

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## Thomas A. Edison

Thomas Alva Edison was probably the greatest inventor who ever lived, though at school he never did really well. In fact, he went to the bottom of his class and stayed at the bottom for three months. Shortly after, at the age of 12, he left school and never went back! His first job was selling newspaper on trains, and later, at the age 16, he got a job working in a telegraph office. Not all Edison's inventions were successful. In fact, his first one was a failure. Many that followed, however, were spectacular successes and Edison became famous. Most people regard him as a genius.

Edison worked hard all his life, often working all night in his laboratory, and would not come home for days at a time. When asked what makes a genius, he said, "Genius is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration." Edison married his first wife, Mary Stilwell, when he was 24. She was only 16 at the time. The story goes that he tapped out his proposal to her in Morse code on a gas-pipe: "Will you marry me?" "I will", came the reply, also in Morse code.

Mary died when Edison was 37 years old and two years later he married his second wife, Mina Miller. Although most of the inventions which made Edison famous were made in the first half of his life, Edison continued to work and invent till he was over 70, often working 16 hours a day! During his long and productive life, Edison made 1.300 inventions. Edison died on October 18, 1931, at the age of 84. America and the world mourned his passing.

## 1. Comprehension Questions:

- a. How old was Edison when he left school? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. What was his first job? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. What did Edison answer when asked what makes a genius?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- d. How Edison propose to his first wife? \_\_\_\_\_
- e. How old was Edison when his first wife died? \_\_\_\_\_
- f. How many inventions did Edison make in his life? \_\_\_\_\_
- g. How old was he when he died? \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Was Edison an American? \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Circle True or False:

- a. Edison sometimes worked longer than 12 hours a day.  TRUE /  FALSE
- b. Edison knew Morse code, but Mary Stilwell didn't.  TRUE /  FALSE
- c. Edison returned to his old school after becoming famous.  TRUE /  FALSE
- d. Mina Miller became Edison's wife 2 years after Mary died.  TRUE /  FALSE
- e. Edison made his greatest inventions before he was 42.  TRUE /  FALSE