

1

CHAPTER

The Inventor Who Kept His Promise

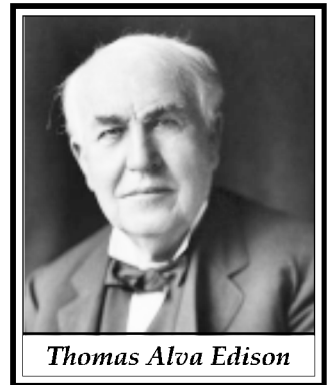
—Thomas Alva Edison

◆ **About the Author**

Thomas Alva Edison was born in 1847. He was an American scientist and inventor. He made more than 1000 inventions. Some of his experiments were silly in his childhood. His greatest inventions were gramophone and electric light.

◆ **About the Lesson**

This lesson tells you about the life and work of one of the greatest scientists the world has ever seen. Thomas Alva Edison was born in 1847 in Milan, U.S.A. He is known as the man of many inventions. Whenever you switch on the lights in your room, or turn on the record player you recognize the genius of Thomas Edison. He was man of great determination. He always reached for the sky. He gave his best.



Thomas Alva Edison

One day he made a promise to give electric light to this world. On 4th Sept., 1882 he fulfilled his promise. It is said that on that day nine hundred houses in New York burst into a bright light. He was honoured by the President of America on October 21, 1929 as he was voted by people of America as the greatest living American.

When you want to read at night, you simply press a switch and the electric lamp gives you light. Do you know who invented the electric lamp? He was an American named Thomas Alva Edison.

Even in the childhood Edison loved to do experiments. He was found of asking questions and he was never satisfied till he got the right answers. There are many stories about his childhood and here are a few of them.

One day when young Edison was at school, the teacher was telling the children a story about the birds. He got up and asked the teacher, "Madam, why can't man fly like a bird?"

"Because man has no wings," replied the teacher.

The young boy thought for a moment and asked her again, "But kites have no wings and still we can fly them in the sky."

All the other boys laughed and the teacher lost her patience. She thought, the boy was stupid and naughty and she asked his parents to take him out of school. His parents took him home but they knew that he was not a stupid boy. Edison was just eight years old when this happened.

Young Edison found in his mother his best teacher. She was patient enough to answer all his questions and with her help and guidance he made good progress. He used to observe things very closely and do a lot of experiments. Some of his experiments were silly but he learnt a lot from them.

One morning he was watching a bird. It flew down to the ground, picked up a few worms in its beak and flew away. This gave young Edison an idea. "The bird is able to fly because it eats worms! Man can also fly if he eats worms," he said to himself. He wanted to try the experiment on someone. He caught hold of a few worms, beat them into a pulp and mixed it in water. He took the mixture to a servant girl and said to her, "This is a wonderful mixture. If you drink this, you can fly like a bird. Come on! drink it and see."

The poor girl believed him and drank the mixture. Well, she didn't fly but she fell ill. Young Edison's mother warned him not to do such silly experiments.

Once he went to a poultry farm with his mother. There he saw a hen. It was sitting on its eggs. He asked his mother about it and she answered, "The hen is hatching its eggs. After sometime chickens will come out of the eggs." "Why can't I hatch eggs?" thought young Edison. The next morning he got a dozen eggs and sat on them. He got up after sometime but he did not find any chickens. He had only smashed the eggs and spoiled his shirts. He got a good beating from his mother that day.

A really funny boy, wasn't he? He failed in all these experiments, but he had learnt something from them. He had learnt that his ideas were wrong. He was fond of books and read quite a lot of them. His father gave him twenty-five cents for every book he read. He read widely with the pocket money he got, he bought more books and set up a small laboratory. His mother encouraged him and helped him in his experiments.

After sometimes Edison found that he needed more money to carry on his experiments. And he wanted more books as he had read all the books he had at home. He wanted to go out and see new places and new people. He wanted to read new books and to improve his knowledge. So he decided to take up a job in the railway. At first, his parents did not like this idea as he was just twelve years old. But they agreed when he gave them good reasons for his decision. So Edison became a newspaper boy and travelled up and down the train to Detroit. He sold newspapers, sweets and fruits and earned two dollars on the first day. He said to his mother at supper that night. "Take this dollar, mother. Every night I shall give you a dollar from what I earn." And he kept his promise.

A year or two later Edison decided to produce his own newspaper. He bought an old printing press and set it up in his railway wagon. He edited and printed his paper, sold a number of copies and made more money. With the money he got, he set up a small laboratory in his railway wagon.

When he was fifteen he met with an accident that affected his career. While he was doing an experiment in his laboratory, the train turned round a corner. There was a sudden jolt and a bit of phosphorus fell on the floor of his carriage and it caught fire. Before he could put it out, the newspapers had caught fire. The fire spread and Edison shouted for help. The guard came in and together they were able to put out the fire, but that was the end of Edison's service on the train. He was dismissed at the next station.

The next five years, Edison took up jobs in different cities. He made good use of the libraries and met experts in factories and workshops. He asked them questions, learnt a lot from them and worked harder at his experiments.

During this period, he was out of a job for a short time and was staying with a friend. This young man was working in a company there. In that company they had an important

machine. One day the machine stopped suddenly. Edison was there at the time. He had a look at the machine and repaired it within a short time. The manager of the company liked Edison and gave him a good job. Edison paid off his debts and improved his laboratory.

The next six years, Edison made a series of inventions. One invention followed another quickly and Edison earned more fame and money. In 1877, he was working on a machine that could reproduce the human voice. The next year, he actually made one. It was then called the talking machine. We call it the Gramophone now. The same year, he was invited to the White House in Washington. That is the name of the house where the President of the United States of America lives. Edison went there to show his new machine to the President. This made him famous all over America. Now he was successful and prosperous. He owed all this to his mother's help and encouragement and to his own hard work.

In March, 1878, he began to work on an electric lamp. People used candles and oil lamps in those days. They did not have electric lights. Edison promised to give them electric light in two years. When he said this, all the scientists laughed at him. They said that it was impossible, but Edison was not worried at all. He worked harder and harder. He performed a thousand experiments but all of them failed. But he did not give up hope. "I must keep my promise to the people", he said to himself and worked harder still. He was racing against time. At last, he succeeded in making an electric bulb after nearly one thousand and two hundred experiments. On New Year's Day, 1880 he and his workers put up electric light at his laboratory. People from all over America came to see that grand sight. Edison had kept his promise to the people. On 4th September, 1882, for the first time, New York shone in the brightness of electric light.

Edison served his country during the First World War. He made forty war time inventions and was awarded a medal for his service. In 1929 the Silver Jubilee of the invention of electric bulb was celebrated in a grand manner. The President of the United States of America received him and honoured him at a big function. Edison got up at the function to thank the President but suddenly fell ill. His illness became worse and he died on Sunday morning of 18th October, 1931. Thus ended the great and eventful life of a man who enriched human life and happiness. He said once, "I shall never invent anything which will destroy life. I want to make people happy." He also said, "The world has been in darkness too long. I would like to give to the world more laughter and more light." He kept his word. His gramophone has brought us more laughter and his electric lamp has given us more light.

Today our country and the world needs more men like Edison. Every boy and girl should follow his great example.

|| Glossary ||

Inventor	आविष्कारक	maker of new things
Promise	वचन दिया	to give word; assurance
Experiment	प्रयोग	practical work
Patience	धैर्य	ability to wait for results
Naughty	शैतान	disobedient
Stupid	मूर्ख	foolish
Patient	धैर्यवान	having patience
Enough	पर्याप्त	sufficient

Guidance	पथ प्रदर्शन	showing the way
Wonderful	आश्चर्यजनक	full of wonder
Progress	उन्नति	development
Silly	मूर्खतापूर्ण	foolish
Worms	कीड़े-मकोड़े	small insects
Poultry farm	मुर्गीपालन फार्म	place where hens are kept
Beak	चोंच	horny part of bird's mouth
Mixture	घोल	solution
Hatch-egg	अण्डे सेना	causing the young bird to come out
Smashed	तोड़ डाला	broke into pieces
Spoiled	खराब हो गया	became useless
Set-up	स्थापित किया	established
Encouraged	प्रोत्साहित किया	inspired
Decision	निर्णय	deciding, judging
Affected	प्रभावित किया	influenced
Phosphorus	फॉस्फोरस (एक ज्वलनशील तत्व जो अंधेरे में चमकता है)	
Expert	विशेषज्ञ	specialist
Chicken	मुर्गी का बच्चा	young of towl
Shouted	चिल्लाया	cried
Repaired	मरम्मत किया	mended restored
Improved	सुधार किया	became better
Reproduce	पुनः तैयार किया	produce again
Prosperous	समृद्धशाली	flourishing successful
Performed	पूरा किया	did or completed
Honoured	सम्मानित किया	respected highly
Eventful	महत्वपूर्ण	momentous

|| Exercise ||

(A) Short Answer Type Questions:

Answer the following questions in not more than 25 words each :

1. Who was Edison and why is he famous?
2. Why was Edison taken out of the school?
3. In what way did Edison find his mother the best teacher?
4. Why did Edison get a beating from his mother?
5. Why did Edison join the railways?
6. How was he dismissed from the job?
7. What inventions did Edison make?

Or Describe the important invention made by Edison.

Or What inventions were made by Edison ?

8. Why did Edison become famous in America?

9. What did Edison promise to the people of America?
Or What promise did Edison keep?
10. Why was Edison awarded a medal?
11. Why did Edison's father give him twenty five cents for every book?
12. What made the teacher think that Edison was stupid and naughty?
Or Why did teacher think that Edison was stupid and naughty?
13. In what way did Edison make the world happy?
14. Why did all the scientists laugh at Edison?
15. Which of Edison's inventions do you think is the most important and why?
16. How did Edison's father encourage him to read more books?
17. How did Edison serve his country during the First World War?
18. Why has the life of Edison been called great and eventful?
19. Why did Edison decide to take up a job in the railway?

(B) Select the most suitable alternative to complete each of the following statements :

1. **When Edison tried his experiment on his servant girl :**
 - (a) she began to fly
 - (b) she began to tremble
 - (c) she fell ill
 - (d) she began to run
2. **Edison got a beating from his mother because :**
 - (a) he had smashed the eggs and spoiled his shirt
 - (b) he had hatched the eggs
 - (c) he had eaten up all the eggs
 - (d) he had sold the eggs.
3. **Edison's father gave him twenty five cents for every book he read, because:**
 - (a) he wanted Edison to read more
 - (b) he wanted Edison to sell his books
 - (c) he had failed in all his experiments
 - (d) he wanted to discourage him.
4. **Edison told his teacher, "But the kites have no wings and still we can fly them in the sky." It was :**
 - (a) an intelligent answer
 - (b) a doubtful answer
 - (c) a silly answer
 - (d) a wrong answer
5. **Edison was taken out of school because :**
 - (a) the teacher asked his parents to withdraw him
 - (b) he was dissatisfied with his teacher
 - (c) he was a weak student
 - (d) he did not like school.
6. **When Edison went on asking questions in the class, the teacher thought that he was :**
 - (a) trying to be fool her
 - (b) stupid and naughty
 - (c) very intelligent
 - (d) arrogant
7. **Edison was fond of :**
 - (a) telling stories
 - (b) playing games
 - (c) making experiments
 - (d) flying kites

8. Electric light shone for the first time in America (New York) in :
Or Edison succeeded in making an electric bulb in.
(a) 1882 (b) 1872 (c) 1880 (d) 1878
9. The teacher thought that Edison was :
(a) stubborn (b) a genius
(c) stupid and naughty (d) very mischievous
10. Edison died on
(a) 18th October, 1931 (b) 13th September, 1929
(c) 2nd November, 1930
11. Edison succeeded in making electric bulb after nearly...
(a) one thousand experiments
(b) two thousand experiments
(c) one thousand and two hundred experiments
(d) one thousand and five hundred experiments
12. The silver jubilee of the invention of electric bulb was celebrated in
(a) 1878 (b) 1880 (c) 1882 (d) 1929
13. The President of America invited Edison to
(a) The White House (b) Washington
(c) New York (d) India

(C) Say whether each of the following statements is 'true' or 'false':

1. Even in his childhood, Edison loved to do experiments.
2. The teacher asked his parents not to take him out of the school.
3. Edison found in his mother his best teacher.
4. As a child, Edison was not fond of asking questions.
5. Edison was dismissed from his job.
6. Edison did not join the railways.
7. Edison went to show his talking machine to the President of the United States of America at the White House in Washington.
8. Edison was never satisfied till he got the right answer.
9. Edison used to observe things very closely.
10. On 4th September, 1882, for the first time New York shone in the brightness of electric light.
11. Thomas Alva Edison was a German.
12. Edison was a dull boy during his student days.
13. Edison did not serve his country during the First World War.
14. Edison was born in Canada.
15. Edison promised to give Americans electric light in two years.
16. Edison was an American scientist.
17. Edison was taken out of school because he was a stupid boy.
18. Edison did not thank the President for the award.
19. Edison was fond of books and read a lot of them.
20. Some of Edison's experiments were silly but he learnt a lot from them.

21. The President of America invited Edison to the White House.
22. Edison said "I shall never invent anything which will destroy life. I want to make people happy."
23. Edison bought toys with pocket money his father gave him.
24. Thomas Alva Edison was a great inventor of England.
25. Edison was fond of asking questions.
26. Edison was a great American sailor.
27. The President of U.S.A. received Edison and honoured him in a big function.
28. In 1929 the Silver Jubilee of the invention of electric bulb was celebrated in a grand manner.
29. Edison promised his mother to give her a dollar every night what he earned.
30. Edison served his country during the World War II.
31. Edison joined the railways because a he needed more money for his experiments.
32. Edison invented many things which can destroy life.
33. Edison made forty wartime inventions.
34. Edison succeeded in making an electric bulb.
35. Edison was a great inventor but he was never awarded a medal for his inventions.
36. Edison was a German scientist.
37. Edison was born in England.
38. Edison made more than one thousand experiments.
39. Thomas Alva Edison was a great singer.
40. The President of the U.S.A. received Edison and honoured him in a big function.
41. Electric light shone in America, for the first time in 1882.
42. Parents of Edison did not encourage him in his experiments.
43. Edison did not invent electric light.

(D) Complete the spellings of the following words :

- (i) In—ent—r (ii) Exp—r—ment (iii) Pat— —nt
 (iv) Doz—n (v) Gu—d—nce

Project Work

- (a) On the basis of your reading of the lesson 'The Inventor Who Kept His Promise' complete the following table after a group discussion.

Table

Foolish experiments done by Edison	After effect	Useful experiment done by Edison	After effect
1		1	
2		2	

- (a) Read the biographical details of the famous scientist Edison from the text and write a **bio-sketch** on the basis of those details.