

Who Invented the mop?

Name: _____

Class: _____



It is a cleaning device we use in our everyday lives. It is only over forty years since it has revolutionised the cleaning methods all over the world.

Source: La Vanguardia Magazine

Manuel Jalón Corominas, a spanish engineer, invented the mop. Until then, people had to kneel down to clean the floor.

According to the Encarta Microsoft encyclopedia, the mop is in 5th place among the greatest spanish discoveries and inventions in the world.

In 1956, the spanish Manuel Jalón Corominas put together a handle and a cleaning cloth that you squeeze through rollers in a bucket with a pedal. He displayed it in a windowshop in Saragossa.

It was a luxurious device worth 395 pesetas but nobody knew what it was for.

Its inventor named it „fregasuelos“ because he thought it was a more elegant word but the first sales person called it „fregona“ and this is how we find it in the spanish dictionary.

This Spanish word in the past, designated the woman who cleaning the floor, at present, it also refers to the cleaning device. It is called 'baieta' or 'mop' in Catalan.

Its inventor says he invented the mop thinking about older women who had to kneel down to clean the floor and most importantly, he prevented millions of people from suffering illnesses like knee bursitis, arthritis, arthrosis, splinter injuries, nail fungal infections and damaged hands.

Nowadays, at least 2 million people use the mop daily in Spain. It is cheap and simple for everyone, and very important.

The main problem to sell the mop was to teach what it was for. The sales person had to mop the shop to show people how to use it.

The mop is used widely nowadays, there are some places in South America, where they don't know how to use it and they sell their parts separate.

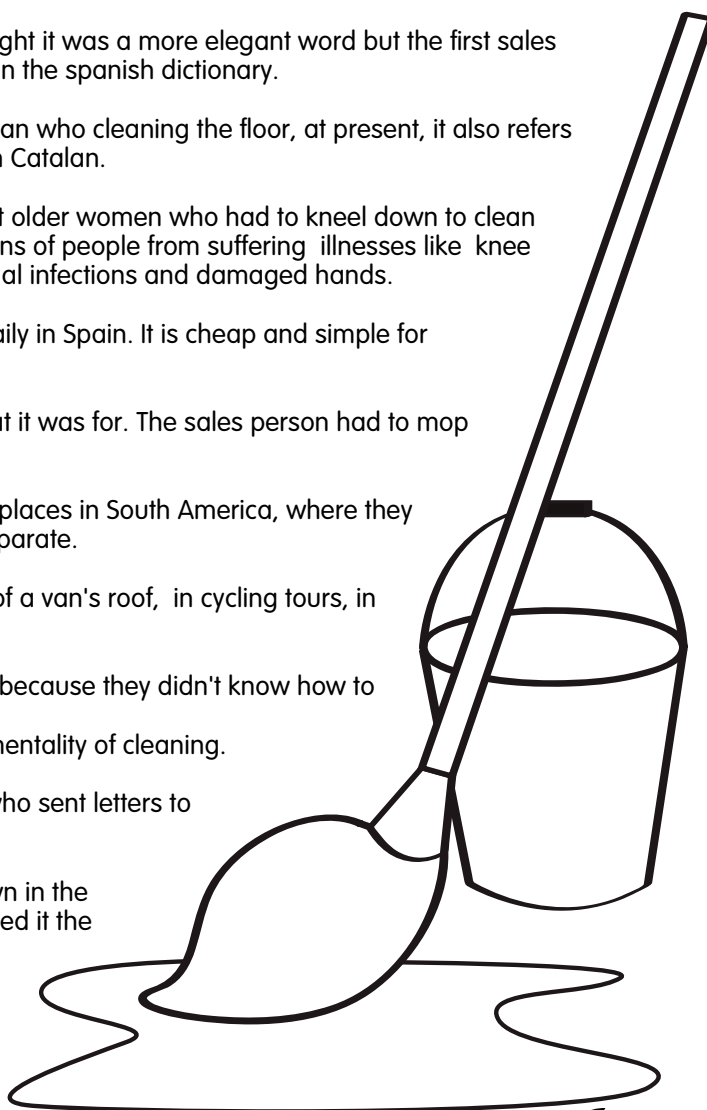
The mop was advertised in window shops, on top of a van's roof, in cycling tours, in parachute ads, in funfairs.

There were women who returned them to the shop because they didn't know how to use them.

The mop changed the method, the status and the mentality of cleaning.

The mop improved thanks to the users comments who sent letters to the inventor, telling him of possible mistakes.

The first critic was written in 1958, when it was shown in the International Exhibition in Barcelona. The press called it the ultra modern "escoba-bayeta to be used for any family member", "not even us would be embarrassed to use it", added the reporter.





When the mop was invented, materials were difficult to find so the first samples were with compact buckets without galvanising made in Barcelona.

Only one or two per day were made at first, until they got an order for 100 and they were able to buy a press.

One of the problems he had, was to find a twisted cotton which could absorb water without fraying.

1960, tourists and emigrants left Spain with mops and in 1980 the mop was already sold in 30 countries. The company had 150 employees and made 1300 millions of pesetas a year.



It was then, when he sold his business to a Dutch multinacional (Curver) that made and exported mops to 60 countries. They were made in China.

They had to improve the invention before it became one of the most exported devices in history. In 1959, Mr. Jalón replaced the mop with a built-in wringer for a bucket funnel with holes.

We know his invention as it is today thanks to the discovery of plastic. Thanks to this, he could have patents worldwide and gave him the chance to innovate squeezers, rollers, buckets, ice buckets and portable fridges used for organ transplants. But there was something missing, said Mr. Jalón, the link of the handle with the head: "since the first system of clamp and the spring were expensive, we looked for something simple and cheap but with so much competition there wasn't any money left. However, it allowed us to pay for the factory expenses working 24 hours every day, except the local bank holiday; We never managed to make people buy the replacement and there we lost a great business deal".

We can see in museums and books that the most representative invention of the Spanish industrial design is Montesa motorbike, the Talgo train and the mop. Of all these 3 Spanish engineer inventions, only the mop goes round the 5 continents.

1 WE ARE CURIOUS

1. Do a survey in your area about the development of housework duties and say if all the family shares housework, or if it is only the father or the mother who does it or if they have a cleaning person to do the housework.  

Ask how the housework is done at home and how housework was done at your grandparents' home in the past and compare.

2. The invention of the mop was thanks to Mr Manuel Jalón Corominas by legal ruling in 2009. Do some research about the authorship controversy held between the Bellvis family and Mr. Jalón. 

3. Interview old people in your surroundings and ask them about the most important changes in cleaning and cleaning floors, clothes, dishes... 

2 YOUR TURN

In the original advertisement of the mop they always refer to women as the users of the mop. Do you think this advertisement would be valid today?

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