



Marfé Ferguson Delano

About the Author

Marfé Ferguson Delano has written 11 children's books for the National Geographic Society. *Inventing the Future: A Photobiography of Thomas Alva Edison* is an American Library Association 2003 Notable Book for Children. *Exploring Caves: Journeys into the Earth*, coauthored with a teacher and a microbiologist, is a National Science Teachers Association 2002 Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K-12. A graduate of Duke University, Marfé lives in Northern Virginia with her husband and two children.

Suggested Activities for *Inventing the Future: A Photobiography of Thomas Alva Edison*

1. Direct students to use the Internet, the library, or other resources to answer the following questions:
 - a. How were homes lit before the invention of the incandescent light bulb? What were the advantages? disadvantages?
 - b. What is a patent?
2. Edison not only invented new things; he improved the inventions of others—the dictaphone and the motion picture projector, for example. Think of something you use every day. How would you improve it?
3. As a class, create a list of things students use daily that use electricity. Ask students to imagine life without electrical power. What could they use as substitutes for items on the list? For example, a wind-up clock instead of a digital one.



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4. What did Edison mean by each of the following statements?
"Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration."
"Just because something doesn't do what you planned it to do doesn't mean it's useless."
"I have more respect for the fellow with a single idea who gets there than for the fellow with a thousand ideas who does nothing."
5. Thomas Edison wrote, "What seems impossible today, may not be tomorrow. Ask students to interview their parents, grandparents, or older members of their community and to ask them what things they see or use today that they would have thought impossible when they were children.
6. Direct students to use the Internet, the library, or other resources to create a chart of the Morse Code alphabet. Ask students to write messages in Morse Code. Ask students to exchange their messages and then to decode the messages. You may ask students to tap out their messages and direct the class to decode those messages.

Online Resources for *Inventing the Future: A Photobiography of Thomas Alva Edison*

National Park Service

The Invention Factory: Thomas Edison's Laboratories

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/curriculumkit/lessons/edison/4edison.htm>

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

Alexander Graham Bell's Patent for the Telephone and Thomas Edison's Patent for the Electric Lamp

http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/telephone_and_light_patents/teaching_activities.html

Smithsonian's Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation

Thomas Edison

http://www.si.edu/lemelson/edison/html/thomas_alva_edison.htm

Online Resources for *Exploring Caves: Journeys into the Earth*

Journey Into Amazing Caves Teacher's Guide

<http://www.amazingcaves.com/teachersguide/>

National Park Service

Tour of Caves and Karst Parks

<http://www2.nature.nps.gov/grd/tour/caves.htm>

The National Speleological Society

<http://www.caves.org/>

U.S. Geological Survey

Exploring Caves

<http://interactive2.usgs.gov/learningweb/teachers/explore caves.htm>

U.S. Geological Survey

Geology of Caves

<http://wrgis.wr.usgs.gov/docs/parks/cave/>



Selected Bibliography

Deserts. National Geographic Society. 1999. ISBN: 0-7922-7544-6.

Exploring Caves: Journeys into the Earth. Nancy Holler Aulenbach, Hazel A Barton, Marfé Ferguson Delano. National Geographic Society. 2001. ISBN: 0-7922-7721-X.

Inventing the Future: A Photobiography of Thomas Alva Edison. National Geographic Society. 2002. ISBN: 0-7922-6721-4.

Kangaroos. National Geographic Society. 2000. ISBN: 0-7922-7125-4.

Sky. National Geographic Society. 1998. ISBN: 0-7922-7047-9.

Tigers. National Geographic Society. 1999. ISBN: 0-7922-7107-6.

Tree Frogs. National Geographic Society. 2000. ISBN: 0-7922-7127-0.