1752 – 1947

Put the Events in Order

Name _____ Date _____

These 9 events from the History of Electricity timeline are out of order. Write a number from 1 to 9 in each box, from the earliest event (1) to the latest (9).

☐ **Faraday Invents the Electric Generator**

Michael Faraday demonstrates electromagnetic induction — showing that a moving magnet generates an electric current in a nearby wire — and builds the world's first simple electric generator and motor.

☐ **Discovery of the Electron**

British physicist J.J. Thomson discovers the electron — the first subatomic particle ever identified — proving that atoms have internal structure and that electricity is a flow of these tiny charged particles.

☐ **The War of Currents: AC Defeats DC**

Nikola Tesla develops practical alternating current (AC) motors and generators; George Westinghouse champions AC against Thomas Edison's direct current (DC) in a fierce public battle; AC wins decisively when the Niagara Falls power plant opens in 1895.

☐ **Volta Invents the Battery**

Italian physicist Alessandro Volta invents the first battery — the 'voltaic pile,' a stack of zinc and copper discs separated by brine-soaked cloth — creating the first sustained, reliable source of electric current.

First Commercial Power Grid

Edison opens the Pearl Street Station in New York City — the world's first commercial electrical power station — supplying electricity to 85 customers and 400 lamps in a square-mile area of lower Manhattan.

Edison's Practical Light Bulb

Thomas Edison, after testing thousands of materials, develops a practical incandescent light bulb using a carbonized cotton thread that burns for about 40 hours — demonstrating it publicly on New Year's Eve 1879; he later improved it with a bamboo filament lasting over 1,200 hours.

Franklin's Lightning Experiment

Benjamin Franklin flies a kite with a metal key attached during a thunderstorm, drawing an electric spark from the sky and proving that lightning is electricity — a natural phenomenon, not a supernatural one.

Transistor Invented

Bell Labs scientists John Bardeen, Walter Brattain, and William Shockley invent the transistor — a tiny solid-state switch that amplifies or controls electric current without the heat, bulk, and fragility of vacuum tubes.

Electromagnetism Discovered

Danish physicist Hans Christian Ørsted notices that an electric current deflects a nearby compass needle — proving that electricity and magnetism are not separate phenomena but two faces of the same force.

1752 – 1947

Put the Events in Order: Answer Key

1752 — 1. Franklin's Lightning Experiment

1800 — 2. Volta Invents the Battery

1820 — 3. Electromagnetism Discovered

1831 — 4. Faraday Invents the Electric Generator

1879 — 5. Edison's Practical Light Bulb

1882 — 6. First Commercial Power Grid

1888–95 — 7. The War of Currents: AC Defeats DC

1897 — 8. Discovery of the Electron

1947 — 9. Transistor Invented