

THOMAS EDISON Reading Comprehension

Thomas Edison was born February 11, 1847, in Milan, Ohio. He was nicknamed "Al" at an early age. At age 11, Edison moved to Michigan, where he spent the remainder of his childhood.

Thomas Edison struggled at school but learned to love reading and conducting experiments from his mother who taught him at home. At age 15, Edison became a "tramp telegrapher," sending and receiving messages via Morse Code, an electronically-conveyed alphabet using different clicks for each letter. Eventually, he worked for the Union Army as a telegrapher. Edison often entertained himself by taking things apart to see how they worked. Soon, he decided to become an inventor.

In 1870, Edison moved to New York City and improved the stock ticker. He soon formed his own company that manufactured the new stock tickers. He also began working on the telegraph and invented a version that could send four messages at once. Meanwhile, Edison married Mary Stillwell, had three children, and moved his family to Menlo Park, New Jersey, where he started his famous laboratory.

In 1877, Edison, with help from "muckers," individuals from around the world looking to make fortunes in America, invented the phonograph. The phonograph was a machine that recorded and played back sounds. He perfected the phonograph by recording "Mary Had a Little Lamb" on a piece of tin foil! In 1878, Edison invented the light bulb as well as the power grid system, which could generate electricity and deliver it to homes through a network of wires. He subsequently started the Edison Electric Light Company in October of 1878.

In 1884, after he attained great fame and fortune, Mary Stillwell died. Edison remarried 20-year-old Mina Miller in 1886. He had three more children and moved to West Orange, New Jersey. At West Orange, Edison built one of the largest laboratories in the world. He worked extremely hard and registered 1,093 patents. Edison continued to invent or improve products and made significant contributions to x-ray technology, storage batteries, and motion pictures (movies). He also invented the world's first talking doll. His inventions changed the world forever. They still influence the way we live today. Edison worked until his death on October 18, 1931.

1.) In what state did Thomas Edison NOT live?

- a.) Michigan
- b.) Ohio
- c.) New York
- d.) Massachusetts

2.) How many children did Thomas Edison have?

- a.) 3
- b.) 4
- c.) 5
- d.) 6

3.) What best describes Morse Code?

- a.) A language for deaf people
- b.) A system of clicks
- c.) A system of clicks that stand for words
- d.) A system of clicks that stand for letters

4.) What was one of Thomas Edison's first accomplishments?

- a.) Inventing the light bulb
- b.) Inventing an improved stock ticker
- c.) Inventing an improved x-ray
- d.) Inventing tin foil

5.) A phonograph is most similar to:

- a.) A microphone
- b.) A walkie-talkie
- c.) A record player
- d.) A television

6.) What is a "mucker"?

- a.) Someone from another country
- b.) Someone from another country hoping to find a home in America
- c.) Someone from another country hoping to make a fortune in America
- d.) Someone from Thomas Edison's family

7.) Select all of the following that Thomas Edison did not invent.

- a.) A power system that could deliver electricity to homes
- b.) The first stock ticker
- c.) The first phonograph
- d.) The first storage battery

8.) What does the quote "Genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration" mean?

- a.) Only geniuses should think of new ideas.
- b.) One percent of people are capable of ingenuity.
- c.) Geniuses have to sweat a lot to come up with good ideas.
- d.) Great ideas take more hard work than ingenuity.

9.) What is a patent?

- a.) An idea that is the property of a person.
- b.) An idea that everyone can use.
- c.) An idea that can only be used in the future.

10.) What happened last?

- a.) Thomas Edison was nicknamed Al.
- b.) Thomas Edison was a "tramp telegrapher."
- c.) Edison served in the Union Army.
- d.) Edison moved to New York City.