



Smithsonian's History Explorer Podcast

Teacher Guide



Fifty Years of Lasers

with curator Hal Wallace

Podcast Link: <http://amhistory.si.edu/thinkfinity/podcast/laser.mp3>

Video Podcast Link: <http://amhistory.si.edu/thinkfinity/podcast/laser.m4a>

Images Related to Podcast: <http://amhistory.si.edu/thinkfinity/podcast/laser.zip>

Discussion Questions:

The following questions can be used for in-class discussion or short written responses from students after listening to the podcast.

- Who were some of the scientists and inventors associated with the development of the laser?
- What other inventions and commercial products were made possible by the invention of the laser?
- How has the laser been used by the military?
- How has the laser been portrayed in science fiction novels, television and movies, and how is this different from its actual uses in the real world? Can you think of any other inventions that have strong ties to science fiction?

Related Resources—for continued instruction or resources for your students' research

National Museum of American History:

- Artifact Wall "Fifty Years of Lasers"
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/artifact-walls-fifty-years-lasers>
- American Institute of Physics: Laser History—<http://www.aip.org/history/exhibits/laser/>

Thinkfinity:

- Lasers Saving Sight – from Science Net Links
<http://www.sciencenetlinks.com/lessons.php?DocID=123>
- Light It Up—from Illuminations—<http://illuminations.nctm.org/LessonDetail.aspx?ID=L606>

National Standards—from the National Center for History in the Schools

- Era 9: Postwar United States (1845-1970s)
1C: The student understands how postwar science augmented the nation's economic strength, transformed daily life, and influenced the world economy.
- Era 10: Contemporary United States (1968 to the present)
2D: The student understands contemporary American culture.

Have your students email their question, comments, and discoveries to thinkfinity@si.edu

Find this podcast and more at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/podcasts>



Name:

Date:

Period:

Topic:

Listen to the podcast, take notes, and answer the questions.

1. Who were some of the scientists and inventors associated with the development of the laser?

2. What other inventions and commercial products were made possible by the invention of the laser?

3. How has the laser been used by the military?

4. How has the laser been portrayed in science fiction novels, television and movies, and how is this different from its actual uses in the real world? Can you think of any other inventions that have strong ties to science fiction?

Email your questions, comments, and discoveries to thinkfinity@si.edu

Find this podcast and more at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/podcasts>