

# Thomas Edison - Biography

**Name:** Thomas Edison

**Birth:** 11th February 1847

**Death:** 18th October 1931 (aged 84)

**Best known for:** Inventing light bulbs for people's homes

## Childhood:

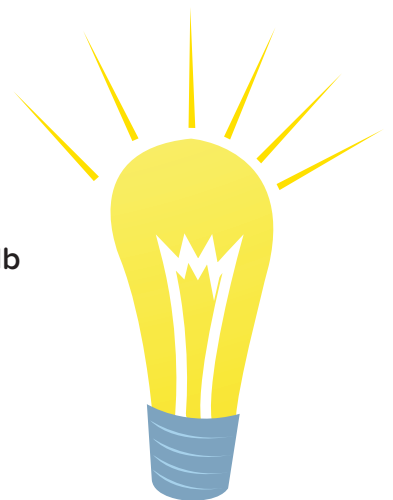
Thomas Edison was born in Ohio in the USA. He was the youngest of seven children. Even though his name was Thomas, his family called him Al. This was his middle name. Edison didn't start school until he was seven years old because of illness. However, he only stayed at school for three months. Edison found it hard to pay attention in class. His mum, who was a teacher, decided it would be better if she taught him at home. He learned a lot by reading books and doing his own experiments.

## Young adult life:

As a young man, Edison worked as a telegraph operator. Telegraphs were used before telephones were invented. They were used to send messages over long distances. In his spare time, Edison also started to invent things. Eventually, he became a full time inventor and scientist.

## Edison's famous inventions:

Edison invented the phonograph which recorded sound. He also invented the kinetograph which was a very basic movie camera. In 1879, Edison invented his most famous invention: Edison's light bulb was the first light bulb that could be used in homes. Edison's bulb was powered by electricity. Unlike other light bulbs that had been invented, Edison's bulb lasted for a long time.



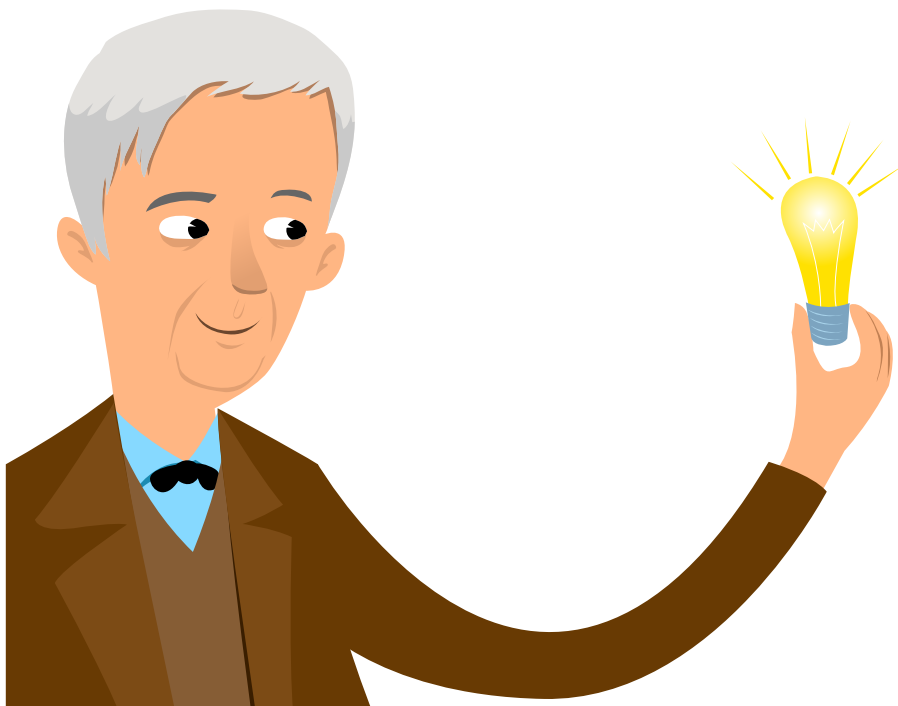
### Edison's power station:

Edison wanted to bring electricity into people's homes. He set up a power station to generate electricity. It was built at 57 Holborn Viaduct in central London. The electricity was then sent into people's houses using wires. People could then use his light bulbs in their homes. This meant that they didn't need to use gas lamps and candles for light.

### Edison's legacy:

Flicking a switch to get light has changed the way we live. Now we don't need to worry about what time the sun rises and sets. People can live, and work, around the clock.

Edison also made lighting homes much safer. Lighting your home with candles or gas lamps could be dangerous. Edison's light bulb is likely to have prevented lots of damaging fires.



# Questions

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- 1 In which year did Thomas Edison die?

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- 2 How many children were in Edison's family?

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- 3 Which fact about Thomas Edison is true? (tick)

- ☐ Thomas was actually his middle name.
- ☐ He had seven brothers.
- ☐ He was home schooled.
- ☐ He was ill for seven years.

- 4 What was Edison's first job as a young man? (tick)

- ☐ telephone operator
- ☐ telegraph operator
- ☐ inventor
- ☐ scientist

- 5 What was the name of Edison's invention that recorded basic movies?

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- 6 How was Edison's light bulb different from the bulbs that existed already? (tick)

- ☐ It was brighter.  
☐ It was bigger.  
☐ It was brighter.  
☐ It lasted longer.

- 7 In which city was Edison's first power station built?
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- 8 Why couldn't people use Edison's bulbs in their homes before the power station was built? (tick)

- ☐ They were unsafe.  
☐ They didn't have electricity in their homes.  
☐ They used gas lamps and candles.  
☐ The bulbs would not have been bright enough.

- 9 'People can live, and work, around the clock.'

What does the phrase 'around the clock' mean? (tick)

- ☐ round like a clock  
☐ without having to light candles  
☐ at all times of the day and night  
☐ without any issues

- 10 Write the numbers 1-5 in the boxes to put these events in order.

- ☐ He worked as a telegraph operator.  
☐ He built a power station.  
☐ He started school when he was seven years old.  
☐ He invented the phonograph.  
☐ He invented a new type of light bulb.

Score:

# Answers

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1931
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seven
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2

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5

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1

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