



James Watt (B2 - Upper Intermediate)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. How was steam used in the 18th and 19th century?
2. How many present-day uses of steam can you think of?
3. What do you know about James Watt?

B – Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and choose the correct answer.

1. James Watt

a) discovered steam power. b) made steam engines better. c) invented the steam engine.

2. He was from

a) West Scotland. b) Glasgow. c) The Scottish Highlands.

3. He first began working

a) in a scientific laboratory. b) in his own business in London. c) with his father.

4. After being asked to repair a steam engine, he realised that he could make it

a) stronger. b) more efficient. c) smaller and cheaper to build.

5. Thanks to his partnership with industrialist Matthew Boulton, Watt was able to

a) set up hundreds of factories. b) sell a lot of engines. c) Neither of these.

6. Watt's steam engine became the main source of power for

a) industries. b) mines. c) Both of these.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. What part did James Watt's parents play in his education?
2. What were steam engines often used for in the middle of the 18th century?
3. Why were they inefficient?
4. What idea did Watt have to improve them?
5. Why was the organisation of workers in Boulton's 'manufactory' helpful?
6. What sources of power were used before the development of the steam engine?
7. How did steam power transform Britain?
8. How were Boulton and Watt commemorated in 2008.

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from plural to singular.)

1. Don't _____ too much time on that report. It's more important to finish those accounts.
2. The new factory is looking for _____ workers with at least two years' experience.
3. Our new flat isn't perfect, but it's a great _____ on our old flat, which was cold and damp.
4. This town was quite prosperous in the 1970s before the _____ mine was closed down.
5. Your bicycle tyres are a bit flat. You'll have to _____ them up before you ride to school.
6. Manicures are very popular now. Nail salons are _____ everywhere.

E – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English? (Reading and Use of English, Part 2)

Read the text and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word for each gap.

It is well-known that steam ¹_____ a vital role in starting up the Industrial Revolution. The improvement of the steam engine led to other major breakthroughs ²_____ as the invention of the steam locomotive and the steamship. Perhaps this is why steam is often thought ³_____ as an outdated technology. Yet ⁴_____ could be further from the truth. It is still widely used in a large number of industries, for heating, cleaning and sterilisation. However, its main ⁵_____ is in the generation of electricity. In the ⁶_____ of the world's power stations, steam is used to drive the turbines. What varies is the fuel used to ⁷_____ up the water to produce steam. This may be oil, gas, coal, geothermal, biomass or even nuclear energy. Furthermore, nuclear-powered ships and submarines are invariably driven ⁸_____ steam turbines.

F – Write about it

Write about an important inventor/scientist from your country. Include:

- where/when he/she was born;
- information about his/her education and career;
- what he/she invented/discovered;
- what impact this invention/discovery had.

Answers

B – Listen and answer

1. b 2. a 3. c 4. b 5. b 6. c

C – Read and answer

1. His mother educated him at home and his father taught him a trade (i.e. shipbuilding). 2. They were often used to pump water out of mines. 3. Because they wasted most of the steam they produced. 4. He added a separate condenser which would condense the steam without cooling the rest of the engine. 5. They worked in a shared building rather than in individual workshops. 6. The previous sources of power were fast-flowing water, horses (or other animals) or burning wood. 7. It transformed it from an agricultural country into a nation of manufacturers. 8. The Bank of England put them on the new £50 notes.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. waste 2. skilled 3. improvement 4. coal 5. pump 6. springing up

E – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English?

1. played/had 2. such 3. of 4. nothing 5. use/application 6. majority 7. heat 8. by