

## Reading Part 4: Reading for Viewpoints

Time: 13 minutes

### Read the following article from a website.

Nicola Tesla, the Serbian-American scientist, was an eccentric genius whose inventions enabled modern-day power and mass communication systems. His nemesis and former boss, Thomas Edison, was the iconic American inventor of the light bulb, the phonograph and the moving picture. The two feuding geniuses waged a "War of Currents" in the 1880s over whose electrical system would power the world - Tesla's alternating-current (AC) system or Edison's rival direct-current (DC) electric power. Amongst science nerds, few debates get more heated than the ones that compare Tesla and Edison.

"They're different inventors, but you can't really say one is greater, because American society needs some Edisons and it needs some Teslas" said W. Bernard Carlson, the author of "Tesla: Inventor of the Electrical Age". Tesla had an eidetic memory which meant he could very precisely recall images and objects. This enabled him to accurately visualize intricate 3D objects, and as a result, he could build working prototypes using few preliminary drawings. "He really worked out his inventions in his imagination," Carlson commented.

In contrast, Edison was more of a sketcher and a tinkerer. "He'd have stuff all over the bench: wires and coils and various parts of inventions," Carlson said. In the end, however, Edison held 1,093 patents, while Tesla garnered less than 300 worldwide (Of course, Edison had scores more assistants helping him devise inventions, and also bought some of his patents.)

Though the light bulb, the phonograph and moving pictures are touted as Edison's most important inventions, other people were already working on similar technologies, and if Edison hadn't invented those things, other people would have," said Leonard De Graaf, an archivist. In a shortsighted move, Edison dismissed Tesla's "impractical" idea of an alternating-current (AC) system of electric power transmission instead promoting his simpler, but less efficient, direct-current (DC) system.

By contrast, Tesla's ideas were often more disruptive technologies that didn't have a built-in market demand. Tesla spent years working on a system designed to wirelessly transmit voices, images and moving pictures - making him a futurist, and the true father of radio, telephone, cell phones and television. "Our entire mass communication system is based on Tesla's system," said author Marc Seifert

Using the drop-down menu (□), choose the best option according to the information given on the website.

1. This article is about (□)
2. Because Tesla had an eidetic memory (□)
3. Edison held far more patents than Tesla because (□)
4. According to Leonard DeGraaf, Edison's inventions (□)
5. According to Marc Seifer, Nicola Tesla's ideas (□)

The following is a comment by a visitor to the website page. Complete the comment by choosing the best option to fill in each black.

I enjoyed reading this article. A few years ago, I read a biography of Edison and Tesla. Unlike this article where the two inventors are portrayed as 6. \_\_\_\_\_, the book argued that many of Tesla's ideas were stolen by Edison. While this article emphasizes 7. \_\_\_\_\_, the book clearly showed that he was mostly known for his factories where he divided work into small tasks. Tesla had also proposed the idea of RADAR, but 8. \_\_\_\_\_, Edison labelled it as unrealistic. This passage also refers to the lightbulb 9. \_\_\_\_\_. However, the author of the biography said that it was worked upon by 21 people including Tesla. Finally, although the book credits Tesla as the inventor of the popular fluorescent light, the passage downplays his technology as lacking 10. \_\_\_\_\_.