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Benjamin Franklin

Theme Summary

Benjamin Franklin—few people have had such an important influence in so many areas of our lives. He was an inventor, a discoverer, and even a founding father. Students will read an informational text and a poem about Franklin, which will help them learn about the great things Franklin accomplished. Who knows, this text pair may inspire the next influential inventor in your classroom!

Answer Key

“The Great Benjamin Franklin” Response (page 13)

1. B. He invented the lightning rod.
2. Franklin helped write the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, which helped establish the United States of America as its own country.
3. Benjamin Franklin had significant contributions as a scientist, an inventor, and a founding father.

“Curious Ben” Response (page 16)

1. B. curious
2. Answers may vary. Students should use the text to explain that many of the discoveries and inventions Benjamin Franklin made were in the area of science.
3. The author likes Benjamin Franklin. The text says that Benjamin Franklin was an inspiration. The author also tells about all the good things he invented and discovered.

Let’s Compare! Inventor, Discoverer, Author (page 17)

Students’ paragraphs will vary but should include some of the following for each section: **Invented**—lightning rod, batteries, fire department, lending library, open stove, bifocal glasses, and the political cartoon; **Discovered**—lightning is electricity; **Wrote**—helped write the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.

Standards

- Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.
- Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.
- Read on-level text with purpose and understanding.


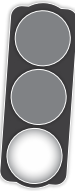



Materials

- *The Great Benjamin Franklin* (pages 12–13)
- “*The Great Benjamin Franklin*” Response (page 13)
- *Curious Ben* (page 15)
- “*Curious Ben*” Response (page 16)
- *Let’s Compare! Inventor, Discoverer, Author* (page 17)
- *Thinking About Benjamin Franklin!* (page 18)
- pencils
- index cards
- drawing paper
- colored pencils

Comparing the Texts

After students complete the lessons for each text, have them work in pairs or groups to reread both texts and complete the *Let’s Compare! Inventor, Discoverer, Author* activity page (page 17). Finally, students can work to complete the *Thinking About Benjamin Franklin!* matrix (page 18). The activities allow students to work on the important literacy skills of reading, writing, vocabulary, and fluency.

The Great Benjamin Franklin

	Lesson Steps	Teacher Think Alouds
 <p>Ready, Set, Predict!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with the text and display a larger version. Ask students to share what they notice about how the text is organized. • Ask students to anticipate the author’s purpose in writing the text and to predict what it is about. 	<p>“I notice this text has subheadings. These headings will help me know what to expect when reading this text.”</p>
 <p>Go!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students do a quick and quiet text walk with pencils in hand. Ask them to put exclamation marks next to words they find interesting or challenging. • Read the text aloud to students. Model fluent reading to convey meaning and keep interest. • Place students in groups of five. Have groups practice reading the text together. 	<p>“Notice how I read the first two sentences in the section <i>Scientist and Inventor</i>. I try to make my voice sound happy because Benjamin Franklin’s inventions made life better for the people at the time and also for us today!”</p>
 <p>Reread to Clarify</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students reread the text and circle any words or ideas they want to clarify. Provide time for students to discuss strategies for clarifying the words they circled with small groups. • Ask students to circle the subheadings. Have them read the paragraphs under the subheadings and underline the sentences that best clarify the subheadings. 	<p>“I don’t get the word <i>Massachusetts</i>, so I ask a friend. She pronounces the word for me slowly and clearly. Now, I recognize it as a name of a state.”</p>
 <p>Reread to Question</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to students that they will reread the text to ask and answer questions about it. • Provide each student with an index card. Have them write questions that can be answered within each section of the text. Collect the questions. Assign each section a number (1, 2, or 3). Ask a question. Have students show you the number of fingers to indicate which section the answer is found in. Select students to provide the text evidence that answers the question. • Have students respond to the question and prompts on page 13. 	
 <p>Reread to Summarize and Respond</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide drawing paper to students. Tell students to reread the text with partners to summarize by creating timelines of Franklin’s life. • Review the close reading strategies with students by singing the song on page 128. 	

***Note:** For more tips, engagement strategies, and fluency options to include in this lesson, see pages 122–128.
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The Great Benjamin Franklin

Adapted from a piece by Lisa Zamosky

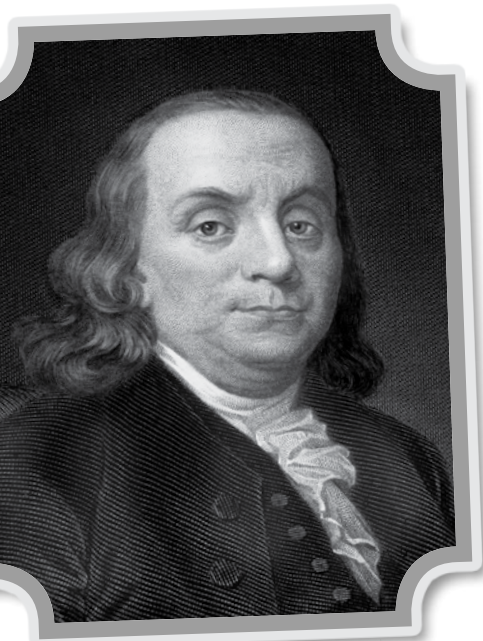
Benjamin Franklin is one of the greatest Americans in history. Growing up, his family didn't have much money, but through hard work, he became very successful at many things.

Early Life

Benjamin Franklin was born January 17, 1706, in Boston, Massachusetts. He stopped going to school at age 10 to work with his father. At 13, he went to work for his older brother, James, who owned a printing house. When Franklin grew older, he also owned his own publishing house.

Scientist and Inventor

Benjamin Franklin was also a scientist. He invented many new things that made people's lives better. When Franklin was 42 years old, he sold his printing business. He wanted to follow his love of science. In 1747, he learned that lightning was electricity. He learned this by flying a kite with a key tied to the string under a thundercloud. When he touched the key, he got a shock. This shock proved lightning is electricity. After this test, he created the lightning rod. This is a metal bar that is put on houses or other buildings. Lightning hits the rod instead of the buildings. Franklin saved many lives with this invention. He invented many other things important to us today, as well. He invented the open stove, bifocal glasses, and the political cartoon.



Founding Father

When Benjamin Franklin was born, Massachusetts was one of just 13 colonies. The colonies were ruled by Great Britain. He was one of the people who helped the United States of America become a country. He helped to write the Declaration of Independence. This said that the American colonies were no longer part of Great Britain. He also helped write the United States Constitution. Benjamin Franklin is known as one of America's Founding Fathers.

The Great Benjamin Franklin (cont)

Benjamin Franklin died in 1790. He was 84 years old. He gave to the world in almost every way. So many things that we have today are because of Benjamin Franklin. He will always be remembered as one of the greatest Americans to have ever lived.



“The Great Benjamin Franklin” Response

Directions: Reread the text on pages 12–13 to answer each question.

1. Which invention was a result of Franklin’s discovery that lightning was electricity?
- (A) He invented bifocals.
 - (B) He invented the lightning rod.
 - (C) He invented the open stove.
 - (D) He invented the political cartoon.

2. Explain why Benjamin Franklin is known as a founding father.

3. Use the text to explain the sentence *He gave to the world in almost every way.*

Let's Compare!

Inventor, Discoverer, Author

Directions: Reread "Curious Ben" and "The Great Benjamin Franklin." Write a short paragraph in each box telling what Benjamin Franklin invented, discovered, and wrote.

Invented

Discovered

Wrote