

Alexander Graham Bell

Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone.

Bell was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on March 3, 1847. Both his father and his grandfather were experts on how people speak. After finishing university, Bell worked with his father. He taught deaf people how to speak and studied the sounds people make when they talk.

In 1870, Bell and his family moved to Brantford, Ontario. In 1871, he moved to Boston to teach at the first-ever school for the deaf. In 1873, he became a professor at Boston University. There, he taught deaf people and encouraged others to become teachers of the deaf.

From 1873 to 1876, Bell developed several devices for sending sounds through electric wires. One of these was an early form of the telephone. Bell thought up the idea for the telephone and Thomas Watson built it. On June 2, 1875, Bell and Watson sent and received a musical note.

On March 7, 1876, Bell was granted a patent for the telephone. The first sentence “Watson, come here. I want you” was sent three days later. Bell showed his new invention at a scientific convention in May 1876 and at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in June. It caused great excitement. In October 1876, Bell talked to Watson on the device and Watson answered him.

In 1877, a telephone was put into a private home, a long-distance conversation was carried over telegraph wires, and the Bell Telephone Company was formed. Bell also demonstrated the telephone in England and France.

In 1884, Bell Telephone built the first long-distance line. Soon, others were built and put into service.

For many years, other people said the idea for a telephone was theirs, but the courts and many scientists and researchers supported Bell’s work. His invention led to the invention of many other types of communication devices.

Bell also invented the gramophone record player and experimented in many other areas, including sheep breeding and aviation.

He died in 1922.

Pre-Reading Warm Up Questions ☀

1. Do you know when the telephone was invented?
2. How many telephones do you have in your house?
3. Do you have a cell phone?
4. How did people use to send long-distance messages before the invention of telephones, faxes, and e-mail?
5. If you invent something, how can you protect your invention so that other people can not steal your idea?



COMPREHENSION ✍

A. True or False. Read the statements below. If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence. If it is false, write F. If it is false, correct the information.

1. Alexander Graham Bell was born in Canada.
2. Alexander Graham Bell was deaf.
3. Thomas Watson came up with the idea for the telephone.
4. A telephone was first put into a private home in 1876.
5. Alexander Graham Bell invented the gramophone record player.

B. Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write the answers in complete sentences.

1. What did Alexander Graham Bell's father and grandfather know a lot about?
2. What did Alexander Graham Bell do when he finished university?
3. Where was the first school for the deaf?
4. What did Bell do between 1873 and 1876?
5. What was Bell's first sentence on the telephone?
6. What was the reaction to Bell's invention at the 1876 science convention and the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition?
7. When was the Bell Telephone company formed?
8. In what other areas did Bell experiment?



VOCABULARY REVIEW

A. Match the words on the left with the correct meaning on the right.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| _____ 1. invent | a. official protection of one's invention |
| _____ 2. expert | b. flying |
| _____ 3. deaf | c. show |
| _____ 4. encourage | d. test or try something to see what happens |
| _____ 5. device | e. create, think up, make something new |
| _____ 6. grant | f. person with special knowledge or skills |
| _____ 7. patent | g. people who study or look for information |
| _____ 8. convention | h. not able to hear |
| _____ 9. demonstrate | i. support |
| _____ 10. researchers | j. raising animals for reproduction |
| _____ 11. experiment | k. piece of equipment |
| _____ 12. breeding | l. give formally or officially |
| _____ 13. aviation | m. conference, large meeting |

DISCUSS

1. What would life be like without the telephone?
2. What other communication devices have changed our lives significantly?
3. Do you prefer to communicate with friends in other cities by telephone or e-mail?
4. What do you think has been the greatest invention of the last two centuries?
5. How long do you think a patent should last?

B. Choose the correct word from the left column above to complete the following sentences. (You may have to change the verb tense.)

1. Many _____ people communicate through sign language.
2. When Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, _____ a new computer operating system, he made millions and millions of dollars.
3. Many _____ all over the world are trying to find a cure for cancer.
4. A wheel chair is a _____ used by people who cannot walk.
5. Roberto speaks French, English, Italian, and Spanish. He is an _____ in languages.

ANSWER KEY

Please note:

The reading for this topic is also available in full-page format at the end of the lesson (page 4).

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1-3. Individual answer

4. Before the invention of the telephones, faxes and emails, people sent long-distance messages via a telegraph.
5. Inventions can be protected through the use of a patent, a document granting an inventor sole rights to an invention.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

A. True or False

1. F 2. F 3. F 4. F 5. T

B. Written Answers

1. Bell's father and grandfather knew a lot about how people speak.
2. After finishing university, Bell worked with his father and taught deaf people and encouraged others to become teachers of the deaf.
3. The first school for the deaf was located in Boston.
4. Between 1873 and 1876, Bell developed several devices for sending sounds through electric wires, one of which was an early form of the telephone.
5. Bell's first sentence was "Watson come here, I want you."
6. Bell's invention caused great excitement at both the Science Convention and the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition.
7. The Bell telephone company was formed in 1877.
8. Bell experimented with sheep breeding and aviation.

VOCABULARY REVIEW

A. Matching

1. e 2. f 3. h 4. i 5. k 6. l 7. a
8. m 9. c 10. g 11. d 12. j 13. b

B. Choose the correct word

1. deaf 2. invented or patented (*patent can be verb or noun*) 3. researchers 4. device
5. expert

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