

Reading Passage:

Most locks tend to operate in one of three basic ways; according to the warded principle, the lever principle, or the pin-tumbler principle.

In the warded principle there are a series of obstacles, called wards, which the key must pass for the lock to be opened. This mechanism was invented by the ancient Romans and, although it may be seen in use today, it was the most common up until the middle of the nineteenth century.

The lever lock was invented at the end of the eighteenth century. This principle uses a lever or levers which must be raised to the correct height before the lock can open. The function of the key is as the only instrument which can raise the levers as required.

The most recently-invented type of lock, the pin-tumbler, was developed by Linus Yale, Jr. in 1865. It was based on an idea introduced by the ancient Egyptians and has proved to be the most secure lock ever invented.

