

Nikola Tesla:
The Shocking
Exploration, Encounter, and Exchange
of the Electrical Wizard

Drake Bolt

Junior Division

Individual Website

Student-Composed Words on Website: 1176

Process Paper Words: 481

Process Paper

Since I enjoy electronics and computers, I wanted to find a topic about the history of technology. I like gadgets and I am amazed at how things work. In looking through various books, I found one about famous scientific inventors. When I read the chapter about Nikola Tesla I was amazed to learn about his life-changing inventions and about his rivalry with Thomas Edison. Until recently, Tesla was so unappreciated that I decided to learn more about him. I wanted to know why I had never heard of him. I recognized his name from the Tesla electric car, which was named after him recently because it uses electric-motor technology that had its origins in Tesla's inventions.

I conducted my research by reading books, primary-source newspaper and magazine articles, and looking on many websites. To give me some background information, I also watched several documentary videos. Most of my primary source quotes and images came from either newspapers or books from the time of Tesla since he was a public figure at the turn-of-the-century.

From my research I found many experts, authors, and electrical-engineers. I interviewed several of them via email and talked to Edison-expert Paul Israel PhD on the phone. My most helpful primary source interview was with William Terbo, Tesla's grand-nephew and his last remaining descendant. Terbo is 83 and met Tesla when he was 10 years old. We talked for more than 2 hours about Tesla's personal life. The other good primary sources were the many news articles and books written by Tesla himself. To get photos I visited many websites especially teslauniverse.com and the Library of Congress.

The website category sounded fun and interesting. I had always wanted to make a website and now I had the chance. Building a website also will benefit me in the future, since I hope to work in the field of computers. I chose my Weebly website template because it looked futuristic and high tech. The color

yellow for my header and buttons was chosen because yellow is the color of lightning. I put the quotes in blue because when you think of electricity you think of blue and yellow.

My project relates to the theme “Exploration, Encounter, Exchange” because although Thomas Edison is considered the father of electric power, competing inventor Nikola Tesla EXPLORED even more futuristic ways of thinking about electricity. Tesla ENCOUNTERED many financial and personal setbacks while he EXCHANGED ideas for financial backing with industrialists like J. P. Morgan and George Westinghouse. Ultimately, his genius was not enough to overcome mental health issues and lack of business knowledge. This led him, until recently, to become a historical footnote even though his many inventions changed modern day living. He is significant now because so much of the technology we use today has its roots in inventions that he perfected, or had great visions for, more than 100 years ago!

481 words