

# Rolling Through History: The Invention of Inline Skates!

## Introduction: Your Skates Have a Story! (5 mins)

Have you ever wondered where your awesome inline skates came from? They didn't just magically appear! Like all cool inventions, they have a history full of clever ideas, experiments, and even some funny-looking early versions. Today, we're going on a historical adventure to discover the story behind inline skates!

## Activity 1: The Skate Timeline Quest (20-25 mins)

Let's become history detectives! Using safe internet searching (with adult help if needed), let's investigate the past:

1. **Way Back When:** Who was John Joseph Merlin? What weird invention did he show off at a party in the 1760s? (Hint: It involved wheels on shoes!)
2. **First Inline Idea?:** Look up 'Pettibled skate patent 1819'. What did this early French skate look like? Did it catch on?
3. **Roller Skates Take Off:** Briefly research James Plimpton and the invention of the four-wheeled 'quad' skate in the 1860s. Why were these so popular for a long time?
4. **The Big Idea Re-emerges:** Who were Scott and Brennan Olson? What were they trying to do with old roller skate parts in the late 1970s?
5. **Rollerblade is Born!:** How did the Olson brothers turn their idea into the company 'Rollerblade'? What made their skates different and successful in the 1980s and 90s?

**Create Your Timeline:** Grab your paper and drawing supplies! Draw a line representing time. Mark points for the key dates or inventors you discovered (Merlin, Pettibled, Plimpton, Olson Brothers/Rollerblade). Draw a small picture or write a key fact next to each point. Make it colorful!

## Activity 2: Why So Popular? The Skate Craze! (10-15 mins)

Inline skating became HUGE! Why? Let's brainstorm and look for clues:

- **Fitness Fun:** People realized it was great exercise.
- **Replacing Hockey Practice:** Hockey players could practice off the ice.
- **Cool Tricks:** The birth of aggressive inline skating and the X-Games.
- **Just Rolling Around:** It was a fun way to travel short distances or hang out with friends.

*Optional:* Search safely online for videos or pictures of 'inline skating in the 90s' to see the fashion and styles associated with the craze.

**Discussion:** Why do you think inline skating became so popular? Does it remind you of any other popular trends today?

## Activity 3: Design the Future Skate! (10 mins)

You've seen how skates changed over time. Now it's your turn! Imagine you are an inventor. Draw a design for the 'Skate of the Future'. What cool features would it have? Lights? Hover abilities? Self-tying laces? Label the features on your drawing.

## Wrap-up & Assessment (5 mins)

Let's review our Skate Timeline! Can you tell me:

- One early idea related to skates?
- Who is famous for making modern inline skates popular?
- One reason inline skating became a big trend?

Show off your 'Future Skate' design! What was the most interesting thing you learned today about the history of something you enjoy doing?

## Differentiation Ideas:

- **Younger Learner:** Focus heavily on the story of Scott Olson and comparing quad skates vs. inline skates using pictures. Simplify the timeline.
- **Older Learner:** Research specific patents, the business challenges faced by Rollerblade Inc., or the different disciplines within inline skating (speed, aggressive, artistic, hockey) and their histories. Discuss the economic impact of the trend.