Young Inventors’ Showcase Preparation

Search for similar inventions

• Before you spend a lot of time on your invention, search existing patents to make sure no one else has already invented it. This is called a prior art search.

• Before searching, make a list of all the words that describe your invention, what it does, what it will look like, etc. Write down some of your words here.

• Go to Google Patents http://www.google.com/patents and enter those words, for example, baseball bat with balls. Print any patent with an invention similar but not exactly the same as yours. Look for the blue “Find Prior Art” button to check additional sources like journal articles, websites, books, etc. to see if your idea already exists. (If you find one just like yours, think of ways you can improve it.)

For older students


• Use their index http://www.uspto.gov/web/patents/classification/uspcindex/indexeouspc.htm to search for the descriptive words you listed above. If you invented a new kind of baseball bat Click on B in the index. (Use the html version of the index because it has links.) Scroll down the page past balls until you come to baseball (a separate category) and choose bats 473/564+. Those numbers, called classification numbers, put things in categories, a main or big category followed by a smaller subcategory. Click on subclass 564.

• If you invented a new kind of plastic bat, look below 564 and see “of plastic composition” - 567. Click on 567 to see the definition. If the definition fits your invention, click on the red P to see patents in that category, or the blue A to see published applications that have not yet been granted a patent.

• Click on Images, a red link at the top of the page, to see the whole patent.

• The sections of a patent are linked on the left sidebar: Front Page, Drawings, Specifications, Claims.

• Use the picture of the printer (print icon) at the top of the page to print any patent that is somewhat like yours and add it to your log book.

• To find 2015+ patents, go to the patents classification page http://www.uspto.gov/web/patents/classification/index.htm, select USPC, under content select Statistical Mapping from USPC to CPC. Put in your class/subclass such as 573/564 to find a CPC number for your invention.

• Go to http://worldwide.espacenet.com/, choose classification search from the left sidebar, and enter your CPC class without spaces (example - A63B59/06).

• Select the class that meets your needs and from the left choose “find patents.”