

## The Story of Nikola Tesla

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Nikola Tesla was born on 10 July 1856 in Croatia during a lightning storm.

At school, Nikola loved science and maths. In fact, he was so good at doing difficult maths in his head that his teacher thought he was cheating!

When he was a child he was given a picture of the Niagara Falls, and he thought it would be a great way to create electricity. From that point on, he was determined to become an engineer and one day improve the way we use and make electricity.

2

At the age of 24, Nikola came up with an idea for a new electrical system which would make electricity flow better. However he couldn't afford to develop his idea.

He moved to New York, where he met Thomas Edison, who was famous for inventing the light bulb. He realised Nikola was very clever and gave him a job. He told Nikola he would get \$50,000 if he could improve one of Thomas's inventions.

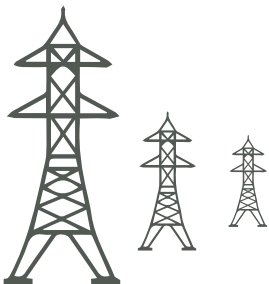
Nikola worked day and night for months, but when he finished Thomas wouldn't pay up! Nikola was so shocked and disgusted that he quit.

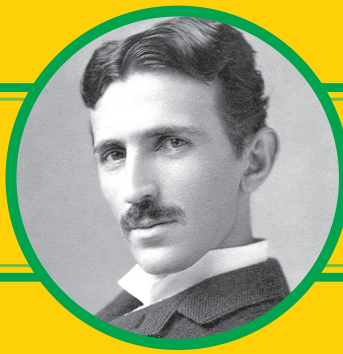
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Luckily, other people also believed in Nikola's talent and they gave him money to work on his invention. After a year of hard work, Nikola was ready with his new electrical system, which he named **AC or alternating current**.

His new AC system was much better than any other system that had been invented before. This was because it could move electricity around the world much faster, cheaper and with little waste.

He was now ready to put this AC system to the test in the real world!





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An opportunity arrived in 1893, when he was asked to power a display of 100,000 lights for the Chicago World Fair. It was a huge event and impressed millions of people.

This success caught the eye of leading engineers who were building hydroelectric power stations – which use the power in rivers to make electricity.

Nikola's inventions and advice eventually meant that the water from Niagara Falls could be used to make his electricity – his early dream had now come true. There was so much power in the river that it could light up an entire city!

From that moment on, AC became the most used electrical system in America.

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Despite all this success, Nikola did not stop there. He made important advances in many new technologies that you might have heard of, such as x-rays, neon light and robotics.

He was so busy that over his lifetime he came up with around 700 inventions, including the radio and the remote control.

Nikola was sometimes very ahead of his time – he thought that energy could pass through the air, which is how wireless communications, or wi-fi, works.

We now use this to connect computers and mobile phones to the internet.



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Nikola wasn't a good businessman so never made a lot of money, but he was very well respected. On his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday he received birthday wishes from many famous scientists, including Albert Einstein. He also appeared in Time magazine – a great honour.

Nikola died at the age of 86 in 1943.

Today we know Nikola as the father of the modern world. His inventions changed the way we live our lives and his legacy lives on every time you switch on a light.

