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Computer mouse turns 40

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0812/081211-computer_mouse.html

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THE ARTICLE

The computer mouse celebrated its 40th anniversary on December the 8th. It was in 1968 that computer visionary Douglas Engelbart showed off his new invention to an audience of 1,000 at a technology conference in California. They witnessed the very first public demonstration of the personal computer. Engelbart's revolutionary 'pointing device' was made of wood and had two wheels built into the bottom. It was originally designed to highlight text on a written document. Engelbart wowed onlookers by demonstrating how text could be selected, copied and pasted. Engelbart said he always wondered why the term 'mouse' never changed into a more technical word after it became a commercial success.

Today computer mice or mouses (both are widely accepted as plurals) are absolutely everywhere. The only real changes to their technology in the past four decades are the transition to laser mice, the right-click button, and the scroll wheel. It looks like mice are here to stay, despite new innovations such as touch screens. Experts say the mouse is still difficult to beat in terms of ease of use and functionality. On the mouse's 40th birthday, computer-device maker Logitech announced it had produced its one-billionth mouse. The Swiss company churns out nearly 8 million mice a month. The pioneer, Douglas Engelbart, has never received a penny for his world-changing invention. His patent ran out before computer companies started mass-producing mice.

WARM-UPS

1. COMPUTER MOUSE: Walk around the class and talk to other students about the computer mouse. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

mouse / anniversaries / visionaries / inventions / conferences / copy and paste / text / plurals / right-click button / scroll wheel / touch screens / functionality / pennies

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. NEW WORDS: You and your partner(s) are in charge of renaming the computer and its parts. Complete the table below. Share what you wrote with other students. Decide as a class which are the official new names for the computer parts.

Part	New name	Why
Computer		
Mouse		
Keyboard		
Memory		
Flash drive		

4. EASE OF USE: Students A **strongly** believe the mouse is better than the touch screen; Students B **strongly** believe the touch screen is better than the mouse. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. 40 YEARS AGO...: The things below weren't around 40 years ago. Talk about how important they are with your partner(s). Rate them: **10** = "I'd die without this," **1** = I can easily live without this. Change partners and discuss what you talked about.

_____ e-mail

_____ Bluetooth

_____ Nike

_____ Starbucks

_____ digital music players

_____ MTV

_____ Facebook

_____ convenience stores

6. VISIONARY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'visionary'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

a.	The computer mouse just celebrated its 40th birthday.	T / F
b.	Just a handful of people saw the first mouse at a California conference.	T / F
c.	The inventor initially designed the mouse to play computer games.	T / F
d.	The mouse's inventor is surprised people stuck with the word 'mouse'.	T / F
e.	The plural 'mouses' is grammatically incorrect.	T / F
f.	There have been three major changes to the mouse in its history.	T / F
g.	A computer-device maker recently churned out its billionth mouse.	T / F
h.	The mouse's inventor made a fortune from his creation.	T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

1.	celebrated		a.	saw
2	audience		b.	makes
3.	witnessed		c.	finished
4.	wowed		d.	thought about
5.	wondered		e.	commemorated
6.	absolutely		f.	changes
7.	transition		g.	amazed
8.	innovations		h.	crowd
9.	churns out		i.	
10.	ran out		j.	completely

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one. combination is possible):

1.	The computer mouse celebrated		a.	plurals
2	Engelbart showed		b.	ease of use
3.	It was originally designed to		c.	never changed
4.	Engelbart wowed		d.	a penny
5.	wondered why the term 'mouse'		e.	producing mice
6.	both are widely accepted as		f.	its 40th anniversary
7.	It looks like mice are		g.	off his new invention
8.	difficult to beat in terms of		h.	here to stay
9.	Engelbart has never received		i.	onlookers
10.	computer companies started mass-		j.	highlight text

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The computer mouse _____ its 40th anniversary on December the 8th. It was in 1968 that computer visionary Douglas Engelbart _____ off his new invention to an audience of 1,000 at a technology conference in California. They witnessed the very first _____ demonstration of the personal computer. Engelbart's revolutionary 'pointing _____' was made of wood and had two wheels built into the bottom. It was originally designed to highlight text on a written _____. Engelbart wowed onlookers by demonstrating how _____ could be selected, copied and pasted. Engelbart said he always _____ why the term 'mouse' never changed into a more technical word after it became a commercial _____.

public

document

celebrated

wondered

showed

device

success

text

Today computer mice or mouses (both are _____ accepted as plurals) are absolutely everywhere. The only real changes to their technology in the past four _____ are the transition to laser mice, the right-click button, and the scroll wheel. It _____ like mice are here to stay, despite new innovations such as touch screens. Experts say the mouse is still difficult to _____ in terms of ease of use and functionality. On the mouse's 40th birthday, computer-_____ maker Logitech announced it had produced its one-billionth mouse. The Swiss company _____ out nearly 8 million mice a month. The pioneer, Douglas Engelbart, has never received a _____ for his world-changing invention. His patent ran out before computer companies started _____ -producing mice.

penny

beat

decades

churns

widely

mass

device

looks

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

The computer mouse _____ anniversary on December the 8th. It was in 1968 that computer visionary Douglas Engelbart showed off his new invention _____ 1,000 at a technology conference in California. They witnessed the very first public demonstration of the personal computer. Engelbart's revolutionary 'pointing device' was made of wood and had two _____ bottom. It was originally designed to highlight text on a written document. Engelbart _____ demonstrating how text could be selected, copied and pasted. Engelbart said he always wondered why the term 'mouse' never changed into a more technical _____ a commercial success.

Today computer mice or mouses (both _____ plurals) are absolutely everywhere. The only real changes to their technology _____ decades are the transition to laser mice, the right-click button, and the scroll wheel. It looks like mice _____, despite new innovations such as touch screens. Experts say the mouse is still difficult to beat in _____ and functionality. On the mouse's 40th birthday, computer-device maker Logitech announced it had produced _____ mouse. The Swiss company churns out nearly 8 million mice a month. The pioneer, Douglas Engelbart, has never _____ his world-changing invention. His patent ran out before computer companies started mass-producing mice.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms … for the words **'computer'** and **'mouse'**.

computer	mouse

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning…?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

• 40	• both
• 1,000	• four
• two	• stay
• first	• maker
• wowed	• 8 million
• why	• penny

STUDENT COMPUTER SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about computers in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

COMPUTER MOUSE DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

a) What did you think when you read the headline?

b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'mouse'?

c) What do you think of your mouse?

d) Do you think 'mouse' is a good word for the mouse?

e) What other computer visionaries do you know of?

f) What do you use your mouse for?

g) When was the last time you were wowed by computer technology?

h) Do you think we simply get used to amazing new technological changes and so are not wowed any more?

i) What have you always wondered about computers?

j) What word would you choose to replace 'mouse'?

COMPUTER MOUSE DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

a) Did you like reading this article?

b) Do you prefer the plural 'mouses' or 'mice'?

c) What new functions would you like to see on a mouse?

d) How important are the right-click button and the scroll wheel to you?

e) Do you think touchpads, track wheels, touch screens and other innovations are better than the mouse?

f) Are you surprised just one company has made a billion mice/mouses?

g) How do you think Douglas Engelbart feels about not receiving any money from his invention?

h) What other recent world-changing inventions improve your life?

i) Is there anything about the mouse you don't like?

j) What questions would you like to ask Douglas Engelbart?

LANGUAGE

The computer mouse celebrated its 40th anniversary on December the 8th. It was in 1968 that computer (1) _____ Douglas Engelbart showed off his new invention to an audience (2) _____ 1,000 at a technology conference in California. They witnessed the (3) _____ first public demonstration of the personal computer. Engelbart's revolutionary 'pointing device' was made of wood and had two wheels (4) _____ into the bottom. It was originally designed to highlight text on a written document. Engelbart wowed onlookers (5) _____ demonstrating how text could be selected, copied and pasted. Engelbart said he always wondered why the term 'mouse' never changed into a more technical word after it became a (6) _____ success.

Today computer mice or mouses (both are (7) _____ accepted as plurals) are absolutely everywhere. The only real changes to their technology in the (8) _____ four decades are the transition to laser mice, the right-click button, and the scroll wheel. It looks like mice are here to stay, (9) _____ new innovations such as touch screens. Experts say the mouse is still difficult to beat in terms of (10) _____ of use and functionality. On the mouse's 40th birthday, computer-device maker Logitech announced it had produced its one-(11) _____ mouse. The Swiss company churns out nearly 8 million mice a month. The pioneer, Douglas Engelbart, has never received a penny for his world-changing invention. His patent ran (12) _____ before computer companies started mass-producing mice.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

1.	(a)	visionary	(b)	vision	(c)	envision	(d)	visions
2.	(a)	to	(b)	for	(c)	of	(d)	at
3.	(a)	really	(b)	too	(c)	just	(d)	very
4.	(a)	building	(b)	built	(c)	builder	(d)	build
5.	(a)	to	(b)	so	(c)	at	(d)	by
6.	(a)	commercials	(b)	commerce	(c)	commercial	(d)	commercialise
7.	(a)	width	(b)	widely	(c)	widen	(d)	widest
8.	(a)	past	(b)	parsed	(c)	passed	(d)	psst
9.	(a)	despite	(b)	spite	(c)	respite	(d)	in spite
10.	(a)	easily	(b)	easiest	(c)	ease	(d)	eases
11.	(a)	bullion	(b)	billions	(c)	billionaire	(d)	billionth
12.	(a)	in	(b)	out	(c)	off	(d)	over

WRITING:

Write about **the computer mouse** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

_____

_____

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HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about the history and development of the computer mouse. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. COMPUTER PARTS: Make a poster about the different parts of your computer. Include a photo of it. Explain your thoughts about the different parts. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. NOT A PENNY: Write a magazine article about a person who invented something that is widely used in the world today but didn't receive a penny for the invention. Include an imaginary interview with the inventor.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Douglas Engelbart. Ask him three questions about his invention. Give him your three ideas on what he could do to make the mouse even better. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

6. DIARY / JOURNAL: You are a computer mouse. Write a diary entry for one day in your life. How does your owner treat you? What work do you do? Do you like being called a mouse? Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T   b. F   c. F   d. T   e. F   f. T   g. T   h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

1.	celebrated	a.	commemorated
2	audience	b.	crowd
3.	witnessed	c.	saw
4.	wowed	d.	amazed
5.	wondered	e.	thought about
6.	absolutely	f.	completely
7.	transition	g.	shift
8.	innovations	h.	changes
9.	churns out	i.	makes
10.	ran out	j.	finished

PHRASE MATCH:

1.	The computer mouse celebrated	a.	its 40th anniversary
2	Engelbart showed	b.	off his new invention
3.	It was originally designed to	c.	highlight text
4.	Engelbart wowed	d.	onlookers
5.	wondered why the term 'mouse'	e.	never changed
6.	both are widely accepted as	f.	plurals
7.	It looks like mice are	g.	here to stay
8.	difficult to beat in terms of	h.	ease of use
9.	Engelbart has never received	i.	a penny
10.	computer companies started mass-	j.	producing mice

GAP FILL:

Computer mouse turns 40

The computer mouse **celebrated** its 40th anniversary on December the 8th. It was in 1968 that computer visionary Douglas Engelbart **showed** off his new invention to an audience of 1,000 at a technology conference in California. They witnessed the very first **public** demonstration of the personal computer. Engelbart's revolutionary 'pointing **device'** was made of wood and had two wheels built into the bottom. It was originally designed to highlight text on a written **document**. Engelbart wowed onlookers by demonstrating how **text** could be selected, copied and pasted. Engelbart said he always **wondered** why the term 'mouse' never changed into a more technical word after it became a commercial **success**.

Today computer mice or mouses (both are **widely** accepted as plurals) are absolutely everywhere. The only real changes to their technology in the past four **decades** are the transition to laser mice, the right-click button, and the scroll wheel. It **looks** like mice are here to stay, despite new innovations such as touch screens. Experts say the mouse is still difficult to **beat** in terms of ease of use and functionality. On the mouse's 40th birthday, computer-**device** maker Logitech announced it had produced its one-billionth mouse. The Swiss company **churns** out nearly 8 million mice a month. The pioneer, Douglas Engelbart, has never received a **penny** for his world-changing invention. His patent ran out before computer companies started **mass**-producing mice.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - a   2 - c   3 - b   4 - d   5 - c   6 - a   7 - d   8 - b   9 - c   10 - a   11 - b   12 - d