

1 A woman invented the fire escape

In fact, the first fire escape was invented by a man named Daniel Maseres in 1784. By the 1870s many buildings had iron fire escapes on their exteriors. It's true that a woman named Anna Connelly patented a type of fire escape in 1887. Good for her but many men also patented new designs of fire escape in the 19th century.

[History of fire escapes](#)

2 A woman invented the lifeboat (liferaft)

It's claimed that a woman named Maria Beasley invented the liferaft in 1882. It's debatable which man first invented the lifeboat. As so often happens with new inventions several men were working on the same idea around the same time. Lionel Lukin patented an unsinkable boat in 1785. The first purpose-built lifeboat was built in South Shields, England in 1789 by Henry Greathead.

[History of lifeboats](#)

3 A woman invented the circular saw

It's claimed that a woman named Tabitha Babbitt invented the circular saw in 1813. In fact, circular saws were used in the late 18th century. It's not certain who first thought of the idea but a patent for a circular saw was made by a man named Samuel Miller in 1777.

[History of circular saws](#)

4 A woman invented the mechanical street sweeper

In fact, Joseph Whitworth invented the mechanical street sweeper in 1842. A woman named Florence Parpart patented a new version of the street sweeper in 1900. It was a useful innovation but a man thought of the basic idea.

[Whitworth Society](#)

5 A woman invented the medical syringe

In fact, two men, a Scot named Alexander Wood and a Frenchman named Charles Gabriel Pravaz independently invented the hypodermic syringe in 1853. At first, syringes were of metal but from 1866 they had glass barrels so the doctor could see how much he was injecting. A woman named Letitia Geer invented a type of syringe that could be used with one hand in 1899. It was a useful innovation, no doubt but again the basic idea was invented by men.

[History of syringes](#)

6 A woman invented the dishwasher

This is partly true. A man named Joel Houghton invented the first dishwasher in 1850. However, it was not a commercial success. A Frenchman named Eugene Daquin invented another version in 1885. A review in Scientific American said that it was 'no danger whatsoever to man or dish'. However, the first commercially successful dishwasher was invented by Josephine Cochrane in 1886. However, a woman

named Josephine Cochrane invented the first successful dishwasher in 1886.

[History of the Dishwasher](#)

7 A woman invented the ironing board

A man named John B Porter invented a portable ironing board in 1875. A woman named Sarah Boone invented a better version in 1892.

[History of ironing boards](#)

8 A woman invented the paper bag making machine

In 1852 a man named Francis Rolle invented a machine for making paper bags. (Useful for carrying groceries). In 1871 Margaret Knight invented the machine for making paper bags with flat bottoms. An improvement certainly but a man invented the first machine for making paper bags.

[Invention of the Paper Bag](#)

9 A woman invented globes

The earliest known globe was made by a man named Martin Behaim in 1492. A woman named Ellen Fitz patented a type of globe mount in 1875. Good for her, but she certainly didn't invent globes.

[Globemakers](#)

10 A woman invented alphabet blocks

It is true that in 1882 a woman named Adeline Whitney patented alphabet blocks. But the basic idea was much older. In 1693 the philosopher John Locke said that 'dice and playthings' with letters on them would help children to learn the alphabet.

[Car heater invented](#)

11 A woman invented windscreen (or windshield) wipers

This is debatable. Mary Anderson patented such a device in November 1903. However, a man named

Robert A Douglass patented a locomotive-cab-window cleaner in March 1903. A man named J. H. Apjohn also patented a device to wipe windshields in October 1903.

[Windscreen wipers](#)

12 A woman invented the electric refrigerator

No one man invented the refrigerator. It was developed by many men in the 19th century and early 20th century. It's claimed that a woman named Florence Parpart invented the modern electric refrigerator in 1914. In fact, Fred W Wolfe invented the first successful refrigerator for use in the home in 1913.

[Domestic refrigerator](#)

13 A woman invented the electric water heater

The electric water heater was invented in 1889 by a man named Edwin Ruud. A woman named Ida Forbes patented a kind of electric water heater in

1917. It was a useful innovation, not an invention but a man first thought of the idea.

[Invention of the electric water heater](#)

14 A woman invented central heating

Central heating has been around since Ancient Times. It's sometimes claimed that a woman invented gas central heating but that is debatable. In 1919 a woman named Alice Parker patented a central heating system fueled by gas rather than coal. However, her design was never built because it was unsafe. To be fair, she was the first person to propose using gas but her design was impractical. The first practical gas central heating boiler was invented by the Chaffoteaux brothers in France in 1925.

[History of central heating](#)

15 A woman invented the bulletproof vest

It is true that a woman named Stephanie Kwolek invented Kevlar, the material that modern bulletproof vests are made of, in 1965. But she did not invent the bulletproof vest. It's debatable who invented it.

People have worn armour to stop blades for thousands of years. The idea of armour to stop a bullet was an obvious idea. Many people say that the first practical bulletproof vest was invented by a man named Casimir Zeglen in 1893.

[A biography of Zeglen](#)