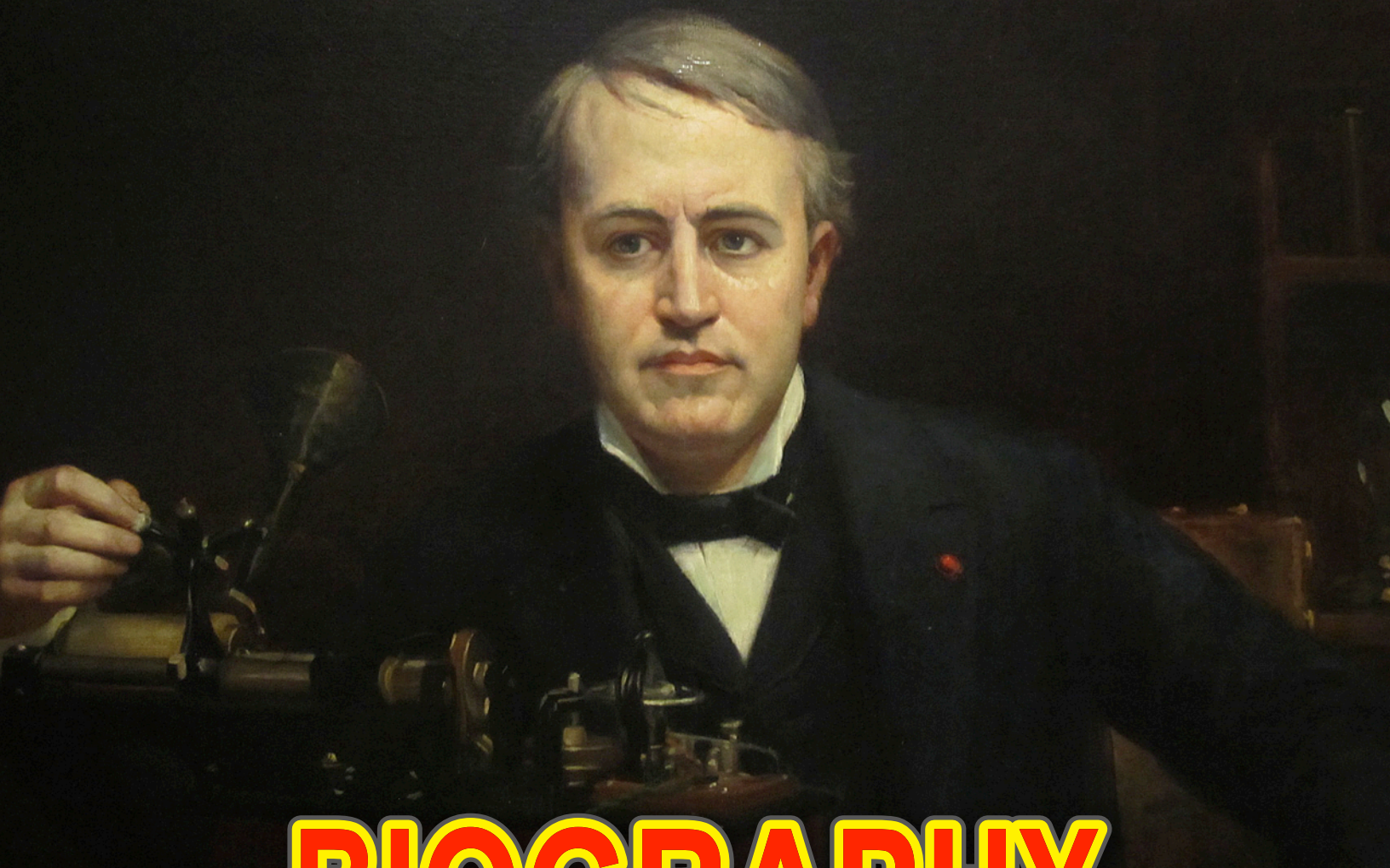


# THOMAS ALVA EDISON



# BIOGRAPHY

# THOMAS ALVA EDISON

Thomas Alva Edison did not have an easy start. He was born in Ohio on February 11, 1847. He got just three months schooling, but his mother homeschooled him. His first job was selling candy and newspapers on trains. It was here he discovered his talent for business.

After that, Edison became a telegraph operator and then, at the age of 19, he worked for a news agency. He asked for the night shift so that he had plenty of time for experimenting while he worked. However, his experimenting led him to be fired.

And so Edison went to Boston, Massachusetts, to find work. He carried on experimenting, and developed an electronic machine for counting votes, but it was not taken up. So he went to New York City, where he invented a machine that matched up transactions on the stock exchange. It was his first financially successful invention.

Edison then went to Newark, New Jersey, where he set up a laboratory and factory to develop and produce more inventions. Edison used his business skills to secure good deals for his inventions, meaning he could make money from them.

In the next decades, Edison worked on the inventions he is most well-known for: the phonograph for recording sound, a camera that could record moving pictures, and the light bulb, for which he secured a patent in January 1880.

Edison then focused on lighting technology, which was rolled out to homes in Manhattan. In 1887, Edison built a new research center at West Orange, New Jersey.

Later on, Edison became friends with Henry Ford, and worked on batteries for cars. Over the course of his lifetime, Edison was granted over 1,000 patents for his inventions. He died in New Jersey on October 18, 1931, at the age of 84.

# Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'homeschooled'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'homeschooled' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'homeschooled'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'homeschooled'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'homeschooled' means.

# Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: discovered	found



# Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

Edison's most famous inventions were the light bulb, phonograph, and moving picture camera.

Then Edison worked as a telegraph operator on night shifts, so had time to experiment.

After that, Edison used his business skills to make money from his inventions.

Thomas Edison was born in Ohio in 1847, and he was mostly homeschooled.

His first job was selling candy and newspapers on trains, which helped him discover his talent for business.

In 1931, Edison died, by which time, he had been granted over 1,000 patents.

Edison's first commercially successful invention was for the stock exchange in New York City.

# Get to the facts

1 What was Thomas Edison's first job?

2 What did Edison set up at Newark, New Jersey?

3 Which inventions is Edison most known for?

4 When did Edison get a patent for a light bulb?

5 How many patents did Edison get over his lifetime?

# Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

## Moving pictures

Thomas Edison developed a way of recording and viewing moving images. He first showed his moving images to the public in 1891. Imagine you were one of the people there, seeing a recorded moving image for the first time...

**Below is a plain text version for printing:**



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## Finding key words:

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – discovered	Synonym – found
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## **Get to the facts:**

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- 3 Which inventions is Edison most known for?
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## **Make a story...**

### **Moving pictures**

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