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## Famous Thinkers

### Reading Comprehension

#### Alexander Graham Bell

Did you answer the phone today? You have Alexander Bell to thank for that. Bell was the son of a speech teacher. He had helped his father through the years and learned many things. He was taught how people learned to speak and hear. He used this knowledge to help deaf people learn to speak.

Bell was born in Scotland in 1847. The Bell family eventually moved to Canada. Bell moved on to Boston, in the United States, where he continued his work with deaf people. He was trying to invent a machine that would help deaf people speak. His first success was when he sent a musical note over an electrical wire.

Bell kept working and experimenting. He invented a machine that was able to send and receive human speech. One day he spilled acid on his clothes. He decided to use his machine to send a "help" message to his friend. His friend got the message through the machine! The telephone had been invented. Some people thought that others had invented the telephone. The Supreme Court finally ruled in Bell's favour. Bell eventually got a patent for his invention.

#### Story Questions:

1. Alexander Graham Bell would probably be most interested in which of the following inventions?
  - a. the microwave
  - b. the cell phone
  - c. Braille
  - d. the car
  
2. According to the passage, how did Bell finally receive the patent for his invention?
  - a. He waited the official ten years for it to happen.
  - b. He went to the patent office to get the official rights.
  - c. The Supreme Court ruled in Bell's favour.
  - d. He spilled acid on his clothes and called his friend for help.

3. What is the main idea of the passage?
  - a. Through hard work and dedication, Bell was able to accomplish great things.
  - b. how the telephone was invented
  - c. how Bell's background proved helpful
  - d. how Bell won the patent for the telephone
  
4. What was the original purpose of the machine Bell invented?
  - a. He was trying to invent a machine that could make you seem bigger.
  - b. He was trying to invent the telephone.
  - c. He was trying to invent a machine that would help deaf people speak.

### Journal Writing

5. **Write** about something that you want to learn how to do. **Explain** in 5–7 sentences what you would like to learn and why.

### Word Problems

6. **Read** the word problems below and **write** the answers.
  - ★ Joseph wants to buy a new book about Alexander Graham Bell. It costs \$7.95. In his piggy bank, he has 21 quarters, 28 dimes, 33 nickels, and 79 pennies. How much money does Joseph have? How much money, if any, will he have left after he buys the book?
  
  - ★ Lori has 39 quarters, 39 dimes, 58 nickels, and 116 pennies. Can she afford to spend \$17.98 on a new case for her cell phone? How much more money does she need or will she have left over?

### Fun Stuff!

7. There have been many changes to the telephone since Alexander Graham Bell first invented it. In 1973, the first mobile phone was invented by Martin Cooper. He believed that the mobile phone should be a "personal telephone – something that would represent an individual so you could assign a number; not to a place, not to a desk, not to a home, but to a person." [Check out the evolution of mobile phones here!](#) What will come next?