

The Great Benjamin Franklin

Length

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.

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.

(C) He invented the open stove.

(B) He invented the lightning rod.

(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.*

Curious Ben

by Linda Arnold

Who invented the lightning rod?

Ben Franklin, that's who!

Who invented batteries?

Ben Franklin did that, too!

Curious Ben, Curious Ben,

Science was the key

That helped you on your way

With each discovery.

Who invented the fire department?

Ben Franklin, that's who!

And the lending library?

Ben Franklin did that, too!

Curious Ben, Curious Ben

You're an inspiration

Always full of bright ideas

That helped to build our nation.

Who invented the lightning rod?

Ben Franklin, that's who!

If we find a bright idea

We can be inventors, too!



Directions: Reread the poem on page 15 to answer each question.

1 What word does the author use to describe Franklin's personality?

(A) inventor

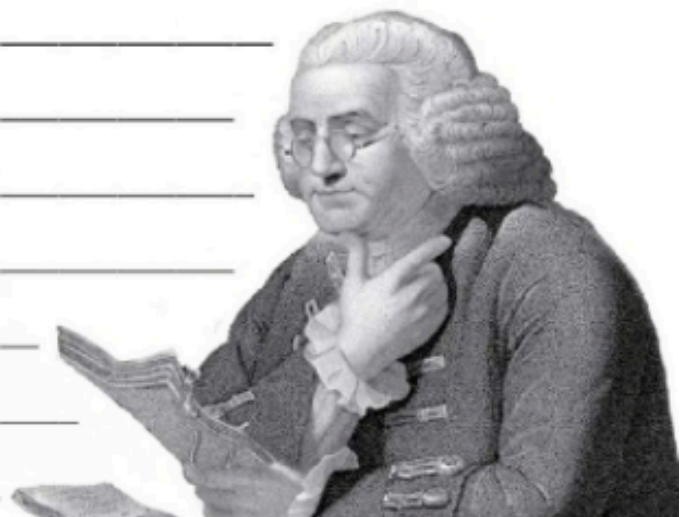
(C) discoverer

(B) curious

(D) scientist

2 The author uses the phrase *Science was the key*. Use the **text** to explain what this means.

3 What does the author think of Benjamin Franklin? Use the **text** to tell how you know.



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