

Master of Modern Communications: Alexander Graham Bell [B2]

È stato un inventore del XIX secolo che con il suo “telegrafo parlante” ha gettato le basi delle moderne telecomunicazioni. Sebbene la sua autorialità sia stata discussa, le sue iniziative si estesero a settori quali l’aviazione e l’educazione dei sordi.



The American inventor Alexander Graham Bell, famous for his pioneering work on the development of the telephone, was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1847. Inventing was in Bell’s blood: as a child, he invented a machine to clean [wheat](#) and a type of speaking robot.

LIFE-SAVING MOVE

In 1870, Bell’s family emigrated to Canada after the deaths of his two brothers from tuberculosis. His parents hoped the [move](#) would save their last child. A year later, Bell [move](#)d to Boston, US, to work as a teacher of the [deaf](#). On a visit to see his mother, herself almost [deaf](#), he conceived of the idea of electronic [speech](#) and started working on the development of an “electrical [speech](#) machine”, as he called the first telephone.

TRANSMITTING SPEECH

Bell was fascinated with the idea of transmitting [speech](#). By 1875 he had [come up with](#) a simple receiver that could turn electricity into sound. Others were working along the same lines, including the Italian engineer Antonio Meucci. However it was Bell who in 1876 was [granted](#) a patent for an apparatus designed for “transmitting vocal or other sounds telegraphically... causing electrical undulations”: the telephone.

CONTROVERSIAL PATENT

Controversy surrounded Bell's patent. He [had filed](#) for it describing his method on 14 February 1876, just hours before a [fellow](#) inventor, Elisha Gray, filed a [caveat](#) (notice of an [impending](#) patent) on a similar method. Some people suggest that Bell paid a Patent Office staff member to give him information on Gray's [device](#). It seems that Bell later felt “deeply [ashamed](#)”, but he never admitted to the act.

VALUABLE PATENT

History credits Bell with being the inventor of the telephone and the father of modern communications, and Bell's patent is considered one of the most valuable in history. It would be one month, however, before his phone actually produced intelligible [speech](#). On 10 March 1876, Bell [summoned](#) his assistant with the words, “Mr. Watson, come here. I need you.” Watson [duly](#) came. The Bell Telephone Company was created in 1877, with Bell owning 30 per cent of the [shares](#), making him a rich man. Five years later, he became a [naturalised](#) American.

A LIFETIME INVENTING

Bell carried on inventing until his death in 1922. Among his inventions were an early version of air conditioning, an [iron lung](#), and a portable [device](#) for distilling sea water. During his lifetime he was considered one of the greatest scientific minds of all time. He even tried to improve on Thomas Edison's

phonograph, an early form of gramophone. He designed a removable [cardboard](#) cylinder, [coated](#) with mineral wax, and then recorded himself. However, for technical reasons, it was only possible to recover his recording a few years ago. If you want to hear his voice, coming to us down the years, just google his name and the phrase "Hear my voice".

Glossary

- **summoned** = chiamare
- **duly** = puntualmente
- **deaf** = non udenti
- **granted** = assegnare
- **ashamed** = vergognarsi
- **naturalised** = prendere la cittadinanza
- **iron lung** = polmone artificiale
- **come up with** = inventare
- **caveat** = richiesta di brevetto
- **shares** = azioni
- **had filed** = presentare
- **coated** = coprire
- **wheat** = grano
- **move** = trasloco
- **speech** = parola
- **cardboard** = cartone
- **fellow** = collega
- **impending** = imminente
- **device** = dispositivo