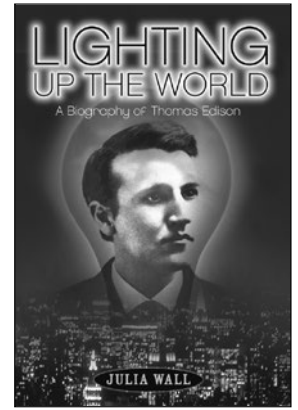


Lighting Up the World: A Biography of Thomas Edison

by Julia Wall



Book Summary

There are more patents in the name of Thomas Edison than any other inventor. This text examines the life and some of the inventions of this remarkably determined man.

Features of the Book

- Biography
- Quotations
- Use of figurative language

Purpose

Lighting Up the World: A Biography of Thomas Edison can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills and understandings:

- S** making inferences;
- S** exploring the use of figurative language;
- S** evaluating information;
- S** identifying the features of a biography;
- S** examining how the work of scientists has benefits for our day-to-day lives;
- S** recognising how people spend their lives working in science;
- S** exploring how people have always had questions about the way the world works.

Investigation Tools

- Step by Step – How Do Inventions Become Manufactured Items?, pages 6–7
- Making Connections – Isaac Newton, page 10
- What’s the Background? – Child Labour, page 12
- Looking Closer – The Invention Factory, page 18
- Digging Deeper – The Edisonian Approach, page 24
- Weighing Both Sides – A Light Bulb That Lasts Forever?, pages 26–27

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Making inferences
- S** Exploring the use of figurative language
- S** Evaluating information

Introducing the text

Discuss the features of biographies. Ask the students to identify what kinds of people have biographies written about them.

- *Why would we be interested in certain people? What could we learn from them?*

Tell the students that they are going to read the biography of Thomas Edison.

- *The title of the book is Lighting Up the World: A Biography of Thomas Edison. What clue does that give us about Edison?*

Explain that the students will explore the use of figurative language to convey meaning. They will also be practicing the reading strategies of making inferences and evaluating information.

Reading and discussing the text

Examine the title and the quote on page 3 with the students. Discuss the use of metaphor (lighting up the world; genius is ...).

- *Why do authors sometimes use metaphors?*
- *What ideas are conveyed in these examples?*

Review the table of contents and encourage the students to identify the use of metaphor and the way that the biography is ordered.

- *What do you infer is the main focus of the biography?*
- *What do you think the titles of chapters 3 and 4 refer to?*

Ask the students to read Chapter 1 silently.

- *What can you infer about Edison?*
- *Why did he work so hard at his inventions?*
- *Describe the research done before an invention goes into production. Why is this important?*

Discuss the quote at the start of Chapter 2.

- *What did Edison mean?*
- *Read Chapter 2, thinking about the kind of person Edison was.*
- *What things influenced Edison's development as a scientist and inventor? Why do you think this?*

The students can read the rest of the book silently. As they finish reading, have them evaluate Edison's importance as a scientist.


- *Apart from the obvious inventions, what were Edison's most important contributions?*
- *The Edisonian Approach (page 24) refers to Edison's thorough way of researching and testing. What could be some drawbacks to this approach?*
- *The heading of Chapter 4 has an example of figurative language called "hyperbole" or exaggeration. Why is it appropriate in this context? (Draw out the double meanings of Edison's death and the tribute paid to him.)*

Revisiting the Text

The activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson, during later reading sessions as mini-lessons, or as independent activities.

S Making inferences

Edison invented many things that made a big difference to people's lives.

 The students can use the blackline master to list some of his inventions and to make inferences about what life might be like without them.

S Identifying the features of a biography

The students can compare this biography with others they have read to identify their key features. They could make a wall chart that contains the criteria or defining characteristics of biographies.

S Examining how the work of scientists has benefits for our day-to-day lives

In this book, the students have read about the inventions and discoveries of one man. The inventions of other scientists are also referred to. The students can select an invention or discovery and find out more about it. The students can come up with their own idea from the book or choose one from this list:

- Newton's discovery of gravity (page 9)
- Morse code (page 13)
- telegrams (page 13)
- the stock ticker (page 15).