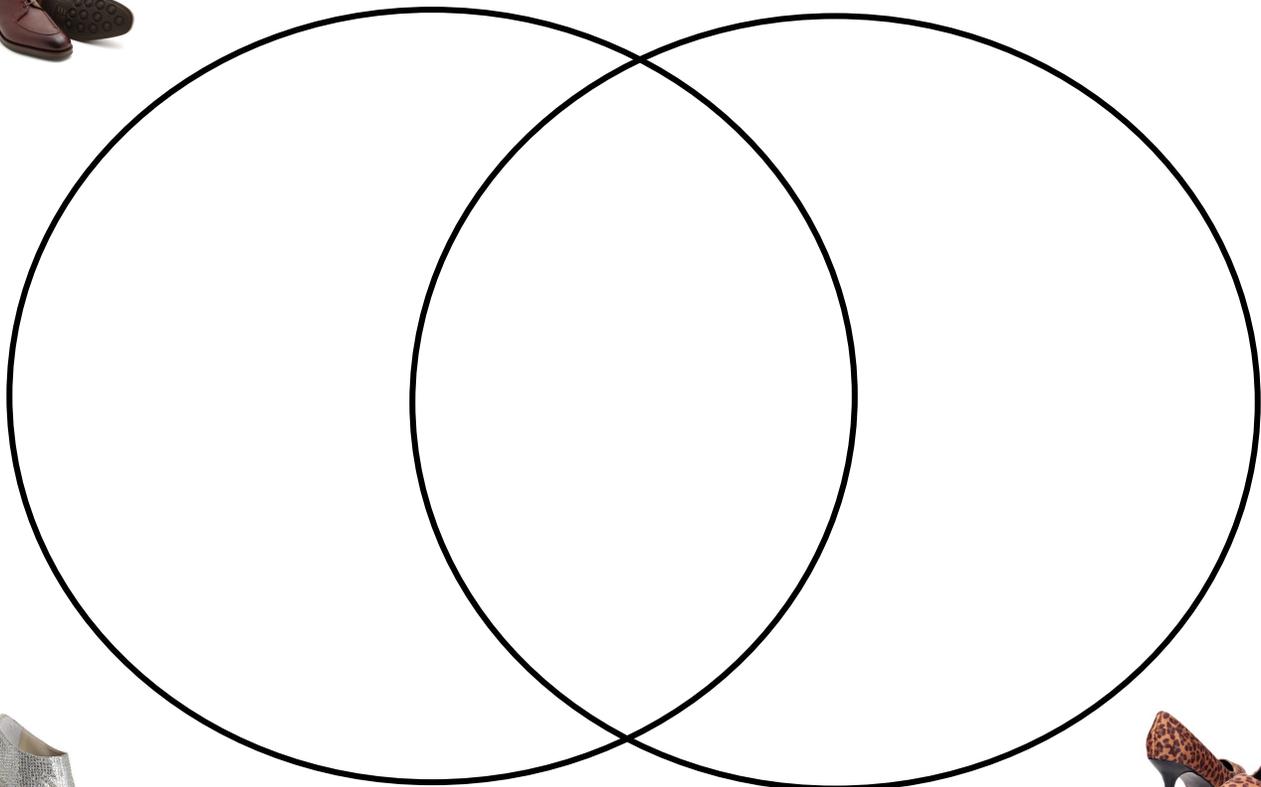
Name _____

Date _____

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6. What do you think would happen if there were no shoemakers? Write 3 things.

7. Compare the profession of a cobbler with a creative shoemaker. Use the Venn diagram to show your ideas.



8. Who is Manolo Blahnik? Why is he mentioned in the text?

Name _____

Date _____

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9. After reading the story, it can be deduced that _____.

- a. shoemakers earn a lot of money
- b. shoemakers are recognized worldwide
- c. shoemakers manufacture and repair shoes
- d. All the answers are correct.



10. Think about inventing your own shoes. Consider the design and type of material. Describe the colors and materials used. Draw them.

Designer Shoes