

FAQs for Teachers

Q. What kind of online resource is available for me?

A. We have two major sources of information and materials.

- California Invention Convention (CaIC) website at www.cainventionconvention.org. Under the **Educators** tab, you will see on the right hand side a section labeled **Teacher Resource Material**. Everything is linked through there. If we say get it from our web and it's not there, or it's wrong or somehow unusable, let us know immediately (acawley@cainventionconvention.org)
- All the lesson plans and supporting documentation are maintained online. Once you have participated in our Professional Development Workshop, we will send you a link to the STEM, NGSS, Common-Core aligned K-12 curriculum and supporting materials.

And if you need help, either use the CONTACT US tab on the Web site, or contact Brenda (bpayne@cainventionconvention.org) or Anne (acawley@cainventionconvention.org)

Q. How do I get started?

A. We don't prescribe a particular set of lessons. However, if this is the first time that your students are going through the curriculum, the following sequence of lessons found in the **Curricular Resources** book has been found to be useful as it allows students to become comfortable with some of the skills that it takes to invent. These lessons structure these skills and develop them, before integrating them back into their intended task of invention design and construction.

- What is an Invention?
- The Engineering Cycle
- What's the Problem?
- Brainstorming 101
- #Accessibility Problems
- Scientific Induction
- Studious Solutions
- Improving Access
- Invention Improvement

The "**What is an Invention?**" lesson is a good refresher even if the students have been through the program before.

Besides the lessons, we recommend that you review the Invention Terms on Pages 3 and 4 of the Invention Log with your students prior to them entering anything into their Invention Log.

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Q. What's the Next Step?

A. You want to communicate with the parents. The student is going to be asking them for problems, getting feedback on design, maybe asking for help in the building of the invention.

There is a sample letter on our website you can download and modify for your needs. (*First Letter to Parent.doc*)

During the program, remember to continue communicating with the parents regarding any program requirements, getting any required permission, and timelines

Q. Speaking of timelines, how soon do we need to get started in order to be ready to participate in the 2018 California Invention Convention?

A. The California Invention Convention is scheduled for April 14th. Assuming that you will be running a 10 week program and that you will have your own local Invention Convention, then you probably want to start by mid-to-late October.

- **February 1st** – School notifies CaIC if classes/school will be participating.
- **February 15th** - Student Registration is open
- **March 15th** – Students must be Registered
- **April 14th** – California Invention Convention - Location: Maxim Integrated in San Jose.
- **May 31st--June 3rd** – National Invention Convention and Entrepreneurship Expo (NICEE) – The Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, Michigan. Finalists from CaIC attend (NICEE). Details for 2018 NICEE are at www.stemie.org.

Q. What materials will I need to deliver the program?

A. If you are planning on doing the Take Apart activity and/or the Engineering (Nuclear Disaster) activity, we have materials lists for both activities, including costs and where to buy.

Every August, the Synopsys Outreach Foundation accepts applications to pay for “Science Project Package”. Teachers have used this in the past to defray the cost of the display boards. The link is https://outreach-foundation.org/other_cc_grants/ . We try to put out an email to teachers in August once we find that the application site is open. We urge you to apply as soon as you can as they have a finite amount of resources to grant.

Q. Do you have any hints and tips for me?

A. Sure. Here is a random list (in no particular order)

- The “Intent to Invent” Lesson introduces the idea of time management when working on long term projects.

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- Have your students bring in their Invention Logs for review on a regular basis. They should be keeping it up and not waiting until the last minute to fill it in. At the National event, the clarity and completeness of an Invention Log can make a real difference. We require them at the State event as well.
- To help you with ensuring the students are keeping their Logs up-to-date, you need to sign off on their designs.
- Send out regular notices to parents letting them know what is happening in class and reminding them of deadlines – and that the students should be keeping their Invention Logs up to date on a regular and consistent basis.

Q. Are there any restrictions or requirements in order for a student to participate in the California Invention Convention in the spring or at the National Invention Convention and Entrepreneurship Expo (NICEE)?

A. Yes. All of the following apply for both the California and National events.

- You, as teacher, must sign off on the solution/invention before the student begins building their design. (Design page in Invention Log)
- Remember that animals are not allowed at the California Invention Convention, so if the invention is for animals, it must be demonstrated in pictures – or on a stuffed toy. Demonstrations/presentations may not include human beings or living creatures.
- The display board must be no larger than 24” with the wings folded in.
- Each inventor must have a COMPLETED, SIGNED Invention Log
- The prototype / invention should be no more than 2 feet high and 2 feet wide and be able to set on a table top.
- The invention does not have to be a working model, but the student needs to be able to explain how it would work, but if it can be **operational**, it should be.
- Electricity may NOT be used. Batteries are fine.
- Inventors may not use lighters, matches, candles or any other open flame or heat **source** or anything material or liquid considered combustible.

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- Inventions may not contain biohazards or utilize any materials that are, or could become dangerous.
- Other restrictions include: electric stun guns, martial arts weapons, guns, replica guns, ammunitions, fireworks, knives of any size, mace, pepper spray, razors, box cutters or balloons.

Q. Can a student use CAD/CAM design software and 3D Printers?

A. Yes indeed.

Q. Can a student use an electronic display device to provide information about the invention at the convention?

A. Yes, the use of an electronic display device (computer, mobile phone, tablet etc.) is allowed during judging. However, the student must still create the invention, the Display Board and the Invention Log – in addition to presenting their invention verbally at that time. The device can only be used to supplement, not in place of other requirements

Also, electrical outlets may not be available, so make sure the device is fully charged and that the student has a backup charger.

Finally, the inventor and his/her family agree that they are fully responsible for the safety of that device at all times and the CaIC is NOT responsible in any way or under any circumstances for any damage or theft of that device.

Q. Some of the students who participated in the Invention Convention last year, would like to modify their inventions as entries for this year's Invention Convention. Is that allowed?

A. A qualified "Yes". A student should not submit their invention from last year if it is the same thing. However, they can submit it if their invention has been improved based on feedback and further research, testing, engineering etc. Any improvements and the supporting research for those improvements would be reflected in the Invention Log. If the "improvement" is just a better display board or a more complete Invention Log -- then "NO". We want the student to focus on the processes of the engineering cycle.

Q. Speaking of Judging, just how are the inventions judged at the State event?

A. CaIC uses the concept of Judging Circles where a group of 6-10 inventors are judged by a group of 3 judges. Each inventor has time during the judging circle to explain his/her invention and answer questions from both judges and fellow students in the circle. The judges interact with each inventor and are trained to consider the invention, the display, the invention log and the inventor's presentation on the following qualities:

- Originality
- Inventing Process

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- Invention Effectiveness
- Practicality of the Invention
- Need for the Invention

If you'd like to use a rubric for your local convention that focuses on these qualities, we have one on the Web that you can use and modify as you see fit.

Q. How can I earn a Continuing Education Unit (CEU) for the California Invention Convention training workshop?

A. The California Invention Convention training is worth 1 CEU. To receive it, you must a) take the training and then b) within 30 days of the training, submit an outline of the lessons you plan on using to teach Invention Convention in your classroom and an overview. The overview should describe how you are planning on implementing the program in your classroom. There is a form on our website for your outline and overview. Fill out and submit the form to Brenda at bpayne@cainventionconvention.org. Once your plan has been reviewed, Brenda will sign off and return the signed-off form to you. Submit this completed, approved form along with the CEU application. Details will be on website and we will email them to you as soon as the process is finalized.