

Exercise:

1. What was wrong with the first lightbulbs? _____

2. What is a filament, and why is it important? _____

3. Which of Edison's inventions has the most impact on your life, and why? _____

4. In cartoons, why does a lightbulb represent an idea? _____

Did You Know?

- Edison invented the first electric typewriter in 1872. It was based on the mechanical typewriter but was not commonly used until the 1950s.
- He created the phonograph, which had a cylinder wrapped in a thin sheet of foil. He etched (carved into) the cylinder with a needle. In 1877, Edison recorded himself saying, "Mary had a little lamb" (the recording still exists today). He called the phonograph a talking machine. It was powered by a hand crank, which gave it inconsistent sound. Edison produced it for sale to the public as the first machine to capture sound and play it back. Later phonographs used electricity for power to produce a more consistent sound. Even later versions by other inventors used disks (or records) instead of a cylinder.
- He improved upon Bell's telephone by inventing a carbon microphone in 1886. His microphone used small granules of carbon in its mouthpiece. The carbon granules vibrated with the speech pattern and converted sound waves into electrical energy. The energy was transmitted through the wire. This led to the first long-distance telephone calls.
- He also developed the first motion picture projector in 1888 and called it the kinetoscope.
- From 1900 to 1910, Edison developed and improved upon the alkaline storage battery, the type of battery used today. Previous batteries were liquid; Edison's was dry and easy to carry.