

“Sonata for Harp and Bicycle” by Joan Aiken**Reading Warm-up B**

Read the following passage. Pay special attention to the underlined words. Then, read it again, and complete the activities. Use a separate sheet of paper for your written answers.

Alexander Graham Bell (1847–1922) was a distinguished scientist and educator who is best known today for inventing the telephone. As a young man growing up in Scotland, Bell showed a great talent for music. His intention, however, was to follow in his father’s footsteps and become a teacher of the deaf. It was an admirable goal, and Bell began working with his father while still in his teens. In 1870, the family moved to Canada. The following year, Bell was offered a job in Boston teaching deaf children to speak. Although he was reluctant to leave his loving family behind, Bell accepted the job. Before long, he became a professor at Boston University and opened his own school for the deaf. Parents soon flocked to Bell’s premises in the hope that he could teach their deaf children to communicate more effectively.

With the help of his partner, Thomas Watson, Bell began to work on an electrical device that would transmit sound over telegraph wires. The two men struggled vainly for years in their efforts to get the device to work. Then, one day in 1876, Bell and Watson were working in separate rooms. Bell spilled some acid on himself. Agitated by the accident, he said, “Mr. Watson, come here. I want you!” To the astonishment of both men, Watson heard Bell’s voice through the device on his workbench.

Bell’s telephone had become a reality!

Bell and Watson were soon giving demonstrations of the amazing new invention. It was not long before the first telephone company was established. Bell and his new wife then set sail for England to introduce the telephone to the people of Europe. When the French government awarded him a prize for his important work, Bell used the money to set up a laboratory devoted to helping the deaf. He continued to make many important contributions to science throughout his life.

In Bell’s later years, some people who worked with him made the witty observation that the great inventor actually disliked the telephone because callers constantly interrupted his experiments!

1. Circle the careers in which Alexander Graham Bell was distinguished. Then, explain what he is best known for.
2. As a young man, what was Bell’s intention? Write what *intention* means.
3. Why was Bell’s goal admirable?
4. Explain why Bell was reluctant to take a job in Boston. Then, tell what *reluctant* means.
5. Underline the words that identify Bell’s premises. Why did parents flock there?
6. Circle the verb that tells what Bell and Watson did vainly. When did their luck change?
7. Why was Bell agitated? Write about something that makes you *agitated*.
8. Do you think the observation at the end of the article is witty? Explain.