

Appliances of the past: What were they used for?

Look at the photos below. Try to guess what each appliance was used for in the past.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

Now, match them with their proper names and descriptions.

A

Coal scuttles were containers made of metal or wood. Also called coal hods or coal buckets, they were both practical and decorative. Because coal was needed to heat houses and cook, people needed a place to store larger quantities of coal at home. Scuttles usually stood near the stove, oven or fireplace.

B

Bed warmers were usually made from metal and looked a little like pans or pots. People put hot stones or embers inside, covered them, and used them to warm their mattresses and sheets. Houses were much colder than they are today, and there certainly weren't any electric blankets!

C

Although nowadays they are used as holders and hangers, wooden **washing dollies** helped people to clean their clothes. There were no washing machines, so it was easier to do the laundry in large buckets or tubs. If you had a dolly, you didn't have to touch the dirty clothes or the harsh soap with your hands.

E

They are not drinking glasses! **Glass insulators** looked a little like bells, and could come in different colours: yellow, blue, green, and purple. People put them on telephone and telegraph poles to protect the electrical wires.

G

Telegraphs were gadgets in the first electrical telecommunications systems. They could send messages through wires over long distances. They were very popular because people could send text messages much quicker than by writing letters. The Morse code was invented to help telegraph communication.

D

It looks a little bit like a wine barrel, but it is actually a **butter churner**. In the old days, people couldn't always buy butter in a shop, and they had to make it at home. Beating the milk or cream by hand is hard work, so in Ireland they came up with this appliance instead: you pour the milk in, spin it, and out comes the butter.

F

Lawn or garden rollers were heavy cement wheels that could be attached to a tractor or pushed by hand. (You had to be extra careful not to get hurt!) They were used to smooth out gardens and pack grass seeds into a lawn. There is an old water pump next to it in the photo.

H

Hand drills made from steel are not even that old: they were still around in the previous century. The one in the photo was a wood drill and people used it to make wooden floors for houses. They were very practical when there was no electricity, and easier to carry around than large electrical drills.

True, false, or don't know?

- 1 The texts mention only one appliance that helped communication.
- 2 Bed warmers could be dangerous.
- 3 One of the appliances helped people to carry water around.
- 4 Washing dollies are still used today.
- 5 More than one appliance could be made from wood.
- 6 Butter churners were used only in Ireland.
- 7 Electrical wires were best protected with metal appliances.
- 8 Only one appliance uses electricity.

Tasks:

- 1 Find online photos of other strange appliances. Show them to your classmates and let them guess what they were used for.
- 2 Create a Kahoot! quiz about things from the past.
- 3 Come up with ideas how to improve modern appliances and gadgets.