

The 50 Most Iconic Designs of Everyday Objects

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We rarely think about the design of the objects we use everyday. You don't usually catch yourself pondering the origin of your ballpoint pen or coffee maker when you're trying to write a paper or wake up after a night out. The fact is you're not suppose to; these everyday objects have been meticulously designed to work so well that you never *have* to notice them - that's what good design is all about.

These everyday objects could arguably be the best examples of successful design: they have stood the test of time, they were easily adopted by a vast majority of the population, and, as objects, they are so user-friendly that they disappear into our daily routine.

Take a moment to appreciate these unsung heroes, both the classic designs that will never change and the ones that were pivotal in raising the bar of design. Learn a little more about the everyday objects that help you get through the everyday with our list of **The 50 Most Iconic Designs of Everyday Objects**.

Tasks for students:

You have got information about 6 products which were in a article selected as iconic designs of products for everyday purpose. Read short information about their history and for selected products try to answer following questions and tasks (you can answer all questions for one product or declare it on different products):

1. Why you think were this product selected for the list?
2. What you like on design of these products
3. Could this design work and be successful at recent market and why (yes or not)?
4. Can you demonstrate use of principles and elements of design on some of these products?

50. Opinel Folding Knife



Year Invented: 1890

Designer: Samuel B. Fay

Created as a simple workman's knife, the Opinel knife, designed by Joseph Opinel in 1890, became popular with farmers, herdsman, and winemakers of France

49. Michael Graves Tea Kettle



Year Invented: 1984

Designer: Michael Graves

Although it's one of the few successful mass-produced post-modern products, the bird-whistle tea kettle by Michael Graves sells over 100,000 units annually and is seen as a design landmark. Graves' concept was simple—a molded plastic bird that provides the sound for the kettle and recalls the memories of the American 19th century Federal tea and coffee services.

48. Le Creuset French Oven



Year Invented: 1925

Designer: Armand Desaegher and Octave Aubecq

Le Creuset was founded in the French town of Fresnay-le-Grand, Aisne, Picardy by Armand Desaegher and Octave Aubecq. Desaegher (a caster) and Aubecq (an enamel specialist), created the French Oven as their first product, which is still their most famous item and one your mother (or you)

probably own to make casseroles.

47. Little Trees

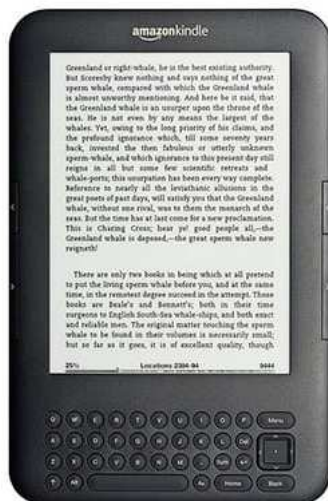
Year Invented: 1952

Designer: Julius Samann

Air fresheners can be found in almost any car these days. The tiny tree shape has become synonymous with "fresh air" (and used cars). Little trees, invented in 1952 by Julius Samann, are the original tree-shaped air freshener. This iconic design has found its way into pop culture and movies like *The Fisher King*, *Seven*, and *Repo Man*.



46. Amazon Kindle



Year Invented: 2007

Designer: Lab126/Amazon

Amazon's answer to reading books in the electronic age was the Kindle, an E-Ink electronic paper reader. The display of the Kindle was revolutionary, because instead of a backlight screen, it rendered 16 tones to simulate reading on paper, making it easier for the reader and minimizing power consumption.

45. Post-It Note



Year Invented: 1968

Designer: Art Fry/Spencer Silver

While attempting to develop a super-strong adhesive, Dr. Spencer Silver accidentally created something that was pretty much the complete opposite—an adhesive that could be applied, removed, and applied again, without damage to the object it was applied to. He attempted to market the "low tack" adhesive to 3M to no avail. In 1974, Art Fry overheard Silver talking about his invention and quickly realized a use for the tack; he applied it to paper and created the Post-It Note.

44. Pyrex Measuring Glass



Year Invented: 1915

Designer: Corning Glass Works

75% percent of American homes have some kind of Pyrex in their cupboards—either baking dishes, measuring cups, or other items from the line. Pyrex, invented by upstate New York glass company, Corning Glass Works, is known for its strength and durability.

43. Greek Diner Coffee Cup



Year Invented: 1963

Designer: Leslie Buck

Leslie Buck, of the Sherri Cup Co., designed the Anthora coffee cup. The cup features an image of an amphora, an ancient Greek container. Because of its Greek styling, the cup appealed to Greek-owned coffee shops in New York City and became ubiquitous with the metropolitan, being called "perhaps the most successful cup in history" by the *New York Times*.

42. Panton Plastic Chair



Year Invented: 1968

Designer: Verner Panton

Eero Saarinen's famous tulip chair, designed in 1955, was one of the first plastic chairs to be produced. But in 1968, Verner Panton created the first single-form injection-molded chair—his stackable, cantilever Panton chair. The sleek lines and singular form of this chair have made it an icon and secured it a place in design history.

41. Chinese Food Container



Year Invented: Early 20th Century

Designer: Unknown

What we know now as the Chinese take out container was originally an oyster pail. When oysters were more prevalent (and cheaper), the container was used to carry them home from the store (at one point they were also used to hold honey). Once the price of oysters went up, demand decreased, and the containers weren't widely used. But after World War II, the demand for take out and take-home meals rose, and the oyster pail was soon adopted as the container of choice, especially for cuisines like Chinese and Thai.

40. Compact Table Service

Year Invented: 1964

Designer: Massimo Vignelli

Massimo Vignelli's compact table service created a thoughtful solution to limited storage space. Vignelli designed each of his dining objects to fit within each other, allowing them to be stacked in a small space.



39. Red Telephone Box

Year Invented: 1920

Designer: Sir Giles Gilbert Scott

The red telephone boxes found scattered around the UK and occupied territories have become an iconic symbol of England. The first standard telephone kiosk was introduced in 1920. Because of widespread dissatisfaction with the original design, the London Metropolitan Borough Joint Standing Committee organized a competition to find a more appealing design. Sir Giles Gilbert Scott won the competition, and the post office chose to produce it in steel and paint it red.



38. Kitchen Aid Mixer



Year Invented: 1918

Designer: Herbert Johnson

The idea for the stand mixer was developed by Herbert Johnson, an employee at The Herbart Corporation. The first incarnation of the machine was used on Navy battleships. The first household, Kitchen-Aid branded mixer was unveiled in 1918.

37. Burberry Trench Coat

Year Invented: 1901

Designer: Burberry

The Burberry trench coat is a staple of everyday attire. It was originally developed as an alternative to the heavy coats worn by British and French soldiers in World War I. The garment was an optional part of the uniform for officers, but it was not permitted to be worn by any other rank. Because of their original role as a staple for military officers, the trench coat gained respectability as businesswear.



36. Planner Group Compact Furniture



Year Invented: 1949

Designer: Paul McCobb

Paul McCobb's planner group compact furniture was the first system of modular furniture components to be produced for the mass-market.

35. Swingline Stapler



Year Invented: 1939

Designer: Swingline (originally Parrot Speed Fastener Company)

Swingline was founded in 1925 in New York City by Jack Linsky. In 1939, the company created a stapler that would set the standard for the office product. This new design had an opening on top

that allowed the user to easily drop in a new strip of staples. The Swingline stapler has also become an iconic everyday object of the screen, appearing in TV shows like *The IT Crowd*, *Scrubs*, and *The Simpsons*, and most notably, the movie, *Office Space*.

34. Jansport Backpack

Year Invented: 1967

Designer: Murray Pletz, Skip Yowell, and Jan Lewis

JanSport came to be through a backpack design competition. An aluminum company sponsored the competition to solicit new backpack designs. Murray Pletz won the competition; with his winnings, he started a new company with his cousin, Skip Yowell, and his girlfriend, Jan Lewis (the namesake of the company). During the '70s, after the company was under new ownership, they started marketing their backpacks more heavily to schools and colleges, and by the 1990s, JanSport was the supplier for almost 30% of backpacks in the U.S.



33. Hunter Rainboots

Year Invented: 1856

Designer: Henry Lee Norris

In the 18th century, the Duke of Wellington instructed his shoemaker to create boots based on the Hessian Boot. This shoe became known as the Wellington (and later the Wellie). The style grew in popularity with patriotic British men. So it's no surprise that by 1852, when Hiram Hutchinson met Charles Goodyear, who had just invented the process to create vulcanization rubber, he would base his design for rubber boots on the Wellington. Hutchinson bought the patent and moved to France, where he set up shop under the name AIGLE. Because of the high population of farmers and laborers in the area, his rubber boots became a huge success, keeping the workers' feet dry while they toiled out in the field. The extreme functionality of the boots, and their popularity as work boots, lead them to be instated as a uniform requirement for the British Army in World War I (and later in World War II). The contract for this went to Henry Lee Norris's company, The North British Rubber Company (now Hunter Boot), who is the most popular manufacture of the iconic boots today.



32. Polaroid Camera



Year Invented: 1948

Designer: Edwin Land

Edwin Land, the founder of Polaroid, invented instant film in 1947. A year later, he unveiled the first commercial instant camera, the Land Camera. Although other "instant" cameras were available before Land's camera, they were more like portable darkrooms than instant cameras or film.

31. One Fifty Vacuum Cleaner

Year Invented: 1933

Designer: Henry Dreyfuss

Henry Dreyfuss' One Fifty vacuum cleaner didn't just deliver an aesthetic redesign of previous models, it was a total overhaul of all aspects of the design. Dreyfuss modified the materials used to create the vacuum, making it lighter and allowing more of the parts to be custom designed.



30. 40 in 4 Chair



Year Invented: 1963

Designer: David Rowland

David Rowland's 40 in 4 chair was conceived to allow for more compact storage. Intended for use in public spaces with small storage areas, the chair quickly became popular for domestic and international use, as well.

29. Q-Tip

Year Invented: 1920

Designer: Leo Gerstenzang

By sticking cotton balls on either end of a tooth pick, Leo Gerstenzang invented the cotton swab, or as it is most commonly referred to, the Q-tip. Gerstenzang originally named his design "Baby Gays," but it was renamed and marketed as the "Q-Tip" (the Q stands for quality).



28. Valentine Typewriter

Year Invented: 1969

Designer: Ettore Sottsass

Olivetti regarded design as a top priority in product development, collaborating with influential designers like Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn. Not surprisingly, many of their products are in the Museum of Modern Art's permanent collection. One of Olivetti's most famous designs was their Valentine typewriter, designed by Ettore Sottsass and Perry King. The Valentine was unique, in that it was designed to be an attractive object. The designers wanted something that was anti-machine, anti-work, and something that people would enjoy using.



27. Track Lighting System

Year Invented: 1963

Designer: Lightolier

Lightolier's track lighting system rethought the possibilities of lighting. By creating a long electric strip that lights could snap into, the track lighting allowed for more flexibility in lighting options.



26. Converse Sneakers



Year Invented: 1892

Designer: U.S. Rubber Company

The sneaker we are familiar with today stems from the U.S. Rubber Company's design for Keds shoes. These rubber-soled, canvas-topped shoes were mass-produced until 1917. That same year, Marguis Converse produced the first shoe made for basketball, the Converse All Star. In 1923, Chuck Taylor, an Indiana basketball player, endorsed the shoe and the name was changed to Chuck Taylor All-Stars.

25. Thermos Vacuum Flask

Year Invented: 1892

Designer: Sir James Dewar

Chemist and physicist Sir James Dewar invented the vacuum flask in 1892. The flask consists of two walls that have air vacuumed out from between them to keep liquids hot or cold longer.

Unfortunately, Dewar never patented his invention, and a German company, Thermos GmbH, ended up manufacturing it in 1904, subsequently patenting the design and leaving Dewar with no rights to the product.



24. RC-M90 Boombox



Year Invented: 1991

Designer: JVC

Arguably the most iconic boombox there is, the JVC RC-M90 has been referenced numerous times in music and film, and it even appeared on a few album covers (like *Solid Gold Hits* by the Beastie Boys and LL Cool J's *Radio*.) While the boombox itself is an icon of everyday design, the RC-M90 has become an icon of pop-culture as well.

23. Weber Grill

Year Invented: 1950

Designer: George A. Stephen

George Stephen worked for Weber Brothers Metal Works, a metal fabricator that primarily made buoys. Stephens was frustrated with his open-brick grill, because he felt that it produced uneven heat and too much smoke. The open top also allowed too much wind to blow ashes into his food. So Stephen took half of a buoy and welded three steel legs onto it. This marked the beginning of the Weber-Stephen Products Co. and one of the most iconic cooking objects to date.



22. Safety Pin

Year Invented: 1849

Designer: Walter Hunt

The invention of the safety pin is a story of caution. In order to repay a \$15 bet, Walter Hunt designed a fastening pin out of copper wire and a clasp to hold the end of the wire. His invention is the basis of the modern day safety pin, but Hunt sold his patent to WR Grace and Co. for \$400, using the money to pay off his friend. As we

know today, the safety pin is an invention that is used throughout the world, and one that made WR Grace Co. millions of dollars. Mr. Hunt only made \$485.



21. Bic Ballpoint Pen

Year Invented: 1938

Designer: Lazlo and Gyorgy Biro

Lazlo and Gyorgy Biro presented their pen design at the Budapest International Fair in 1931. By this time, many variations on the ballpoint pen had been patented, but none of these were as commercially viable as the Biros' design. The Hungarian Biro brothers patented their design in 1938, and in 1943 they moved to Argentina, where they formed Biro Pens of Argentina. The design was licensed to the British, and in 1945, Marcel Bich bought the patent, which soon became the star product of his Bic company.



20. Swiss Army Knife



Year Invented: 1890

Designer: Wester & Co.

The Schweizer Offiziersmesser (or the Swiss Army Knife as U.S. soldiers called it during World War II, because they couldn't pronounce the German name), was designed by West & Co. for the Swiss Army. The knife was designed to open food containers and disassemble rifles, among other things. The original

knife had a blade, reamer, can opener, and screwdriver. In 1891, Elsener took over production of the model. His company Victorinox is the producer of the classic Swiss Army Knife we see and use today.

19. Phonosuper

Year Invented: 1956

Designer: Dieter Rams/Hans Gugelot

The cabinet design of Dieter Rams and Hans Gugelot's Phonosuper revolutionized the series from Braun and introduced the concept of the transparent plexiglass cover. The sleek, minimalistic styling of the Phonosuper epitomized the company's dedication to modern design aesthetics and set the standard for high-quality styling.



18. Flint 1900 Kitchen Tools



Year Invented: 1946

Designer: Ecko

Ecko's Flint 1900 line set the production and design standard for kitchen tools. Ecko's modification of materials from wood and stamped metal to plastic and steel made the Flint 1900 line more resilient and durable.

17. Band-aid Bandage



Year Invented: 1917-1921

Designer: Earle Dickson

Earle Dickson worked for Johnson & Johnson, and he also had a very clumsy wife. This aided Dickson in creating one of the best-selling bandages ever. Sales were initially slow; they only sold \$3,000 worth of Band-Aids the first year, but once Johnson & Johnson decided to

give free Band-Aids to Boy Scout troops as a publicity stunt, the sales started picking up. Now the company says that sales have topped over \$100 billion.

16. CIFRA 3 Table Clock

Year Invented: 1966

Designer: Gino Valle

Gino Valle employed the same technology in the CIFRA3 travel clock as he did in his airport and train station projects for Solari. His travel clock told time by clipping numbers. As the center rotating cylinder turned, it allowed the number tiles to drop and change the time. He also designed the type of numbers that could be more easily read from across the room, bolding the hour number so that it was differentiated from the minute numbers.



15. T-Shirt



Year Invented: 1913

Designer: U.S. Navy

The origin of the t-shirt is murky. Some say that the British wore the garment under their military uniforms during World War I, and others say that the French may have worn them even earlier. Most people cite the U.S. Navy as the originator of the shirt—first requiring it in their issued uniforms as early as 1913. Other branches of the military were soon to follow; in the late 1930s, the Marines adopted the garment, and by the

end of WWII, the Army had it as well. It was the popularity among the armed forces that allowed the shirt to transition from just a piece of uniform to an everyday clothing staple. By the late 1950s, the T-shirt had seeped into American pop-culture, sported by Hollywood icons like James Dean and Marlon Brando.

14. John Deere Tractor



Year Invented: 1938

Designer: Henry Dreyfuss

Arguably one of the most influential industrial designers in America, Henry Dreyfuss was a pioneer of automotive design. So it seems natural that he would be approached by America's leading manufacturer of agricultural machinery to give its best selling tractors, the Model A and Model B, a modern facelift.

13. Dualit Toaster

Year Invented: 1952

Designer: Max Gort-Barten

Max Gort-Barten, a German-born entrepreneur, started Dualit in Britain after World War II. Gort-Barten designed the first six-slice toaster with a built-in timer in 1952. The toaster's iconic design (virtually unchanged since its conception) makes it a staple in homes today.



12. Tupperware



Year Invented: 1945

Designer: Earl S. Tupper

Earl S. Tupper's storage containers were revolutionary to their class of kitchen supplies; they were durable, flexible, and beautiful. House Beautiful even gushed about the line in 1947, calling the products "art objects."

11. Safety Razor



Year Invented: 1847

Designer: William S. Henson

The basic razor was invented by William S. Henson. The design was easier to use on oneself than the previous straight razor design, but in 1880, Fredrick and Otto Kampfe improved it by adding a blade holder that distanced the blade from the handle, and allowed the hair to be cut without damaging the skin. In 1901, King Camp Gillette improved upon the razor

again, creating a disposable double-edge blade, which was widely used by American troops in World War I. In the 1970s, a disposable version of the design was adapted to further reduce risk, and the razor blades were embedded into a disposable plastic cartridge, which is similar to the disposable razors we see today.

10. Zippo Lighter

Year Invented: 1933

Designer: George G. Blaisdell

Zippo lighters became popular in the military, primarily during World War II. Initially the lighter was made of brass, but due to the war, it had to start being manufactured in steel. Although Zippo was not officially contracted by the U.S. Military, the product was so popular among soldiers and armed forces that they became stocked in base exchange and post exchange stores.



9. Glass Coca-Cola Bottle



Year Invented: 1916

Designer: Root Glass Co.

Coca-Cola wanted to create a bottle that could be easily identified by shape alone, so in 1916, Root Glass company designed the 6.5 ounce bottle, inspired by the gourd-shaped coca pod.

8. JC Penny's Coffee Maker



Year Invented: 1976

Designer: JC Penny

The JC Penny coffee maker, introduced in 1976, was one in a series of products that brought high-quality, modern design to the mass-market, along the same lines as Braun.

7. Levi's Denim Jeans

Year Invented: 1873

Designer: Jacob Davis/Levi Strauss

Although the denim fabric was invented long before, jeans as we know them today were not invented until 1873, when Jacob Davis and Levi Strauss designed the first pair out of denim with strategically placed, reinforced copper rivets to prevent ripping.



6. Angelpoise Lamp



Year Invented: 1932

Designer: George Carwardine

The Angelpoise Lamp, also known as the architect's lamp or the task lamp, is a staple amongst people who do desk work. The adjustable lamp was designed by George Carwardine, a car designer, in 1932. In addition to multiple variations and knock-offs that have been created, key elements of Carwardine's lamp have also been copied, most notably the adjustable arm.

5. Predicta Television



Year Invented: 1958

Designer: Philco

Philco's Predicta television set was the first TV in America to break away from the standard cabinet format. It was also the first to swivel, allowing the viewer to move the set as needed.

4. Apple IIc Personal Computer



Year Invented: 1982-1985

Designer: FROGDESIGN/Apple

The Apple IIc was the first truly user-friendly computer. By creating a clean, sophisticated design and scaling down components, Frog Design, along with Apple, was able to create a modern, easy-to-use product that was immediately copied by competitors.

3. Apple iPhone

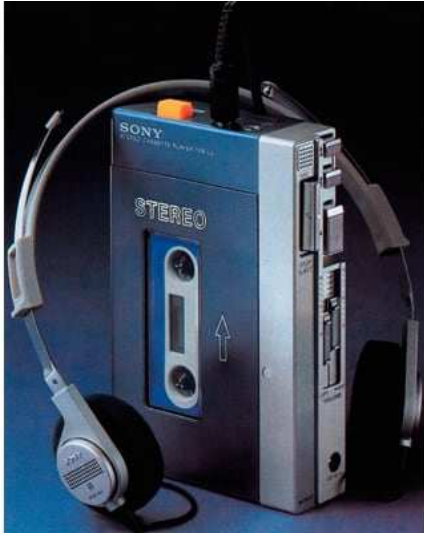


Year Invented: 2007

Designer: Jonathan Ives/Apple

The iPhone revolutionized cell phones. It took a basic object, with a purpose to only place and receive phone calls, and turned it into a hub of all electronic communication.

2. Sony Walkman



Year Invented: 1970

Designer: Akio Morita and Masaru Ibuka
When Sony's Akio Morita and Masaru Ibuka became unhappy with the weight of their portable tape recorder, the Pressman, they decided to refine it with a stereo amplifier. The new product, the Walkman, soon took off. Sony had to design new machinery to handle the growing demand.

1. Model 302 Telephone



Year Invented: 1876

Designer: Henry Dreyfuss

Western Electric's Model 302 was the first widely-used telephone to include a ringer and network circuitry in the same unit. Its iconic form was designed by predominant industrial-designer, Henry Dreyfuss. The phone was first deployed on the Bell System in 1936 and appeared in many TV shows and films, including a memorable scene in *I Love Lucy*. The phone is still referred to as "the Lucy phone" by collectors.

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