

# INVENTORS

## Thomas Edison

### HIGHLIGHTS

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1. Before Thomas Alva Edison, the technology of the 19th century wasn't all that different from the 18th.
2. Most homes were lighted by kerosene lamps, all music was performed by live performers, and electricity was more of a fantasy than a reality.
3. When Edison died, all that had changed and his inventiveness played a major part in those changes.
4. Edison, who was a millionaire by age 40, made his first \$40,000 by creating a ticker for printing the latest stock market quotes and sending them to brokers' offices.
5. Thanks to his invention of the incandescent lamp and the phonograph, he was said to be the most famous American in the world by the time he was in his 30s.
6. Deaf for most of his adult life and suffering from an assortment of illnesses, Edison died on October 18, 1931, at the age of 84.

### THE PERSON

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1. Thomas Edison was born February 11, 1847, in Milan, Ohio.
2. Suffering from poor hearing and easily distracted, he spent just three months of his life in school.
3. After working as a telegraph operator, Edison produced his first inventions, a transmitter and receiver for the automatic telegraph.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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1. Edison patented more than 1,000 inventions in America, more than any other person in our history.
2. He patented thousands more inventions in other countries.
3. His major contributions were the incandescent light bulb, which led to electric lighting; the phonograph; the first electric power plant; and the first movies.
4. He contributed to improving the telephone, telegraph, and the storage battery.

5. He created the first research laboratory.

### UNIQUE INFLUENCE

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1. Edison's patents were some of the greatest contributions to modern life inventions that helped usher in and define the industrial age.
2. Edison, more than any other individual, laid the foundation for the technological and social revolution of the modern electric world.
3. He came up with the idea of putting together a team of skilled workers to investigate and solve technical problems, which led to the progress of modern science and research.
4. He left us with 389 patents for electric light and power, 195 for the phonograph, 150 for the telegraph, 141 for storage batteries, and 34 for the telephone.
5. Today, the very light bulb that Edison invented has become the symbol for the brilliant idea, the inspired thought, and the solution to a challenging problem.

### QUOTABLE QUOTES

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*When Edison set up his research lab, he promised, "A minor invention every 10 days and a big thing every six months or so." He made good on his boast.*

*He even predicted nuclear power when he said, "There will some day spring from the brain of science a machine of force so fearful in its potentiality, so absolutely terrifying that even man, the fighter who will dare torture and death in order to inflict torture and death, will be appalled and will abandon war forever."*

*When Edison was about to die, his wife asked if he was suffering. "No," he replied, "Just waiting."*

*When he was developing the first motion picture equipment, he said, "I am experimenting with an instrument which does for the eye what the phonograph does for the ear."*

*When asked his philosophy of life, Edison said, "Work. Bring out the secrets of nature and apply them for the happiness of man. Look on the bright side of everything."*