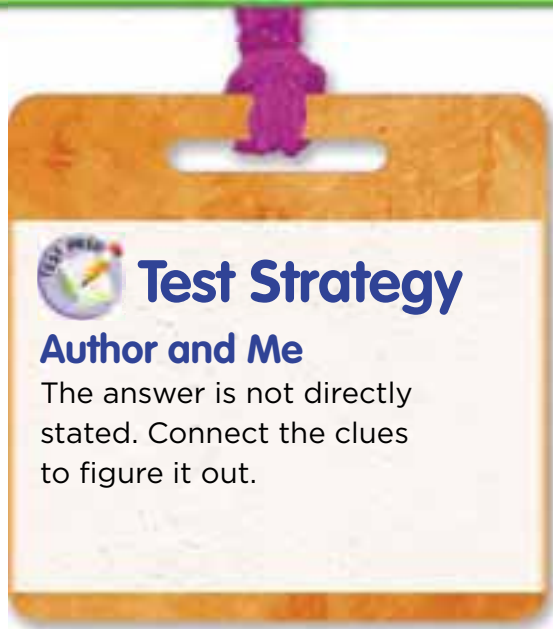


## Answer Questions



# THE STORY OF RADIO

*by Jill Seidman*

It's one of those discoveries that you take for granted. You probably listen to it in the car or early in the morning at home. You push a button or turn the dial, then sound fills the air. Right away you can hear the latest song or a message about a snow day at your school. That little radio is an amazing device.

### How It Works

Every radio has two parts: a transmitter and a receiver. First, sound is changed into radio waves. Then, those waves are transmitted. The signals can go through solid objects like walls or trees and are turned back into sounds once they are received.

The idea behind the radio is mathematical, not musical. About 150 years ago, J.C. Maxwell discovered that radio waves were possible. People used this idea to figure out how to send radio signals. The Italian scientist Guglielmo Marconi was the first to send a radio signal across the ocean. In 1901 he sent messages between England and Canada. The first radio was more like a wireless telegraph than the radio you have today. These first messages were sounds that stood for letters, not music or talking.

Marconi's wireless radio began to signal ships at sea. The first time people heard voices and music over the radio was on December 24, 1906. A man in Massachusetts sent out a three-part broadcast. Ships picked up the signal. They heard a man speaking, then a woman singing. Finally, they heard a person playing a violin.

By the early 1920s, the first radio station, KDKA, started broadcasting in Pittsburgh. It was the first station to send out voice broadcasts. Within a few years, people eagerly bought radio sets to hear news and music. In 1930 the first broadcast was heard "around the world." Radio signals traveled from tower to tower across the globe. The golden age of radio had begun.

### Vital Link During World War II

In those days radio was as important to people as television is today. In the days leading up to World War II, the President's important speeches were broadcast on the radio. The whole world tuned in to listen to the news of the war overseas. Radios became even more important once the United States joined World War II. Soldiers and sailors were able to use two-way radios to communicate with one another and get news about events happening around the world.

Radio was also a great source of entertainment then, much as television is today. Families and friends gathered around the radio to listen to music, comedy programs, quiz shows, and serious dramas. Companies that made laundry and cleaning products sponsored some of these dramas, which were called "soap operas." That's right; the first soap operas were on the radio and actually had something to do with soap.



During the golden age of radio, families frequently gathered around the radio. People would stop what they were doing to listen to a favorite program.

# Answer Questions

## Radio Today

By the beginning of the 1950s, television took over as the leading form of home entertainment. However, that didn't mean that people turned off their radios. Most radio stations changed their programs and focused on playing the latest news and the newest music. In the 1950s, as rock and roll became all the rage, many stations began playing only popular music. Today most stations choose a particular type of program or music. Stations specialize in rock music, country tunes, classical music, sports, or news and weather.

Your parents might have a favorite radio station that plays music from their teen years. You, on the other hand, might enjoy a different station that plays the latest hits. Push a button or turn a dial. It's easy to find something you like!



Today's households enjoy home entertainment systems.  
Families can listen to the news or enjoy their favorite programs.

**Tip**

Connect the clues or ideas from the selection to figure out the best answer.

**Directions: Answer the questions.****1. Why was radio first invented?**

- A to send sound waves
- B for communication
- C to teach others to play the violin
- D to give families time together

**2. Why are radios still important today?**

- A to listen to news and music
- B to help soldiers communicate
- C to listen to soap operas
- D to signal ships at sea

**3. Why do many families today have more than one radio?**

- A to listen to radio ads
- B because they want to honor Guglielmo Marconi
- C because they like different music or radio programs
- D to use electricity

**4. What problem did radio stations face when television appeared? How did radio stations try to solve the problem?****5. What do you think the future of radio and television will be?**

**Write two paragraphs and include details from the selection in your response.**

**Writing Prompt**

Your favorite radio station is going off the air. Write an essay to persuade people to listen to the station. Use reasons to support your opinion.

