

UNIT 1 – TECHNOLOGY HEROES

Reading 1

Skills:

- Main idea and details
- Make inferences
- Cause and effect

Getting started: Do you know people who have been vital in the development of technology?

HEDY LAMARR

The Hollywood film star behind the invention of Wi-fi and mobile phones.



The Austrian actress Hedy Lamarr was born in Vienna in 1914, as Hedwig Kiesler. She was a very clever girl, always interested in how things worked - she loved taking her music boxes to pieces and putting them together again. However, she also loved acting, so she left school early without qualifications and started drama school.

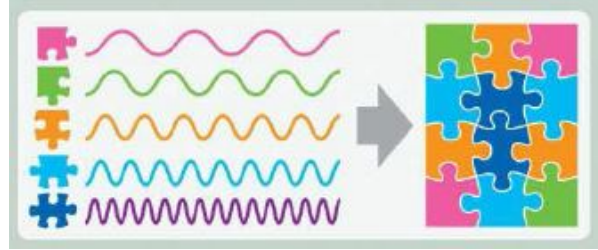
Hedy the film star

Hedwig first worked in Czechoslovakian films, and she quickly became a successful actress, often called 'the most beautiful woman in the world'. She married in 1933, but her husband didn't want her to work, and kept her locked in the house.

Finally, in 1937, she ran away to Paris. There she met an American film producer, and under her new name, Hedy Lamarr, she was soon a famous Hollywood actress. Hedy's problem was that she soon got bored with film roles that were just about being beautiful. She didn't enjoy Hollywood parties, and liked to spend her free time inventing things.

Wartime work

At the beginning of World War II, Lamarr and composer George Antheil developed a radio system using spectrum technology for Allied torpedoes in order to make it difficult for the enemy to locate them. This system was patented in 1942. She also helped improve airplane aerodynamics for Howard Hughes Aircraft Company during the war. Although the US Army did not adopt Lamarr's invention until 1957, nowadays various spread-spectrum techniques are incorporated into Bluetooth technology and are similar to methods used in some versions of Wi-Fi. To recognize the value of her work, she was posthumously inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 2014.



* Adapted from Headway Elementary. Oxford University Press.

Answer the following questions:

1. Why is Hedy Lamarr considered a prominent figure?
 - a. Because of her amazing Hollywood career.
 - b. Due to her participation in the war as a soldier.
 - c. She became the greatest female inventor of all times.
 - d. She had a key role in the development of modern technologies.
2. How is Hedy described in the first paragraph?
 - a. She hated acting.
 - b. She was curious.
 - c. She was a great student.
 - d. She was a good musician.
3. What made her escape to Paris?
 - a. The war
 - b. She wanted to go to school.
 - c. A husband who didn't let her be free.
 - d. Her desire to work in a technology company.
4. True or false: Hedy's ideas were implemented immediately.
5. Organize the following events in chronological order based on the information in paragraph 4:
 - a. Her invention was officially registered.
 - b. After her death, she was honored and received the recognition she deserved.
 - c. Lamarr created a system to make torpedoes undetected.
 - d. The military didn't implement her creation until almost two decades later.
 - e. She worked for an aviation enterprise.

What do you think?

Would you like to be recognized as a famous celebrity or as an important scientist?