

Objective To improve your reading and listening skills.

Think about it Have you got any Rollerblades? When was the last time you used some Chapstick? Why? Have you ever had to blow into a Breathalyzer? Where were you at the time? Do you ever use Tupperware? What for? Have you got anything with Velcro on it? What? When was the last time you threw a Frisbee? Where were you?

Exams This reading and listening activity will help prepare you for English exams such as KET and TOEFL.

TRACK 9: ENGLISHMEN



Brand names that we use as ordinary words!

Aspirin, Kleenex, Escalator, Tupperware, Velcro, Bubble Wrap... they're all brand names that we often use as ordinary words. But what are their origins?



Breathalyzer

The **Breathalyzer** was invented by Indiana University professor

Rolla Harger in 1931. It was originally called the Drunk-O-Meter.

Typical sentence: "The police officer asked her to blow into the Breathalyzer."



Rollerblades

Two hockey player brothers designed Rollerblade inline skates

from a pair of old roller-skates in 1979. Until the mid-80s, they were the only brand available.

Typical sentence: "We went Rollerblading at the weekend."



Chapstick

This brand name of lip balm was originally produced by

pharmaceutical giant Pfizer. **Typical sentence:** "I put some Chapstick on because my lips were dry."



Tupperware

Tupperware got its name from creator Earle Silas Tupper. It was introduced to the

public in 1948.

Typical sentence: "I take my lunch to work in Tupperware."

Velcro



George de Mastreal invented **Velcro** after noticing how plants **stuck**

to his dog's **fur** after a walk in the country. These days, Velcro is used on a whole range of products including shoes and bags.

Typical sentence: "His shoes had Velcro instead of laces."



Post-It

Dr Spencer Silver invented this **adhesive** in 1968 and scientist Art

Fry thought up a practical use for it in 1974. **Post-its** were initially available for sale under the name Press 'N Peel.

Typical sentence: "She wrote the message on a Post-it."



Kleenex

This brand of **tissue** was introduced into the market in 1924 and

is a registered trademark of Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc.

Typical sentence: "Have you got any Kleenex? I need to blow my nose."



Frisbee

What would a day out at the beach be like without a Frisbee? Walter

Morrison came up with the idea for this flying disc in 1937.

Typical sentence: "She threw the Frisbee to him."

How many of these brand names exist in your country? *

VIDEO

YouTube

Watch this video on brand names. Search YouTube for "25 Common Words That You Didn't Realize Are Actually Brand Names".

TRADEMARKS

There are three ways of referring to trademarks in text: by giving them a capital letter, by making them all capitals or by adding the ® symbol. For example:

- Canon cameras
- CANON cameras
- Canon® cameras

Officially, you should also only use a trademark as an adjective, not as a noun or verb. For example, you should say, "I had a Budweiser beer" (NOT, "I had a Budweiser"). The ® symbol is used for marks that have been registered with an official patent office.



GLOSSARY

a Breathalyzer ¹¹ a machine that can tell you how much alcohol you've drunk

inline skates ¹¹ a type of shoe with a line of four or five wheels. Also called Rollerblades

roller-skates ¹¹ shoes with four small wheels on the bottom

lip balm ¹¹ a cream that you put on your lips

lips ¹¹ the part of your mouth you use for kissing

Tupperware ¹¹ a range of plastic containers with tight-fitting lids (tops) for storing food

Velcro ¹¹ a material with two strips of nylon fabric which you press together to close things such as pockets and bags

to stick to ^{exp} if A "sticks to" B, A becomes attached to B and it's hard to take it off

fur ¹¹ the hair on an animal's body

laces ¹¹ the pieces of string on your shoes that you use to tie them so they don't fall off

an adhesive ¹¹ a substance such as glue which is used to stick (join) things together

Post-it ¹¹ a piece of paper with an adhesive strip on one side. You can write notes on it

a tissue ¹¹ a piece of thin soft paper that you use to blow or clean your nose

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1 Pre-reading

Look over the list of brand names below. Which ones are used as ordinary words in your country? Hoover, Escalator, Aspirin, Bubble Wrap, Jet Ski, Jacuzzi, Bikini, Yo-Yo, Trampoline, Boogie Board, Hi-Liter, Thermos, Blu-Tack, Tippex, Dental Floss, Breathalyzer, Rollerblades, Chapstick, Tupperware, Velcro, Post-It, Kleenex, Frisbee

2 Reading I

Read or listen to the article about brand names. Which information is the most surprising or interesting?

3 Reading II

Read the article again. Then, answer the questions.

1. Who invented the Breathalyzer?
2. When were Rollerblades invented?
3. When was Tupperware introduced to the market?
4. What animal helped George de Mastreal invent Velcro?
5. When was Kleenex introduced to the market?
6. Who invented the Frisbee?