

They changed the world

The inventions of both Thomas Edison (1847-1931) and Henry Ford (1863-1947) changed the world.

Edison's best-known inventions

- 1877 The phonograph (a way of recording sound)
- 1879 The electric light bulb
- 1894 The kinetoscope (first machine to produce motion pictures)
- 1909 The alkaline battery



"I find out what the world needs. Then I go ahead and try to invent it."



Henry Ford first met his hero, Edison, in 1897.

BIOGRAPHY

Thomas Edison's brilliant career as an inventor started when he was just a young boy. He [] at school for only three months when his teacher declared that eight-year-old Thomas was "addled" (confused). His mother decided to teach him at home and gave him a science book which described a variety of chemistry experiments. When he [] every experiment in the book, he built a science laboratory in the basement, labelling all his bottles "poison".

At the age of 12, young Thomas got his first job, serving newspapers, food and drinks on a train, but, whenever he had a moment, he carried on with his experiments in the baggage compartment. Unfortunately, during one of these experiments, he accidentally set fire to the compartment and he lost his job.

In 1863 he became a telegraph assistant in Canada. His job was to report to Toronto every hour by telegraph. Thomas thought this was a waste of time so he invented a gadget that sent a

signal automatically, even if he was asleep! This was his first real invention but his boss found him asleep on the job and he nearly lost his job again! By the age of twenty-two, Edison [] a full-time inventor. In 1882, only three years after he [] the light bulb, the first Central Power Station in New York was built to bring electric light to city streets and homes. By 1889 he [] his company, the "Edison General Electric Company". By 1913 he [] his "phonograph" and "kinetoscope" to produce the first *talking* "movie".

During his lifetime Edison took out a record number of 1,093 patents, and it is often said that he "invented" the 20th century. At the time of his birth, many scientists [] already [] with electricity, but no one [] able to do anything very useful with it! At his death, his electrical inventions [] life not only in America but also in all corners of the world. On the day of his funeral, lights were turned down at 10 pm all over the United States in his honour.