Read the short story and answer each question.

The History of Electricity

Electricity has been a powerful force for centuries, but its story begins long before it was used to light our homes. The ancient Greeks were the first to study electricity, noticing that rubbing amber made it attract light objects. This is called **static electricity**. But it wasn't until the 1600s that scientists began to understand electricity more deeply.

In 1600, **William Gilbert**, an English scientist, coined the term "electricus" to describe the force he observed when rubbing materials together. Over the next hundred years, other scientists began experimenting with electricity. In 1752, **Benjamin Franklin** made his famous kite experiment, proving that lightning is a form of electricity. This discovery changed the way people understood weather and energy.

By the 1800s, inventors began to harness electricity. **Alessandro Volta**, an Italian scientist, created the first chemical battery in 1800, proving that electricity could be generated chemically. Just a few years later, **Michael Faraday** discovered that electricity could be produced through **magnetic fields**.

In the late 1800s, **Thomas Edison** made history by inventing the practical light bulb, which allowed electricity to be used in everyday life. Edison's work in electricity led to the creation of power plants and the widespread use of electric power. Later, **Nikola Tesla** invented the alternating current (AC), a system of electrical power that is still used today.

The discoveries made by these individuals and others built on one another, leading to the modern use of electricity that powers our homes, schools, and businesses.

Name:

The History of Electricity

1. How are the discoveries of Franklin, Volta, Faraday, Edison, and Tesla related?

A. Each discovery built on the previous one to help understand and harness electricity.

B. Each scientist made a new discovery that completely changed electricity.

C. Their work was unrelated, and they didn't influence one another.

D. They all worked together to invent the light bulb.

2. What relationship did Franklin's kite experiment have with later electrical inventions?

A. Franklin's discovery proved that lightning is a form of electricity, which led to future studies on generating electricity.

B. Franklin's experiment led directly to the invention of the light bulb.

C. Franklin proved that electricity could be stored in batteries.

D. Franklin's work showed that electricity is dangerous and should not be studied.

3. Fill in the blank:

In 1800, Alessandro Volta invented the first _____, which could generate electricity chemically.

4. Explain how the inventions of Edison and Tesla influenced each other.

_____

_____

_____

5. What details from the passage show how these inventions have built on each other over time?

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Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: T
Lexile Level: 900L-1050L
Grade Level: 5th Grade, Beginning of the Year
Genre: Informational – History / Science

Introducing the Text

"This passage tells the story of how electricity was discovered and harnessed by inventors over many years. Students will examine how each discovery led to the next and how these discoveries helped shape the world we live in today."

Vocabulary: static electricity, chemical battery, magnetic field, alternating current, power plant

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you know about electricity and how it is used?
2. Why do you think electricity was so important to inventors?
3. What kinds of inventions might depend on electricity?

During Reading Discussion Questions

1. How did Franklin's kite experiment contribute to our understanding of electricity?
2. What is the relationship between Volta's battery and Faraday's work with magnetic fields?
3. How did Edison and Tesla's inventions change the way we use electricity?

After Reading Discussion Questions

1. How are the discoveries in the passage connected to each other?
2. What can we infer about the role of inventions in shaping the modern world?
3. What details in the text show that scientific progress is often built on earlier discoveries?

Activity Idea

Have students create a timeline showing the major discoveries and inventions in the history of electricity. Include each inventor, their discovery, and how it influenced later advancements.