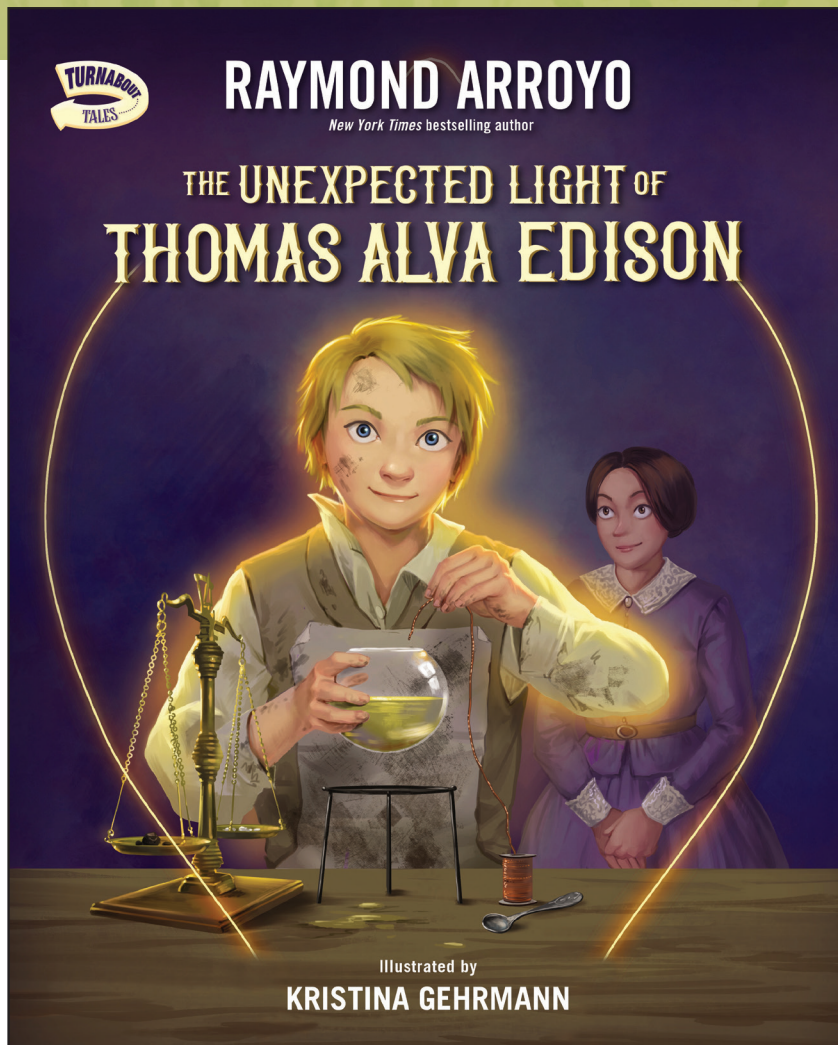


CURRICULUM GUIDE

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THE UNEXPECTED LIGHT OF THOMAS ALVA EDISON

BY
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ILLUSTRATED BY
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FROM *New York Times* bestselling author and news anchor Raymond Arroyo comes a picture book biography of one of America's most famous inventors, Thomas Alva Edison, and a story about how a small spark can create a big light.

No one thought much of young Thomas Alva Edison. He couldn't focus at school and caused trouble around the house. But where others saw a distracted and mischievous boy, his mother saw imagination and curiosity. At only seven years old, Al, as he was called as a young child, was educated by his mother, who oversaw his rigorous at-home schooling while also allowing him great freedom to explore and dream. Those early years of encouragement and loving guidance formed the man who would apply those valuable lessons as well as his rich imagination to inventing the phonograph, the motion picture camera, the light bulb, and more.



Challenges Faced. Paths Changed. History Turned.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



What do you think it means to describe a person as having a “light within?”



Look closely at the illustrations of Al next to the waterway. What clues from the illustrations help to show the reader the setting for the story?



When Al’s mother tells him that geese squat on their eggs to keep them warm and help them hatch, what idea comes to Al?



What happens as a result of Al’s curiosity about fire?



Compare the difference between how Al’s mother and father react to the experiments that Al conducts at home.



What happens when Al attends a one-room schoolhouse in Michigan?



What does Mrs. Edison’s reaction to Reverend Engle’s opinion of Al reveal about Mrs. Edison’s character?



What does Al do with his knowledge about electricity and mechanics?



What does Al discover about himself while working on the trains selling newspapers and food? What is the positive outcome of this discovery?



How does Al demonstrate bravery at the train station? What is Al’s reward for his courage?



How does Al, now called Tom as an adult, honor the memory of his mother when he opens the invention factory?



What are some of the inventions that came from the over 3,000 notebooks of ideas that Tom kept while he worked at the invention factory?

ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

OPINION PIECE

Thomas Edison created the light bulb, the phonograph to record music, and the motion picture camera. Look around your house and classroom to see how some of Edison's early inventions still exist today. In your opinion, which of Edison's inventions is the most important today? Write an opinion piece that includes reasons for your choice.



BEE CURIOUS

Young Al Edison was curious about bees. Research these amazing insects and create a poster report with illustrations and facts about what you discover about bees.

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Thomas Edison said, “My mother was the making of me . . . If it had not been for her appreciation and her faith in me at a critical time in my experience, I should very likely never had become an inventor.” A person's dreams and creativity benefit from the support of those who believe in the dreamer. Think of a time when someone in your life believed in you when you followed a dream, tried something new, or expressed your creativity. Write a personal narrative about this experience and what this person did to support you.

BOOK TALK

Using the modern equivalent of Thomas Edison's motion picture camera—namely, the video recording tool on a Smartphone—make a short book talk video about *The Unexpected Light of Thomas Alva Edison*.

The discussion questions, activities, and worksheets in this guide were created by Leigh Courtney, Ph.D. She teaches in the Global Education program at a public elementary school in San Diego, California. She holds both master's and doctoral degrees in education, with an emphasis on curriculum and instruction.

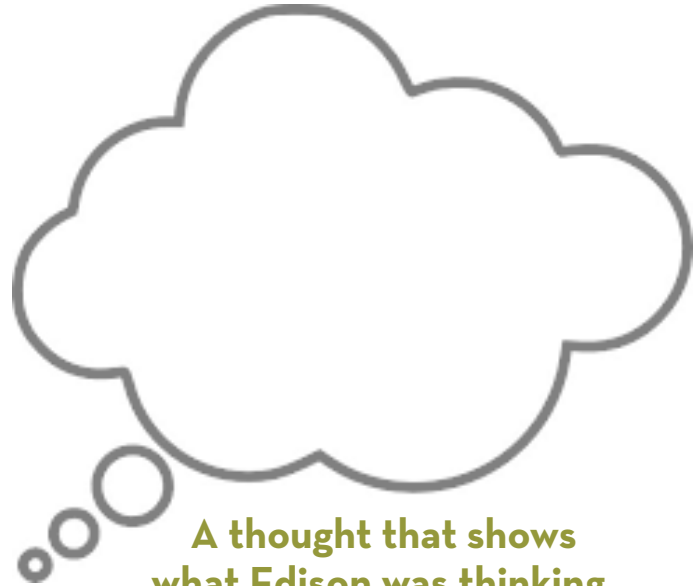
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GETTING TO KNOW THOMAS EDISON FROM HIS HEAD TO HIS TOES

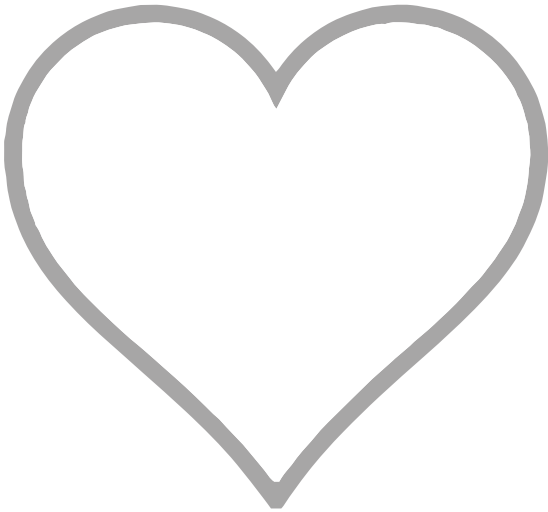
Fill in each shape with information from the story.



A quote from Edison.



A thought that shows
what Edison was thinking.



Character traits of Edison



Things
Edison
created.



Places
Edison
traveled.

NAME: _____

MAIN IDEA AND DETAILS

Think carefully about the events in *The Unexpected Light of Thomas Alva Edison* and identify two main ideas presented in the story. Write each idea in the top boxes. Below each main idea, list details from the story that support it.

MAIN IDEA

MAIN IDEA

NAME: _____

SEQUENCING STORY EVENTS

Number the following story events in the order in which they happened in *The Unexpected Light of Thomas Alva Edison*.

- Al was curious about fire, and he burned down his family's barn.
- Tom opened the invention factory.
- As a baby, Al Edison slept in a dark, windowless attic.
- Tom invented the light bulb, the phonograph to record music, the motion picture camera, and so much more!
- Al's mother took him out of a school that didn't appreciate his talents, and she homeschooled him.
- Al was curious about how a grain elevator worked, so he climbed inside one.
- Al learned how to use the telegraph and became a telegraph operator.
- Al got a job working on the Grand Trunk Railway.
- Al was curious about how steamboats moved along the canals and fell in the waterway!

