



Thomas Edison was not the first person to invent the light bulb. He was, however, able to improve on existing designs enough to be able to produce a longer lasting, and cheaper electric light. Light bulbs produce light by running electricity through a tiny thread inside the bulb and making it glow. After thousands of combinations and experiments, and over 72 hours without sleep, Edison was finally able to get one to work and he showed it to the people of New Jersey on New Year's Eve, 1879. With money borrowed from J.P. Morgan and Cornelius Vanderbilt, Edison quickly formed the Edison Light Company (which is called General Electric today) and began to produce light bulbs for the people. Edison guaranteed to make electric light so cheap that only the rich would be able to afford to burn candles.

1. What does Edison's quote tell you about his personality?
2. What was the problem with the existing light bulbs before Edison began work on his own version?
3. What did Edison have to do to be able to start his own electric light company?
4. What is Edison's company called today?
5. Video Question: Where was Edison's laboratory?
6. Video Question: How many materials did Edison go through in his search for a filament for the light bulb?
7. Video Question: What material did Edison finally discover would glow the brightest and burn the longest?
8. Video Question: By 1902, how many light bulbs are in use?