Alexander Graham Bell

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- **Occupation:** Inventor
- **Born:** March 3, 1847 in Edinburgh, Scotland
- **Died:** August 2, 1922 in Nova Scotia, Canada
- **Best known for:** Inventing the telephone

Biography:

Alexander Graham Bell is most famous for his invention of the telephone. He first became interested in the science of sound because both his mother and wife were deaf. His experiments in sound eventually let him to want to send voice signals down a telegraph wire. He was able to get some funding and hire his famous assistant Thomas Watson and together they were able to come up with the telephone. The first words spoken over the telephone were by Alex on March 10, 1876. They were "Mr. Watson, come here, I want to see you".

It turns out that other scientists had similar ideas. Bell had to race to the patent office in order to get his patent in first. He was first and, as a result, Bell and his investors had a valuable patent that would change the world. They formed the Bell Telephone Company in 1877. There have been many mergers and name changes over the years, but this company is known today as AT&T.

Where did Alexander Graham Bell grow up?

Bell was born on March 3, 1847 in Edinburgh, Scotland. He grew up in Scotland and was initially homeschooled by his father who was a professor. He later would attend high school as well as the University of Edinburgh.

Did Alexander Graham Bell only invent the telephone?

Bell actually had many inventions and did experimentation in many areas of science. Some of these include:

- The Metal Detector - Bell invented the first metal detector which was used to try and find a bullet inside of President James Garfield.
- Audiometer - A device used to detect hearing problems.
- He did experimental work on aeronautics and hydrofoils.
- He invented techniques which helped in teaching speech to deaf persons.
- He made a device to help find icebergs.

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Actor portraying Alexander Graham Bell
Source: AT&T promotional film by Unknown

Fun Facts about Alexander Graham Bell

Bell made the first transcontinental telephone call on January 15, 1915. He called Thomas Watson from New York City. Watson was in San Francisco.

- He helped form the National Geographic Society.
- Bell did not like to have a telephone in his study as he found it intrusive!
- He did not get the middle name Graham until he was 10 years old, when he asked his father to give him a middle name like his brothers.
- At his wife's request, Bell went by the nickname Alec.
- Upon his death, every phone in North America was silenced for a short period to honor him.

Activities

Take a ten question quiz about this page.

Test Quiz

Questions on this quiz are based on information from
Alexander Graham Bell.

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1. Where was Alexander Graham Bell born?
a. New York, New York
b. Toronto, Canada
c. Chicago, Illinois
d. Edinburgh, Scotland
e. San Francisco, California

2. What caused Alexander Graham Bell to become interested in the science of sound?
a. He enjoyed listening to music
b. His mother and wife were both deaf
c. He worked as an acoustic engineer at the Paris Opera
d. He was a professional pianist
e. He thought he could make a lot of money by studying sound

3. Who was Thomas Watson?
a. Alexander Graham Bell's brother
b. The inventor of the phonograph
c. Alexander Graham Bell's teacher who taught him about sound
d. A rival inventor who invented the telegraph
e. Alexander Graham Bell's assistant

4. What invention is Alexander Graham Bell most known for?
a. Telephone
b. Steam engine
c. Camera
d. Telegraph
e. Sewing machine

5. What were the first words spoken over the telephone?
a. Hello, who's there?
b. This is a test
c. Mr. Watson, come here, I want to see you
d. Can you hear me now?
e. What's your favorite color?

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6. What major modern-day company began as part of Alexander Graham Bell's company Bell Telephone Company?
a. Apple
b. AT&T
c. Microsoft
d. General Electric
e. Ford Motor Company

7. Bell's metal detector was used to try and find a bullet inside of what U.S. President?
a. Grover Cleveland
b. Benjamin Harrison
c. William McKinley
d. James Garfield
e. Chester A. Arthur

8. What invention by Alexander Graham Bell would have helped ships crossing the Atlantic Ocean?
a. A GPS location device
b. A radio phone that could communicate over thousands of miles
c. A device to help find icebergs
d. All of the above
e. None of the above

9. True or False: Alexander Graham Bell did not want a telephone in his study because he found it intrusive.
a. TRUE
b. FALSE

10. How was Alexander Graham Bell honored in North America after his death?
a. All the telephones rang at the same time
b. The Star Spangled Banner was played over the telephones
c. All the telephones were silent at the same time for a short period
d. The recording of the first phone call was played on the radio
e. All of the telegraph lines in North America were shut down for good