

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Biography Page Count: 24 Word Count: 1,893

Book Summary

Ben Franklin is a biographical text about the many accomplishments of this famous inventor, author, and politician. Chronicling his life from birth to death, readers learn about his contributions, family, early business ventures, and beliefs, all of which provide insight into the personal side of his character. Famous quotes by Franklin introduce each chapter, and photographs and illustrations support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask and answer questions

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of asking and answering questions while reading
- Identify elements of a biography
- Identify and understand compound sentences
- Identify and understand multiple-meaning words

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Ben Franklin* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- [KWLS, elements of a biography, compound sentences, multiple-meaning words worksheets](#)
- [Discussion cards](#)



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](#).

- Content words:
 Story critical: *apprentice* (n.), *colonies* (n.), *delegate* (n.), *essay* (n.), *passions* (n.), *publications* (n.)
 Enrichment: *contributed* (v.), *debate* (v.), *electricity* (n.), *foundation* (n.), *freedom* (n.),
meager (adj.), *merchant* (n.), *salary* (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Create a KWLS chart on the board and hand out the [KWLS worksheet](#) to students. Review or explain that the *K* stands for knowledge we know, the *W* stands for questions we want to have answered, the *L* stands for the knowledge we learned, and the *S* stands for what we still want to know about the topic. Fill in the first section (*K*) with information students already know about Ben Franklin. Have students complete the same section of their KWLS worksheet.
- Ask students what they would like to know about Ben Franklin. Have them fill in the *W* section of their worksheet. Write shared questions on the class chart as an example.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, fiction or nonfiction, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Ask and answer questions**

- Ask students to turn to the table of contents on page 3. Remind them that the table of contents provides an overview of what the book is about. Ask students what they expect to read about based on the section titles in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)
- Model how to use the table of contents to ask questions.
Think-aloud: I can use the table of contents to think of questions I'd like to have answered about Ben Franklin. For example, one section is titled Family Man, Community Activist. I think that being a family man means that a person is devoted to spending time with his family. I wonder what it means to be a community activist. Since this phrase is paired with family man, maybe this means that Ben Franklin was devoted to spending time with both his family and the people in his community. I think this is a good question. I'll write it in the W section of the KWLS chart.
- Have students preview the rest of the book and look at the photos, captions, covers, table of contents, and index. Ask them to think of other questions about Ben Franklin based on this information. Have them write these questions in the *W* section of their KWLS worksheet.
- Invite volunteers to share their questions aloud. Write these questions on the class KWLS chart on the board.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Elements of a biography**

- Ask students to explain the difference between a biography and an autobiography (biography: the story of a person's life written by someone else; autobiography: the story of a person's life written by that person). Explain that this book is a *biography*. A biography includes information about the person's *personality*, *accomplishments*, and *influence* on the world.
- Write the words *Personality*, *Accomplishments*, and *Influence* in a three-column chart on the board. Discuss with students the meaning of each of these words (personality: the qualities that makes each person unique; accomplishments: successes achieved through practice or training; influence: an effect on someone or something).
- Have students turn to page 5. Read the first section, "Early Life," aloud while students follow along silently. Model identifying elements of a biography.
- *Think-aloud: As a child, Ben was very hard-working. His family wasn't able to afford school, so Ben went to work at a very young age. He learned many useful skills but really dreamed of being a sailor. He also read a lot. This information tells readers about Ben's personality. As I read, I can organize the information about Ben into the categories Accomplishments, Influence, and Personality. By categorizing the information in this way, I know I will understand more about him and the events of his life.*
- Invite students to identify the information that tells about Ben's personality (he was hard-working, intelligent, loved to read). Write this information on the chart under the heading *Personality*.
- Based on this information, ask students to describe how Ben's personality as a child might have influenced his later accomplishments (his work ethic and versatility led him to discover and invent many things, and so on).

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Remind students of the strategies they can use to read words they don't know. For example, they can use what they know about letter and sound correspondence to figure out a word. They can look for base words, prefixes, and suffixes.
- Explain to students that they can use context to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words. Have students find the bold word *apprentice* on page 7. Have them read the paragraph that contains this word. Point out the sentence after the bold word (...*work for James and learn printing*). Explain that this sentence helps to explain the meaning of the word *apprentice* (work for someone to learn a skill).
- Explain to students that they won't always find context clues to help them determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Have a volunteer read the definition for *apprentice* in the glossary. Have students follow along on page 7 as you read the sentence in which the word *apprentice* is found to confirm the meaning of the word.
- Repeat the process with other content vocabulary before students begin reading.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read the book to find answers to their questions about Ben Franklin. Have them write what they learned in the L section of their KWLS worksheet.

During Reading

Student Reading


- **Guide the reading:** Have students read from page 7 to the end of page 11. Remind them to read for information about Ben Franklin that will answer questions on their KWLS chart. Encourage students who finish early to go back and reread.



When they have finished reading, have students circle any questions on their KWLS worksheet that were answered and underline the information in the book that answers those questions.

- Model answering a question on the KWLS chart and filling in additional information.
Think-aloud: *I wanted to know whether Ben Franklin was devoted to spending time with both his family and the people in his community. I found out that Ben began an apprenticeship at age 12 and worked at the printing press until he was 21. This meant that he worked for eight years without getting paid—he only received food and a bed for his work. Although this information does not yet answer my questions, it further confirms an aspect of Ben's personality—he was hard-working. I'll write what I learned in the L section of my KWLS chart. I also read how Ben had a thirst for knowledge, often studying alone and using any money he had to buy books. I wonder what things Ben liked to read about. I will write this question in the W section of the KWLS chart.*
- Have students write on their KWLS worksheet the answers to their questions and any additional questions they generated as they read. Invite students to share this information aloud. Record shared responses on the class KWLS chart.
- Ask students to identify Franklin's personality, accomplishments, and influence from the discussion and their reading (personality: persevering, dreamer, believed in fairness; accomplishments: wrote essays, poems, and editorials, traveled to England, owned his own print shop; influence: became official printer of Pennsylvania, used his newspaper to inform people and speak his mind).
- Introduce and explain the [elements-of-a-biography worksheet](#). Write this information on the chart on the board, and have students write the information on their worksheet. Discuss with students the words from the book that support the information on the chart.
- Discuss how Ben's personality might have influenced his accomplishments. Facilitate the discussion with questions such as: *How would you describe Ben's personality? What characteristics of his personality might have influenced him to excel in his early life?*


- **Check for understanding:** Have students read from page 12 to the end of page 16. Have them write answers they found while reading in the *L* section of their KWLS worksheet. Invite them to share the information they learned and the additional questions they generated as they read the book. Write this information on the class KWLS chart on the board.
- Have students discuss with a partner information from the section that reflects Franklin's personality and accomplishments. Have them write this information on their elements-of-a-biography worksheet. Invite students to share this information aloud.
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to look for answers to their questions and use the information learned to identify the elements of a biography (personality, accomplishments, and influence on others). Encourage students to write new questions they might have on their worksheet as they read.

 Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

 Have students circle the questions on their KWLS worksheet that were answered from the reading and underline the information in the book that answers those questions. Then have them write answers they found while reading on their KWLS worksheet.

- **Think-aloud:** *I wanted to know whether Ben Franklin was devoted to spending time with both his family and the people in his community, and what things Ben liked to read about. I learned that Ben got married and had children. His daughter sometimes spent time with him while he worked with the mail delivery. Ben also made many contributions to the community, such as organizing the first lending library and volunteer fire company. I'm still not sure what topics Ben liked to read about. However, I can infer from his many interests that the topics were from a variety of subject areas.*
- Invite students to share the information they learned and the additional questions they generated as they read the book.
- Discuss with students how asking questions before and during reading, and looking for the answers while reading, helps them remember and enjoy what they read.
- Point out to students that all of their questions may not have been answered in this text. Brainstorm other sources they might use to locate additional information to answer their questions. Invite students to fill in the final section (*S*) of their KWLS worksheet with information they would still like to know about Ben Franklin.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Discuss how many of Franklin's ideas and contributions improved the quality of life for people living in the 1700s, and how his passion for social justice helped create the government of the United States of America.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the elements-of-a-biography worksheet. When they have finished, discuss their answers.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned that Ben Franklin had a lot of interests. How did his many interests help him become a leader? Now that you know this information, how can you become a leader?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Compound sentences

- Write the following sentence on the board: *His father said that poets made no money, so Ben should stick to writing essays.* Ask students to identify two separate sentences within this longer sentence. (*His father said that poets made no money; Ben should stick to writing essays.*)
- Point out that the original sentence is an example of a *compound sentence*. Review or explain that a compound sentence is a sentence consisting of two or more simple sentences separated by a comma and a conjunction.
- Review examples of conjunctions with students (*and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet*). Write these examples on the board. Ask students to identify the conjunction that joined the two parts of the original sample sentence (*so*).
- Discuss why the author chose to join two sentences of similar content together (compound sentences with conjunctions help writers make their writing more fluent and interesting).
- Write the following sentence on the board: *He published a newspaper, and then he used it to inform people and to speak his mind.* Ask a volunteer to come to the board to identify and circle the conjunction (*and*).



Check for understanding: Have students locate at least three compound sentences in the book. Ask them to underline these sentences in their book and circle each conjunction and comma. Point out that a sentence is not necessarily a compound sentence just because it has a comma in it.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [compound sentences worksheet](#).

Word Work: Multiple-meaning words

- Have students turn to page 6 and read the following sentence: *Ben's parents did not want him to be a sailor because of the dangers he would face on long ocean voyages.* Write the word *face* on the board.
- Ask students to explain the meaning of *face* as it is used in this sentence. Then write the following sentence on the board: *She had a big smile on her face.* Ask students to explain the difference between the meanings of the word.
- Explain to students that words that sound and are spelled the same but have different meanings are called *multiple-meaning words*.
- Model how to locate the various meanings for *face* in the dictionary. Point out to students that a dictionary can help them find definitions for multiple-meaning words. However, remind them that trying out the definitions in the context of the sentence in which the word is found will help them determine the correct definition of the word.
- Check for understanding: Invite students to share other multiple-meaning words they know. Write the words on the board and discuss their meanings with students.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [multiple-meaning-words worksheet](#).

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, pairs can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students share with someone at home what they learned about Ben Franklin and discuss how life would be different without his many contributions.

Extend the Reading

Informational Writing Connection

Have students use the Internet to further research one of the following individuals with whom Ben Franklin was associated: *Thomas Jefferson* or *John Adams*. Have them write a research paper identifying the major contributions of that individual during his life and evaluate his impact on history. Allow time for students to present their papers orally.

Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on informational report writing.

Social Studies Connection

Provide students with long strips of butcher paper cut approximately 12" wide. Have them fold the paper in half three times. Ask students to review the timeline across the bottom of pages 14 through 21. Explain that the timeline helps readers visually keep track of Franklin's accomplishments throughout his lifetime. Point out, however, that the timeline does not contain all the events in Franklin's life. Have students use the text and the timeline to choose eight dates and events in Franklin's life to create their own timeline.

Skill Review

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more card and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently ask relevant questions about the topic prior to and during reading; locate answers to their questions in the text and understand that not all answers are found in one source during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify elements of a biography; categorize information by element during reading and on a worksheet
- correctly identify and create compound sentences during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly understand and identify multiple-meaning words in text and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)