

A telephone carries speech

1876 | Grade 2 · Read & notice

Words to know

invent — create a new tool, process, or idea

message — information sent to someone

cooperate — work together

Look closely



Portrait of Alexander Graham Bell.

Read the story

Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Watson worked in Boston on carrying speech by wire. In March 1876, Watson heard Bell's spoken request through an experimental telephone. Communication was changing.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. What happened in this reading? Tell one fact.
2. Who or what is this reading mostly about?
3. Choose a word from the word bank. Explain it in your own words.
4. Look at the picture and its caption. What does it help you notice? Is it from the time of the event?

Follow-up reading: Boston Symphony Orchestra begins

1881

The Boston Symphony Orchestra gave its first concert in 1881. Musicians worked together to make a large sound. Concerts became part of the city's cultural life. An orchestra includes many kinds of skilled work.

How are the two readings alike or different? Tell a partner one connection. Which event came first?

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.2.1: ask and answer questions; RI.2.2: identify a main topic; RI.2.7: use images and words; W.2.2 and SL.2.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Watson worked in Boston on carrying speech by wire. In March 1876, Watson heard Bell's spoken request through an experimental telephone. Communication was changing. Telephone development involved many inventors and disputed claims. Bell's successful experiment was a milestone rather than the work of one person alone. Ask how an invention spread and who could afford access.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

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The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's [HTML page](#). External sources may need adult guidance.