

**1/STUDENT A:** Our report is due in two weeks and all the good topics have been taken. What are we going to do?

**2/STUDENT B:** Let's ask someone at the library research department for some help.

**3/STUDENT C:** Excuse me, can you give us some suggestions on topics for a science report? I guess, -- uh -- I guess we should have started earlier.

**4/RESEARCHER:** I think I can help. I'm compiling a file on a Canadian inventor named Reginald Aubrey Fessenden.

**1/STUDENT A:** Was he any good? I don't think I've ever heard of him.

**2/STUDENT B:** Fessenden left Canada when he was only 20 to work for Thomas Alva Edison. He became Edison's chief chemist.

**4/RESEARCHER:** He and Edison had the same type of inquiring mind, but sometimes they clashed. When Fessenden asked Edison about sending speech without wires, Edison said, 'Fezzie, I figure that one is about as likely as a man jumping over the moon.'

**3/STUDENT C:** Edison was wrong about that one. We have all kinds of wireless transmissions today.

**4/RESEARCHER:** Fessenden holds over 500 patents. The only person who has more patents is Edison himself, and Fessenden, like Edison, gave many of his ideas away for free.

**1/STUDENT A:** Inventors have the ability to see things in a different way. According to Fessenden, "An inventor is one who can see the means to supplying a demand five years before it is obvious to those skilled in the art."

**2/STUDENT B:** I think you gave me the wrong book. This Fessenden developed over 100 inventions related to sea transportation. His field was electrical engineering, not chemistry.

**4/RESEARCHER:** That is the same person. Fessenden was a prolific inventor, and his interests were quite varied. He holds patents in several different areas. One of his first patents was for voice transmission.

**3/STUDENT C:** It couldn't have been a telephone. That was Alexander Graham Bell's invention.

**4/RESEARCHER:** You're right, and by 1900, there were over a million telephones and over 400 million telegrams sent per year.

**1/STUDENT A:** You could only communicate with a person if the wires were long enough to reach him.

**2/STUDENT B:** Didn't Marconi invent a "wireless" means of communication?

**4/RESEARCHER:** You have a good memory. Marconi did develop a wireless means of communication, but it was based on the sounds of the dots and dashes of the Morse code. Marconi transmitted sounds, Fessenden transmitted speech.