

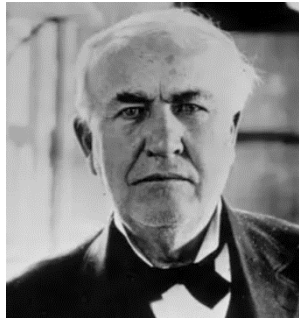
Our science topic this term is on 'Light'.

Find out about why Thomas Edison was so famous and how almost everyone in the world has used at least one of his inventions!

Name: Thomas Edison

Born: 11th February, 1847

Died: 18th October, 1931 aged 84



Images: <https://www.history.com/topics/inventions/thomas-edison>

Childhood

Thomas Edison was born in Ohio, America. He was the seventh child of Samuel and Nancy Edison. As a child, he had hearing problems from the illness scarlet fever. His mother was a teacher, so he did not go to school but was taught at home. As a teenager, he sold candy and newspapers on trains. Quickly, he became quite a good businessman, and with four assistants started selling newspapers on the streets.

First Job

He got his first job by accident when he saved a 3 year-old boy from being hit by a train. The boy's father was so grateful that he gave Thomas a job as a telegraph operator. A telegraph operator is a person who operates a telephone switchboard.

At 19 years old, Thomas moved to Kentucky to start a new job. He chose to work at night so that he could carry on with his experiments. Unfortunately, he spilt sulphuric acid on the floor and it dripped through the wooden floor boards onto the desk of his boss below. Thomas Edison lost his job!

First Invention

Thomas Edison's first invention was completed in 1877 - the phonograph. This was a machine that could record and replay sound. The sound was played through a large horn. Suddenly, Thomas Edison became very famous.

The Electric Lightbulb

Thomas wanted to invent a light that did not need oils or gas to be lit. After some tests and changes, Edison created a lightbulb that would stay lit using electricity for 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours! In 1879, he demonstrated this amazing invention to a group of people in Menlo Park. He then became known as the 'Wizard of Menlo Park'.

His Legacy

Thomas Edison was a very careful worker, who went on to become one of the most famous inventors in history. He always thought carefully about all the different things that could go wrong in his projects and how to put them right. He managed to encourage very important people to support his inventions and put money into them, so that he had the time to work on them properly.

Thomas Edison died in 1931 from problems with diabetes. He was 84 years old. Almost everyone in the world has used at least one of his inventions: the electric lightbulb. We are still using them today, almost 100 years later!

Have you read the text carefully?

Please answer the following questions in your homework book in full sentences, e.g. Thomas Edison did not go to school because...

1. Why did Thomas Edison not go to school?
2. Explain in your own words how Thomas Edison got his first job.
3. Why did Thomas Edison want to work at night?
4. What invention made Thomas famous and what did it do?
5. Why did he want to invent the electric lightbulb?
6. Why do you think he was known as the 'Wizard of Menlo Park'?
7. Name two things about Thomas' character that helped him be a successful inventor.
8. What are your thoughts about Thomas Edison?