

Writing Homework #24

DIRECTIONS: Read the article and summarize the important information, like we did in class. Write your summary **by hand** on notebook paper.

While Edison was not the inventor of the first light bulb, he came up with the technology that helped bring it to the masses. Edison was driven to perfect a commercially practical, efficient incandescent light bulb following English inventor Humphry Davy's invention of the first early electric arc lamp in the early 1800s. After buying Woodward and Evans' patent and making improvements in his design, Edison was granted a patent for his own improved light bulb in 1879. He began to manufacture and market it for widespread use. In January 1880, Edison set out to develop a company that would deliver the electricity to power and light the cities of the world. That same year, Edison founded the Edison Illuminating Company—the first investor-owned electric utility—which later became General Electric.

In 1881, he left Menlo Park to establish facilities in several cities where electrical systems were being installed. In 1882, the Pearl Street generating station provided 110 volts of electrical power to 59 customers in lower Manhattan.

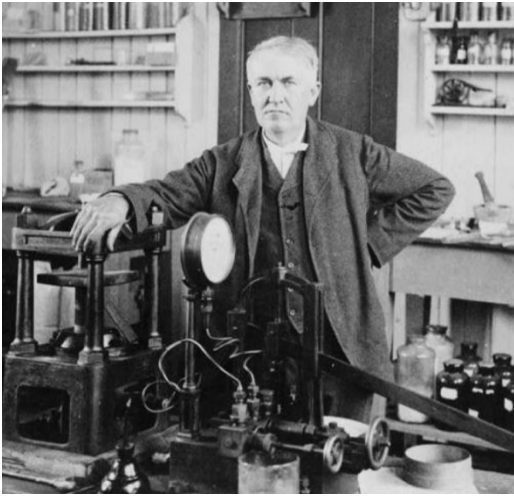
In 1887, Edison built an industrial research laboratory in West Orange, New Jersey, which served as the primary research laboratory for the Edison lighting companies. He spent most of his time there, supervising the development of lighting technology and power systems. He also perfected the phonograph, and developed the motion picture camera and the alkaline storage battery.

During the 1890s, Edison built a magnetic iron-ore processing plant in northern New Jersey that proved to be a commercial failure. Later, he was able to salvage the process into a better method for producing cement.

On April 23, 1896, Edison became the first person to project a motion picture, holding the world's first motion picture screening in New York City. His interest in motion pictures began years earlier, when he and an associate developed a Kinetoscope, a peephole viewing device. Soon, Edison's West Orange laboratory was creating Edison Films. Among the first of these was *The Great Train Robbery*, released in 1903.

To find out more about the Kinetoscope, watch this video on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfI0NVC0hLU>



As the automobile industry began to grow, Edison worked on developing a suitable storage battery that could power an electric car. Though the gasoline-powered engine eventually prevailed, Edison designed a battery for the self-starter on the Model T for friend and admirer Henry Ford in 1912. The system was used extensively in the auto industry for decades.

Thomas Edison in his laboratory in 1901.

During World War I, the U.S. government asked Edison to head the Naval Consulting Board, which examined inventions submitted for military use. Edison worked on several projects, including submarine detectors and gun-location techniques. However, due to his moral indignation toward violence, he specified that he would work only on defensive weapons, later noting, "I am proud of the fact that I never invented weapons to kill."

By the end of the 1920s, Edison was in his 80s. He and his second wife, Mina, spent part of their time at their winter retreat in Fort Myers, Florida, where his friendship with automobile tycoon Henry Ford flourished and he continued to work on several projects, ranging from electric trains to finding a domestic source for natural rubber.

During his lifetime, Edison received 1,093 U.S. patents and filed an additional 500 to 600 that were unsuccessful or abandoned.

Edison died on October 18, 1931, from complications of diabetes in his home, Glenmont, in West Orange, New Jersey. He was 84 years old. Many communities and corporations throughout the world dimmed their lights or briefly turned off their electrical power to commemorate his passing.

By the time he died, Edison was one of the most well-known and respected Americans in the world. He had been at the forefront of America's first technological revolution and set the stage for the modern electric world.



Look It Up!

A patent is _____.