**Inspiration Is Overrated!** Resource 1.3

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| Here’s something that isn’t on everyone’s shopping list: a coffee mug that irons clothes. It’s just one of a multitude of inventions that most of us have never heard of. Each of those forgotten contraptions was probably someone’s bright idea—a flash of inspiration experienced while walking in the woods, an idea guaranteed to change the world. So what went wrong?  Some inventions are so much a part of everyday life we forget that they started off as someone’s bright idea. Others are long forgotten or remembered only as being colossal duds. For every invention that actually makes it to production, there are thousands that don’t. The line between the bizarre and the ingenious is often a very thin one. History is filled with examples of new inventions that supporters thought would be transformational but turned out to be just minor fads.  Experts say that the odds are stacked astronomically against inventors, and that no amount of marketing can turn a situation around. The number of failed inventions reinforces how hard it is for inventors to make the leap from idea to marketable product.  Let’s look at some figures. According to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, there are about 1.5 million products that have patents. Perhaps 3,000 of those make money. A noted business magazine states that only one in 5,000 inventions succeeds in the marketplace. This estimate is ten times lower than the one from the Trademark Office!  What explains the high rate of failure? Is there something the inventors failed to see? The answer is yes: they failed to see how much work was involved in getting a product off the ground. Someone once said that genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration. That could be true for invention, too.  Developing something new that actually works—and that people want—can take years. After an inventor has a brilliant idea, the hard part begins. First, a working model must be developed and tested. If the results are poor or inconsistent, the project may have to be rethought—or even scrapped. It’s no easy thing for an inventor to admit defeat and start over.  When a working model is finally developed, the inventor must conduct what is called a “search for prior art.” That means checking to make sure that there isn’t a similar or even identical invention around. Sometimes it seems like all the good ideas have been taken!  When everything is ready to go, the inventor has to apply for a patent—a legal right to ownership of the invention. It’s like a contract, and every single word has legal consequences. Many inventors hire patent lawyers to make sure their interests are protected.  It’s a common mistake to think that you can sell an idea. You can’t. You can only sell an invention. Turning an idea into a viable invention takes work—time-consuming, tedious, and sometimes frustrating!  If invention is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration, I’m putting my money on the ninety-nine percent. | *Notes* |

**A Word Network** is a collection of words related to a topic. As you read the selections in this unit, identify interesting words related to the idea of invention and add them to your Word Network. For example, you might begin by adding words from the Launch Text, such as contraption, ingenious, and transformational. Continue to add words as you complete this unit

**Summary**

Write a summary of “Inspiration Is Overrated!” A summary is a concise, complete, and accurate overview of a text. It should not include a statement of your opinion or an analysis.

**Quick Write**

Consider class discussions, presentations, the video, and the Launch Text as you think about the prompt.

**PROMPT: What situations might encourage people to invent?**

Review your QuickWrite and summarize your point of view in one sentence to record in your Evidence Log. Then, record evidence from “Inspiration Is Overrated!” that supports your point of view. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| **Connection to Prompt** | **Text Evidence/Details** | **Additional Notes/Ideas** |
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| **How does this text change or add to my thinking?** |