Q118 – Name one example of an American innovation.

DOUGLAS GINSBURG, Federal Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit:
When you're asked to name an American innovation, you have endless inventions from which to choose. Here are a few.

The light bulb – an everyday item we take for granted – revolutionized daily life – it turned night into day. The light bulb was so revolutionary, it became the very symbol of ingenuity.
Every skyscraper on the planet is a grandchild of the Home Insurance Building: the first modern skyscraper. Ten stories and 138 feet tall. A breakthrough in engineering, its steel skeleton was lighter than masonry – making it possible to erect taller and more stable buildings.
The automobile had several pioneers in several different places, including the United Sates. But it was American ingenuity that created the automotive industry. Henry Ford introduced mass production – including the moving assembly line – that made the automobile affordable for the average American. And the family car would change where Americans lived.
Two bicycle makers without a college education – Orville and Wilbur Wright – invented a gasoline-powered airplane. It flew only twelve seconds on its first flight but took mankind into the next dimension.
Six decades later, the whole world watched as an American became the first person to walk on the moon. That mission was made possible by another American invention: the integrated circuit – better known as the microchip. Today, everything from rockets to credit cards uses microchips.
What makes America such a hotbed of innovation? Our free enterprise system and freedom itself.