

Thomas Edison's Patent Application for the Light Bulb (1880)

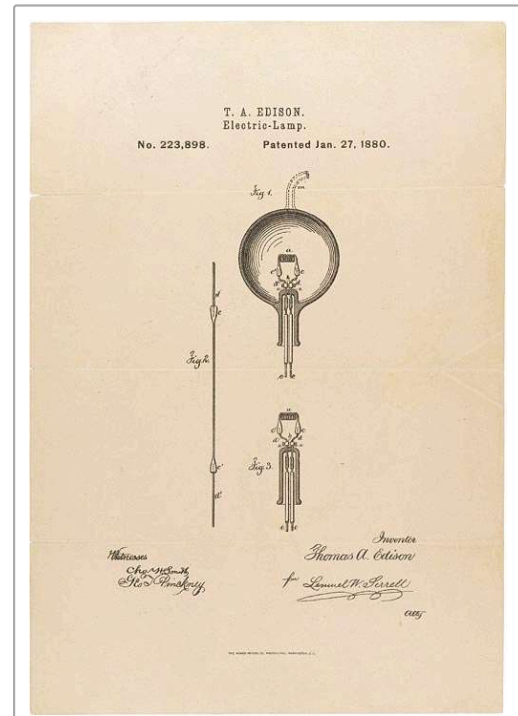
On January 27, 1880, Thomas Edison received the historic patent embodying the principles of his incandescent lamp that paved the way for the universal domestic use of electric light.

The Patent Office granted Thomas Edison a patent for his "electric-lamp." Edison's patent was an improvement on electric lamps, not the invention of them; but because of Edison's design changes and the materials he used—such as a carbon filament—his patent allowed for an electric lamp that was reliable, safe, and practical.

Edison propelled the United States out of the gaslight era and into the electric age. From the time he was a boy, he was mesmerized by the mechanics of the universe and, with virtually no formal education, brought forth innovations that continue to dominate our lives. Out of his New Jersey laboratories, which were themselves inventions – thoroughly equipped and fully staffed – came 1,093 patented inventions and innovations that made Edison one of the most prolific inventors of all time.

Three of his most famous inventions, the phonograph, a practical incandescent light bulb, and the moving picture camera, dazzled the public and revolutionized the way people live throughout the world. His thundering dynamos transformed the United States into the world's greatest industrial superpower.

In 1878, the creation of a practical long-burning electric light had eluded scientists for decades. With dreams of lighting up entire cities, Edison lined up financial backing, assembled a group of brilliant scientists and technicians, and applied his genius to the challenge of creating an



Citation: Thomas Edison's patent drawing and application for an improvement in electric lamps, patented January 27, 1880; Records of the Patent and Trademark Office; Record Group 241; National Archives.

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effective and affordable electric lamp. With unflagging determination, Edison and his team tried out thousands of theories, convinced that every failure brought them one step closer to success.

On January 27, 1880, Edison received the historic patent embodying the principles of his incandescent lamp that paved the way for the universal domestic use of electric light. The patent number for his electric lamp is 223,898.

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Transcript

(Transcription of Thomas A. Edison's application letter for the Patent on an Improvement in Electric Lamps.)

To the Honorable Commissioner of Patents:

Your Petitioner Thomas A. Edison of Menlo Park in the State of New Jersey prays that Letters Patent may be granted to him for the invention of an Improvement in Electric Lamps and in the method of manufacturing the same set forth in the annexed specification. (Case no. 186).

And further prays that you will recognize Lemuel W. Serrell, of the City of New York, N.Y., as his Attorney, with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application, to make alterations and amendments therein, to receive the Patent, and to transact all business in the Patent Office connected Therewith.

1879

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