

## Lights On!

by Paul Mores

City streets were not always lit up after sunset. Before electric lights, the streets in cities were often dark at night. Not only were the streets dark, they were dangerous! People who walked at night were brave—or foolish. Most who ventured out brought torches or lanterns to light their way.

Over time, people thought of some clever solutions to this problem. In the 400s, oil lamps hung from ropes in the streets of Antioch in Syria. In China in the Middle Ages, natural gas flowed through bamboo pipes. The gas was used to light streetlamps.

People in Europe did not use gaslights until much later. William Murdock came up with the idea in 1792. He was an inventor from Scotland. The first gas streetlights were used in London 15 years later. By 1820, gas lamps lit up streets in Paris, France and Baltimore, Maryland. With gaslights came a new job—lamplighting. In cities and towns, the lamplighter came each evening. He used a ladder and lantern to light each lamp.

These gaslights were much better than oil lamps. The gas burned inside a glass cover. This made the light burn longer and brighter. However, there were still problems. The gas flame did not burn steadily. Its light was not even.

In 1841, people began to use electric streetlights. The first ones were used in Paris. These electric arc lamps gave a strong and steady light. However, they had to be changed every few hours, so they were impractical. Modern electric streetlights were really invented in 1879. That's when Thomas Alva Edison made a longer-lasting lightbulb.

As the use of electric streetlights spread, lamplighters were no longer needed. Little by little, the lamplighters disappeared from the evening streets. The new lights kept the city streets bright all night long.

**Resource Links**

1 RDI Book 1: p. 357

SAM Keyword: Problem

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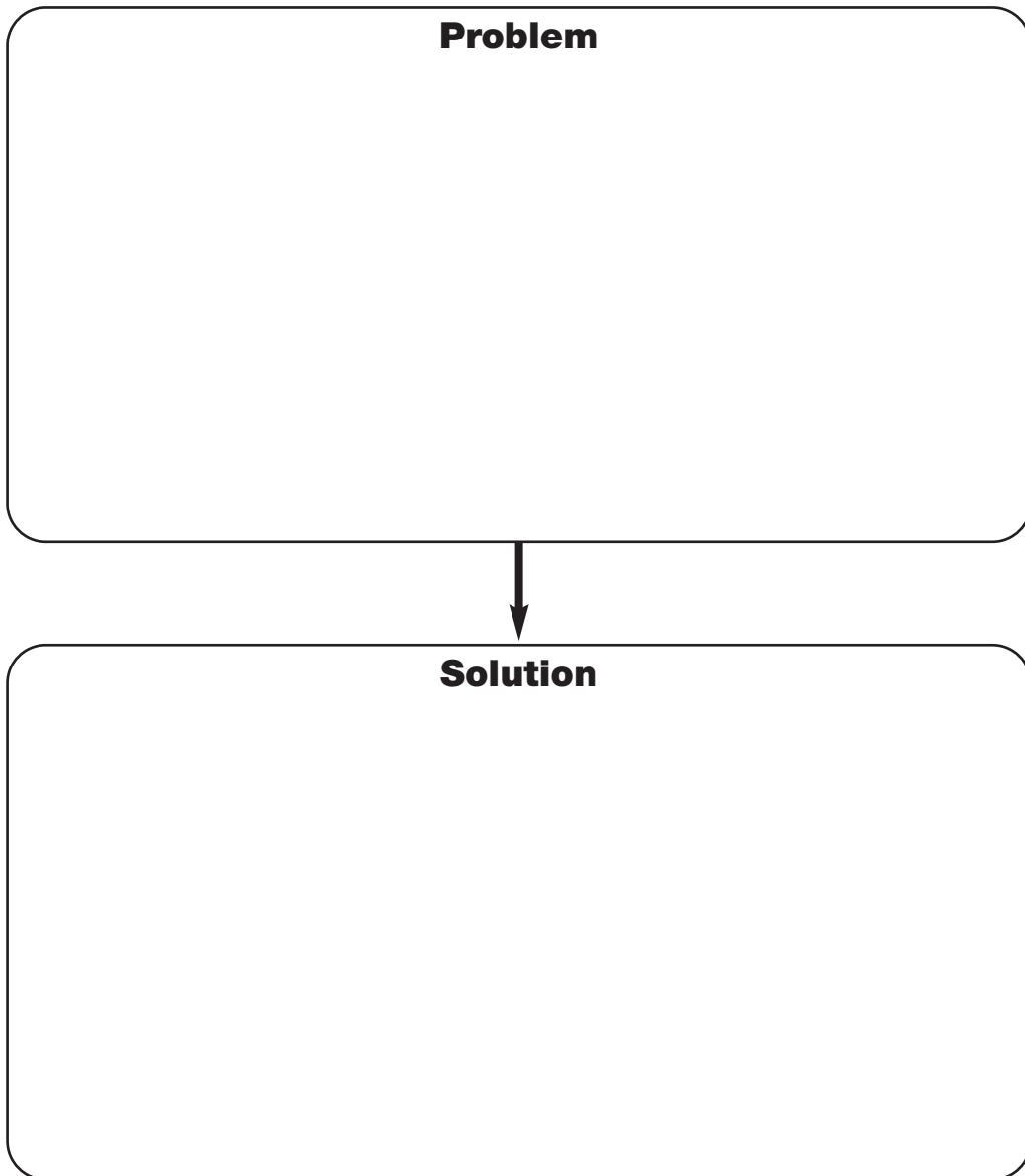
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# Problem and Solution

Sometimes an article is organized into sets of **problems** and **solutions**. Identifying problems and their solutions can help you understand what you read.

Use the chart below to list problems and their solutions.

**Passage:** \_\_\_\_\_



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**Resource Links**

**1** RDI Book 1: p. 399  
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