

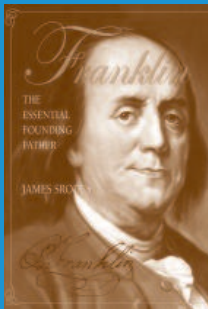


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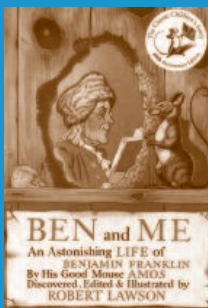


Independence  
Blue Cross

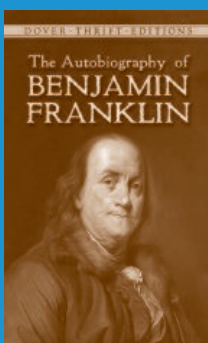
In Philadelphia  
EVERYONE IS READING  
about Ben Franklin



*Franklin: The Essential  
Founding Father*  
BY JAMES SRODES



*Ben and Me*  
BY ROBERT LAWSON



*The Autobiography  
of Benjamin Franklin*  
BY BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Resource Guide  
*One Book, One Philadelphia*

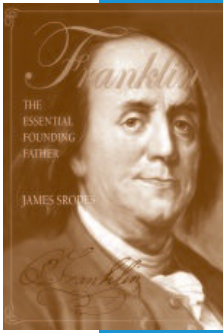
3 BOOKS  
for



Founding Father

January 17 – March 15, 2006  
Continuing Events through December 31, 2006

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## The Books — Three Books for One Founding Father

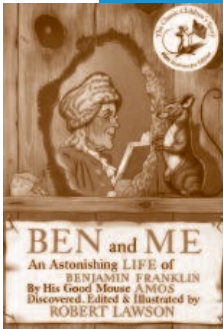
In 2006, *One Book, One Philadelphia* is joining Ben Franklin 300 Philadelphia to celebrate the tercentenary (300 years) of Franklin's birth.

Franklin's interests were diverse and wide-ranging. Countless volumes have been written about him. The challenge for the *One Book* program was to choose works that would adequately capture the true essence of the man and his times.

Because of the complexity of this year's subject, and in order to promote the widest participation possible, *One Book, One Philadelphia* has chosen to offer not one, but three books about Franklin. This year's theme will be "Three Books for One Founding Father."

The featured books are:

- The *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* by Benjamin Franklin (various editions)
- *Ben and Me* by Robert Lawson (1939, Little, Brown & Company)
- *Franklin: The Essential Founding Father* by James Srodes (2002, Regnery Publishing, Inc.)

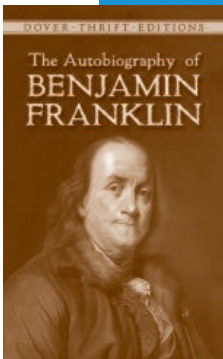


## The Authors

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, author of *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, was born in 1706 and died in 1790 at the age of 84. He was an author, inventor, businessman, scholar, scientist, revolutionary, and statesman whose contributions to Philadelphia and the world are countless. His autobiography is considered a classic of American literature and covers his life up to his prewar stay in London as representative of the Pennsylvania Assembly.

ROBERT LAWSON, author of *Ben and Me*, was a writer and illustrator who won both the Caldecott Medal and Newbery Medal — two of the most prestigious awards in children's literature. He illustrated such beloved classics as *Mr. Popper's Penguins* and *Ferdinand the Bull* and wrote and illustrated *Ben and Me* and *Mr. Revere and I*. He was born in 1892 and died in 1957. The Rare Book Department of the Free Library of Philadelphia possesses Lawson's original drawings for *Ben and Me*. They will be on display at the Central Library throughout the *One Book* calendar period.

JAMES SRODES, author of *Franklin: The Essential Founding Father*, is an author, journalist, and broadcaster based in Washington, D.C. In addition to his book on Franklin, Mr. Srodes has also written biographies of Allen Dulles and John DeLorean. His book, *Allen Dulles: Master of Spies* won an award for "Best Intelligence Book" in 2000 from the Association of Former Intelligence Officers. On *Franklin: The Essential Founding Father*, *Harper's Magazine* commented that, "[Srodes'] gift to the familiar Franklin is an accessible style that will see readers to the last page."



## Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the following people for their assistance in the preparation of this resource guide: Henry Addis, Sibyl Cohen, Vera DaVinci, Jim DeWalt, Marie Field, Iris Griffin, Sue Ströhm, and JoAnn Weinberger.

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## Introduction

*One Book, One Philadelphia* is a collaborative initiative of the Office of Mayor John F. Street and the Free Library of Philadelphia. The program seeks to promote reading, literacy, and community by encouraging the Greater Philadelphia population to read and discuss the same books. The Philadelphia program is in its fourth year. This year *One Book, One Philadelphia* celebrates the fascinating life of Benjamin Franklin with the selection of three books:

- *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* by Benjamin Franklin (various editions) — Read about Franklin in his own charming words.
- *Ben and Me* by Robert Lawson (1939, Little, Brown & Company) — This is a children’s classic that will be enjoyed by adults and kids alike. The author is the only person to have won both the Caldecott and Newbery Medals.
- *Franklin: The Essential Founding Father* by James Srodes (2002, Regnery Publishing, Inc.) — This excellent biography presents a thorough and comprehensive overview of Franklin’s life and times.

Read one or all of the books to learn more about the wonderful Mr. Franklin, as the entire Philadelphia region — and the nation — celebrate his three-hundredth birthday.

## Questions for Discussion

The questions that follow are intended to enhance your reading group's discussion of these three books about Benjamin Franklin.

### ***The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* by Benjamin Franklin**

Questions prepared by Iris Griffin, Literacy Coach, Office of Curriculum and Instruction, School District of Philadelphia

- 1.** As you read *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, think about Benjamin Franklin's tone. Is he always being completely serious, or do you detect irony and/or self-mockery? What examples did you find to support your conclusions?
- 2.** What was Benjamin Franklin's incentive for beginning his autobiography?
- 3.** What reasons were given to prompt Franklin to complete his autobiography and by whom?
- 4.** What does Franklin say must happen before people can depend on correct moral behavior?
- 5.** Why does Franklin place temperance first on his list of virtues?
- 6.** Franklin writes, "My list of virtues contain'd at first but twelve...." What does he add to his list and why?
- 7.** Franklin uses an analogy to explain why he does not try to tackle all of the virtues at once. He compares eliminating faults with pulling weeds from a garden. Explain this analogy in order to emphasize Franklin's point.
- 8.** What conclusions can you draw about Benjamin Franklin's attitudes and beliefs based on his plan to achieve moral perfection? Consider developing a character sketch of Ben Franklin based on *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*.
- 9.** What modern causes do you support? Tell why. If Franklin were alive today, what modern causes might he support?
- 10.** Reactions to *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* have sometimes been negative. Read the following comment by satirist Mark Twain. What is Twain's tone in this paragraph — that is, his attitude toward Benjamin Franklin?

[Franklin had] a malevolence which is without parallel in history; he would work all day and then sit up nights and let on to be studying algebra by the light of a smoldering fire, so that all the boys might have to do that also, or else have Benjamin Franklin thrown upon them. Not satisfied with these proceedings, he had a fashion of living wholly on bread and water, and studying astronomy at mealtime — a thing which has brought affliction to millions of boys since, whose fathers had read Franklin's pernicious biography.

Adapted from *Elements of Literature*, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston 5th Course.

# **Franklin: The Essential Founding Father by James Srodes**

Questions prepared by Dr. Sibyl Cohen, Philadelphia Great Books Council

**1.** Why is concentrating on the “ ‘firsts’ in his [Franklin’s] life ...to miss the point?” (pg. 392)

How was Franklin “the essential founding father?” (Title of Book)

Why is Franklin described as the “essential American?” (pg. x)

Why is he the “essential ingredient that made change happen?” (pg. 393)

How is he “the light that outshone all others?” (pg. 265)

What were Franklin’s goals for the United States?

Why did he distinguish between “non-negotiable and advisable conditions of peace?”(pg. 360)

**2.** “For Franklin it became clear that the colonies had to band together in a united force.” (pg. 101)

What was the most significant thing he did to help make this happen?

Why did Franklin anticipate “a final separation...?” (pg. 218)

When did Franklin know that he could not promote the peace between England and the United States? Why did he try?

How did his warning letter to Massachusetts Speaker Thomas Cushing and Sam Adams in 1771 act as a catalyst? (pg. 223)

**3.** How did Franklin exhibit the “13 virtues he would strive to acquire?” (pg. 56)

What were his goals? Did he get what he wanted for himself?

How did he change?

Would you like to have known Franklin as a friend?

How old would you like to have been?

What age would you like him to be?

Why would it make a difference if you were a man friend or a woman friend?

**4.** Why characterize Franklin as “He never let abuse distract him but he never forgot it?”(pg. 324)

Why couldn’t he get along with John Adams?

Who were his closest friends?

Why was Franklin silent when Wedderburn verbally attacked him? (pg. 248)

What is meant by suggesting the “habit of magnanimity” as a reason for this silence? (pg. 250)

Why couldn’t Franklin forgive his son, William? (pg. 278)

Why did he “cut William and his fiancée off abruptly?” (pg. 168)

Why does he create new families? (“He built a small new family?” pg. 270)

Whom did Franklin love?

Why did he need Anne-Louise Buillon (pg. 347) and Anne-Catherine Helvetius? (pg. 350)

**5.** How was Franklin able to be scientist, inventor, and consummate communicator?

How did he use these skills?

Why are Franklin’s “two best skills...to plot strategy in private and to write documents for public purposes?” (pg. 393)

## ***Ben and Me* by Robert Lawson**

Questions prepared by Vera DaVinci, Program Manager, Office of Accelerated Learning, School District of Philadelphia

- 1.** This book can be classified as a work of historical fiction. What events in this book really happened? Where in the book did Amos the mouse and narrator revise the facts?
- 2.** Explain which one of Ben Franklin's ideas and inventions shared in this book may be most helpful to people living today.
- 3.** Throughout the book, Amos shares many of Ben Franklin's maxims, or wise sayings. Choose one maxim from the book and describe an event that could have led up to the creation of the maxim you chose. Try to write your own maxim. Is your maxim based on a personal experience?
- 4.** Explain the procedures Ben Franklin followed in his electricity experiments.
- 5.** Amos assigns unflattering characteristics to the mice from various countries who he encounters in France. Research the inhabitants of one of the following countries — France, Russia, Italy, and Spain — during the time of Ben Franklin's visit to France, and present a defense against Amos' portrayal of the country's mice inhabitants.
- 6.** We learn about Amos and his family in this tale but little about Ben Franklin's family. Ask someone you know who is reading one of the other *One Book, One Philadelphia* selections to share information about Ben's parents, siblings, wife, and children.
- 7.** Amos was both a help and a companion to Ben in this tale. Compare Ben's relationship with Amos to your own relationship with an animal or pet.
- 8.** Many famous people throughout history have had a relationship with animals. Edgar Allen Poe was inspired to write a story about his cat, Catarina; Mozart used the song of a starling in one of his compositions, and Queen Elizabeth carried her pet beagles in her saddlebag. Read about these and other famous owners and their pets at: [http://www.wnetwork.com/tv\\_shows/shows/animal\\_mag-netism/famous\\_pets.asp](http://www.wnetwork.com/tv_shows/shows/animal_mag-netism/famous_pets.asp) or [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_historical\\_animals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_historical_animals) .
- 9.** Both Franklin and Amos were attached to Ben's fur hat. Hats worn by men in colonial time were made from beaver skins, wool, cotton, and straw. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of each material for use as a hat. Sketch a design of a hat made in each material for Ben that would also allow room for Amos.
- 10.** Why do you think the author of this book decided to use a mouse as the narrator?

## Timeline: Major events in the illustrious life of Ben Franklin.

**1706:** Ben is born on Milk Street in Boston to Josiah and Abiah Franklin

**1718:** Ben's father, Josiah apprentices Ben to older brother James, a printer.

**1723:** Ben runs away to Philadelphia, gets a job as a printer, and finds a home with John Read, father of his future wife, Deborah.

**1727:** Forms the Junto, a philosophical/political discussion group.

**1728:** Sets up own printing shop.

**1729:** Publishes the first edition of the Pennsylvania Gazette.

**1730:** Marries Deborah Read. Son William Franklin is born. Begins printing money for the colony of Pennsylvania.

**1731:** With the Junto, forms the Library Company of Philadelphia.

**1732:** Son Francis Folger Franklin is born. Ben prints first edition of *Poor Richard's Almanack*.

**1736:** Francis dies of smallpox. Ben establishes the Union Fire Company. Begins promoting his citywide sanitation scheme. Prints counterfeit-proof money for the colony of New Jersey.

**1737:** Becomes Postmaster of Philadelphia.

**1741:** Invents the Franklin stove.

**1743:** Daughter Sally is born. Ben establishes framework for the formation of the American Philosophical Society.

**1748:** Becomes a soldier in militia regiment he organizes.

**1749:** Convinces citizens that a state school is needed. This school eventually becomes the University of Pennsylvania.

**1750:** First suggests the use of lightning rods to keep houses safe.

**1751:** Helps Dr. Thomas Bond establish the Pennsylvania Hospital.

**1752:** Performs famous kite experiment, proving lightning is electricity.

**1753:** Ben is appointed Deputy Postmaster General for America and begins overhaul of the postal system.

**1754:** France and England begin fighting for control of North America. Appointed to the Albany Congress, Ben forms his Albany Plan of Union. Creates "Join, or Die" cartoon.

**1756:** French and Indian War declared.

**1757:** Pennsylvania Assembly sends Ben to England to discuss colonial disputes with Parliament.

**1765:** Stamp Act is passed by Parliament.

**1766:** Testifies in favor of the repeal of the Stamp Act before the House of Commons. Testimony is published and applauded in America.

**1767:** Parliament passes the Townshend Acts, laying taxes on lead, paint, tea, and other items.

**1768:** The British send troops to Boston.

**1770:** The Boston Massacre occurs. Ben tries to bring compromise between England and the colonies.

**1773:** Parliament passes the Tea Act, leading to the Boston Tea Party. Ben tries one last time for reconciliation between the two countries.

**1775:** The Battles of Lexington and Concord occur in April, marking the beginning of the Revolutionary War. Ben returns to Philadelphia and takes his seat in the First Continental Congress.

**1776:** Ben and Thomas Jefferson are appointed by Congress to draft the Declaration of Independence. After Washington's defeat on Long Island, Ben is appointed commissioner to France.

**1777:** Ben hears grim news of British occupation of Philadelphia. Also hears joyous news of American victory at Saratoga, New York.

**1778:** France formally recognizes the United States and signs Treaty of Alliance.

**1781:** General Charles Cornwallis surrenders at Yorktown, putting an end to the Revolutionary War. Congress appoints Ben along with John Jay, John Adams, and Henry Laurens, as commissioner to negotiate peace.

**1783:** Ben and the American Commission complete negotiations and sign peace treaty with England.

**1784:** Invents bifocals.

**1785:** Ben returns home from France. Is elected president of the executive council of Pennsylvania.

**1787:** Serves as the oldest delegate to the Constitutional Convention. Becomes President of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery.

**1788:** Retires from public office.

**1790:** Dies on April 17; buried next to Deborah in Christ Church Cemetery, Philadelphia.

**Source:** [www.library.phila.gov](http://www.library.phila.gov)

## Ben FAQs

### 1. What were Benjamin Franklin's last words?

His last words were "A dying man can do nothing easily."

**Source:** *Famous Last Words*, 1979, p. 106, Jonathan Green, 080 F271L, Literature Reference

### 2. What was the first cartoon to be published in an American newspaper?

The first newspaper cartoon was "Join or Die". It was designed by Benjamin Franklin and published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on May 9, 1754. "It depicted a snake cut up into segments representing South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and New England".

**Source:** *Famous First Facts*, 1997, p. 404, Joseph Nathan Kane, 031.02 K132f, Social Sciences History Ready Reference

### 3. Franklin helped raise funds for what famous Philadelphia church?

Christ Church, which stands on 2nd just north of Market Street, was built between 1727 and 1754.

Benjamin Franklin organized three lotteries to provide funds for its completion. It is now a national shrine.

**Source:** *Bulletin Almanac and Yearbook*, 1976, p.293, 917.481 B87 1976, Government Publications Department Reference, Social Sciences History Reference

### 4. Where is Benjamin Franklin buried?

Benjamin Franklin's grave is in the Christ Church burial ground at 5th and Arch Streets. He was buried in April of 1790; the cemetery was bought by Christ Church in 1719. It is said to be lucky to toss a penny on his grave.

**Source:** *Bulletin Almanac and Yearbook*, 1976, p.291, 917.481 B87 1976, Government Publications Department Reference, Social Sciences History Reference

### 5. Did Franklin found the Free Library of Philadelphia?

No, but he belongs in spirit to all public libraries. Afforded only two years of formal schooling, the young Franklin took charge of his own extraordinary education, borrowing and buying books as he could. In 1731, he and a group of friends pooled their own books to found the Library Company of Philadelphia, which was supported by subscription fees paid by its members. That was the first public library in the American colonies, and it grew to serve the city and the emerging nation well for many decades. However, borrowing books from it was not free, and it was not related to the Free Library of Philadelphia, which was chartered much later, in 1891. Today, Franklin's Library Company of Philadelphia survives on Locust Street as a scholarly research library rich in rare books and documents.

**Source:** Durham, Jennifer L. *Benjamin Franklin: A Biographical Companion* (1997) pp.142-144

### 6. When was Franklin born, January 6 or January 17, 1706?

The City Registry of Boston records: "Benjamin Son of Josiah Frankling [sic] & Abiah his Wife born 6 Janry 1706" According to the Julian calendar then in use, Ben was born on January 6, but in 1752 Britain and its territories adopted the Gregorian calendar, 'losing' eleven days in the process, so we celebrate on the 17th, although it is said that he always marked the 6th as his true birthdate.

**Source:** *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* Yale University Press v.1 (1959) p.3

### 7. Was Franklin a capitalist or a socialist?

The Author of *The Way to Wealth* and countless aphorisms such as: "A penny saved is a penny earned," would seem to be our greatest promoter of early American capitalism. Then why, in 1776, as President of the Constitutional Convention to create a new framework of government for Pennsylvania, did he try to enact a provision limiting the amount of wealth a citizen could accumulate? In fact, terms such as capitalism and socialism are more recent political ideas and don't fit easily into Franklin's eighteenth century world. What Ben seemed to believe was that honest wealth acquired through honest labor was valid, but that great wealth, especially inherited wealth of the type accumulated by the Penn family, was corrupting of democratic principles. In any case, Ben's provision was not considered.

**Source:** Srodes, James *Franklin: The Essential Founding Father* (2002) p.283

### 8. Was the kite experiment a hoax?

This has been a controversial issue for over a century, and several recent books purport to prove the claim that the kite experiment never took place. Here is what we know:

- That lightning could be safely drawn to earth by a metal rod had already been proven by Franklin and others in Europe by 1752. The identification of lightning with electricity, which Franklin had suggested in



1749, was in doubt. Several experiments attempting to link lightning with electricity had been performed in England and France prior to Ben's experiment, but he had not received word of them.

- Franklin supposedly performed his famous experiment with kite and key in June 1752. He did not immediately record it, and when he later described the experiment he did not explicitly say that he performed it. (Incidentally, Franklin's son William, who supposedly helped him, was a young man of 22 at this time, not the small boy depicted in most prints.)

- The famous account of Franklin's kite experiment in 1752 is from fellow scientist Joseph Priestley's *History of Electricity*, published in 1767.

- Franklin never, during his lifetime, said that he performed the kite experiment, but neither did he deny it, yet he must have known the reputation surrounding him.

- Franklin's European contemporaries, including his rivals, accorded Franklin the honor of first place in his discovery. The kite experiment became known as the Franklin or Philadelphia Experiment, and for his efforts Franklin was awarded the prestigious Copley Medal by the Royal Society in 1753.

- There were later challenges to Franklin's scientific achievement. Ben never bothered to respond. The consensus among most historians seems to be that Franklin did perform a kite experiment, that he was remiss in recording and publishing his findings in a timely manner, and that if he had wanted to perpetrate a hoax he could have done a better job of it, but there is still room for skepticism.

**Source:** Srodes, James *Franklin: The Essential Founding Father* (2002) pp.92-95

## 9. What were some of Franklin's inventions and discoveries?

- Ant communication (by watching ants lay siege to a jar of molasses)
- Bifocal glasses (to let him use one pair of eyeglasses to see both close and far)
- Catheters (for his brother who suffered from kidney stones)
- Cold-air baths (for cleansing)
- Causes of the common cold (lack of fresh night air while sleeping; not washing hands)
- Electrical principles and devices
- Electroshock therapy
- The Pennsylvania fireplace, known today as the Franklin Stove
- The Glass armonica (Mozart and Beethoven composed music for it)
- The location and calculation of the Gulf Stream (his measurements remain accurate)
- The recognition that lead can poison
- The concept that light clothing reflects (resists) heat
- Improved streetlights (with four panes and open at top to let smoke out)
- Swimming paddles and flippers (which allowed him to swim faster)

**Source:** Durham, Jennifer L. *Benjamin Franklin: A Biographical Companion* (1997)

## 10. What are some of the organizations and institutions that Franklin helped to found?

- The Junto, a social and intellectual club (1727)
- The Library Company of Philadelphia (1731)
- Improved postal service when Franklin became Postmaster of Philadelphia (1731) and Deputy Postmaster for the colonies (1753)
- The Union Fire Company (1736)
- The American Philosophical Society (1743)
- A militia regiment for defense of the western frontier (1748)
- The Pennsylvania Hospital (1751)
- The Philadelphia Academy and Charitable School (1751) later becoming the University of Pennsylvania

But not the Free Library of Philadelphia (founded 1891)

**Source:** Durham, Jennifer L. *Benjamin Franklin: A Biographical Companion* (1997)

## 11. Franklin was the only one of our founding fathers to sign what four major documents that made possible America's independence?

- The Declaration of Independence (1776)
- Treaty of Alliance with France (1778)
- Treaty of Paris ending the Revolutionary War (1783)
- Constitution of the United States (1787)

**Source:** Fleming, Candace *Ben Franklin's Almanac* (2003) p.103

## 12. Was Franklin a slave-owner?

Yes, Franklin both owned and sold slaves, a fact that is hardly touched on in most biographies. David Waldstreicher, in his recent book *Runaway America*, writes:

(Franklin) profited from the domestic and international slave trade, complained about the ease with which slaves and servants ran off to the British army during the colonial wars of the 1740's and 1750's, and staunchly defended slaveholding rebels during the Revolution. He owned a series of slaves between 1735 and 1781 and never systematically divested himself of them. After 1731 he wrote publicly and regularly on the topics of slavery and racial identity but almost never in a straightforwardly antislavery or antiracist fashion. He declined to bring the matter of slavery to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 when asked to do so by the abolition society that he served as President.

Yet as early as 1751 Franklin had pointed out the economic weakness of slavery, and in 1758 had suggested the establishment of the first school for African American children. Franklin's views gradually changed as he grew older. After about 1770 his writings became progressively more anti-slavery, and in a letter to the *London Chronicle* he called slavery "a constant butchery of the human species by the pestilential detestable traffic in the bodies and souls of men." After the Revolution, Franklin was involved with the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and served as its President for a time. In 1789 he drafted a petition condemning slavery and sent it to Vice President John Adams. The petition was rejected, as Franklin had anticipated. Franklin, who as a former indentured servant was the only Founding Father to have been "owned" by someone else, came to see both the economic and the moral paradox of American freedom and American slavery.

**Source:** Waldstreicher, David *Runaway America* (2004) pp.xii-xiii

## 13. What kinds of books and other resources on Franklin are available at the Free Library of Philadelphia?

- More than 350 titles by or about Ben Franklin
- Franklin's complete writings in several editions, including the 37 volumes of the monumental *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (Yale University Press)
- Access — electronic, or in print — to scores of scholarly journals concerning American history and culture during Franklin's era, and the recently acquired *Archive of Americana*, digitized reproductions of contemporary printed materials from every aspect of American life in the 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries
  - In the Central Library's Rare Book Department, many books from Franklin's own press — as well as a collection of the original Robert Lawson drawings for *Ben and Me*
  - In the Central Library's Print and Picture Collection, hundreds of portraits of Franklin and illustrations of his era
  - In the Central Library's Children's Department, more than 25 titles about Franklin, as well as many books of non-fiction or historical fiction set during Franklin's time; and, in the Children's Literature Research Collection, non-circulating books on similar subjects dating from the mid-19th to the 21st century
  - Other items of interest from the 18th century, including maps, city directories, and local government documents

## 14. Where and when was the first subscription, or social, library in the United States founded?

The Library Company of Philadelphia was the first subscription, or social, library. It was founded in 1731 in Philadelphia by Benjamin Franklin and his friends.

**Source:** *American Libraries Before 1876*, 2000, p. 22, Haynes McMullen, 027.073 M229a, Education, Philosophy, Religion

## 15. How was the first electric cooking done?

In 1749 Benjamin Franklin prepared a picnic along the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia, by killing a turkey with an electric shock and roasting it with the help of electricity.

**Source:** *Famous First Facts*, 1997, p. 218, Joseph Nathan Kane, 031.02 K132f, Social Sciences History Ready Reference

## 16. Franklin published what ethnic newspaper, the first of its kind in British America?

The "Philadelphische Zeitung", a German newspaper, was published by Benjamin Franklin on May 6, 1732.

**Source:** *Famous First Facts*, 1997, p. 402, Joseph Nathan Kane, 031.02 K132f, Social Sciences History Ready Reference

**Source:** [www.library.phila.gov](http://www.library.phila.gov)

## Materials Related to Benjamin Franklin

### Books for Adults

**Title:** *The Most Dangerous Man in America: Scenes From the Life of Benjamin Franklin*

**Author:** Bowen, Catherine Drinker

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** 973.3091 F854b/B F85b67

**Notes:** A noted Philadelphia author explores Franklin's character through five defining scenes from his life. A highly accessible book for general readers.

**Title:** *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*

**Author:** Brands, H. W.

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** 973.3092 F854bra

**Notes:** This Pulitzer Prize finalist combines masterful storytelling and meticulous scholarship. Franklin comes vividly to life as America's first Renaissance man.

**Title:** *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*

**Author:** Franklin, Benjamin

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** various editions

**Notes:** Begun in 1771 as advice to his son William, this is the only autobiographical book that Franklin ever wrote. The Autobiography tells Ben's own story of his early life up to the beginning of his diplomatic career in 1757, full of insight into his character and opinions. A *One Book, One Philadelphia* selection for 2006.

**Title:** *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life*

**Author:** Isaacson, Walter

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** 973.3092 F854is

**Notes:** This popular biography is perhaps unique in its discussion of Ben's strained and flawed relationship with his family. It shows us a Founding Father great and human at the same time.

**Title:** *Benjamin Franklin*

**Author:** Morgan, Edmund S.

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** 973.3092 F854mor

**Notes:** Perhaps the best short biography of Franklin, noted historian Morgan presents glimpses into the life and character of the man from his own papers. Sometimes faulted for its slight coverage of politics, this is more of an appreciation than a work of meticulous scholarship.

**Title:** *A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America*

**Author:** Schiff, Stacy

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** 327.7304 F854s

**Notes:** Pulitzer Prize-winning author Schiff presents an intriguing glimpse into Franklin's diplomatic years in France between the Declaration of Independence and the Treaty of Paris.

**Title:** *Franklin: The Essential Founding Father*

**Author:** Srodes, James

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** 973.3092 F854sr

**Notes:** Historian and biographer Srodes tells Franklin's life story in one of the most riveting accounts yet of the journalist, scientist, politician, and adventurer. A *One Book, One Philadelphia* selection for 2006.

**Title:** *Benjamin Franklin*

**Author:** Van Doren, Carl

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** 973.3092 F854v

**Notes:** Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1939, Van Doren's work is still considered by most historians the most comprehensive and scholarly biography of Franklin available.

**Title:** *Runaway America: Benjamin Franklin, Slavery, and the American Revolution*

**Author:** Waldstreicher, David

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** 973.3092 F854waL

**Notes:** Waldstreicher presents a fresh assessment of Franklin, slavery and the American Revolution, and explains how the Founding Father embodied the American paradox.

**Title:** *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*

**Author:** Wood, Gordon S.

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** 973.3092 F854wo

**Notes:** Not strictly a biography, but an insight into the shifting views and positions that Franklin assumed on his way to becoming an American. Wood is perhaps our foremost interpreter of the founding period in America.

**Title:** *Franklin of Philadelphia*

**Author:** Wright, Esmond

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** 973.3092 F854w

**Notes:** This assessment of Franklin's personal and political life, written in 1986 by a highly readable and sympathetic British historian, was perhaps the best biography after Van Doren.

## Books for Children

**Title:** *A Picture Book of Benjamin Franklin*

**Author:** Adler, David A.

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** j973.3092 F854ad

**Notes:** This Picture Book Biography features full color illustrations by John and Alexandra Wallner of 14 chapters in Franklin's life. Each double-page spread is accompanied by a paragraph or more about what he did. For grades 2-4.

**Title:** *The Amazing Mr. Franklin, Or, the Boy Who Read Everything*

**Author:** Ashby, Ruth

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** j973.3092 F854as

**Notes:** This biography primarily covers Franklin's life from his escape from Boston at age 17 to midlife. His struggles as well as successes are summarized. For grades 3-5.

**Title:** *Benjamin Franklin: Inventor and Patriot*

**Author:** Ford, Carin T.

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** j973.3092 F854for

**Notes:** The author's 'just the facts' approach to this Franklin biography makes it perfect for assignments for young readers. Includes timeline and index. For grades 2-4.

**Title:** *What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?*

**Author:** Fritz, Jean

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** j973.3092 F854f

**Notes:** Margot Tomes' illustrations in color and, pen and ink highlight this delightful yet brief biography of the multifaceted Franklin by an award-winning author. For grades 4 and up.

**Title:** *The Amazing Life of Benjamin Franklin*

**Author:** Giblin, James

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** j973.3092 F854gi

**Notes:** This comprehensive biography is complemented by Michael Dooling's glorious illustrations. Was an American Library Association Notable Book. For grades 4 and up.

**Title:** *Qwerty Stevens, Stuck in Time With Benjamin Franklin*

**Author:** Gutman, Dan

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** jFiction

**Notes:** Seventh grader Qwerty Stevens accidentally transports Franklin into the 21st Century. How does Qwerty return him and prevent the Declaration of Independence from being hijacked? For grades 4 and up.

**Title:** *Ben and Me: An Astonishing Life of Benjamin Franklin by His Good Mouse Amos, Lately Discovered, Edited and Illustrated by Robert Lawson*

**Author:** Lawson, Robert

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** jFiction

**Notes:** Amos, the former church mouse, describes how he gave Ben his ideas and inventions. Amos even helps Jefferson come up with the start of a famous document. A *One Book, One Philadelphia* selection for 2006. For grades 4 and up, or as a read-aloud for younger children.

**Title:** *Ben Franklin and His Magic Squares*

**Author:** Murphy, Frank

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** jFiction

**Notes:** Using Ben's assistance to the Pennsylvania Colonial Assembly as a backdrop, the author discusses simplified examples of magic squares and give some basic Franklin facts. For grades 1-3.

**Title:** *Benjamin Franklin and Electricity*

**Author:** Parker, Steve

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** j509.2 F854p

**Notes:** Despite the title, this biography describes Franklin's early life, as well as his other discoveries and contributions beyond electricity. Includes an index and timetable of world events. For grades 4-6.

**Title:** *How Ben Franklin Stole the Lightning*

**Author:** Schanzer, Rosalyn

**Free Library of Philadelphia Call Number:** j530.2 F854p

**Notes:** In picture-book format, the author/illustrator emphasizes Ben's discoveries, from preventing scurvy to bifocals to electricity. Beautifully illustrated in full color throughout. For grades 2-4, or as a read-aloud for younger children.

## Websites

### The Electric Ben Franklin

<http://www.ushistory.org/franklin/>

The essential Ben website. Everything about him plus a whole page of links to additional internet resources. (Independence Hall Association)

### The World of Benjamin Franklin

<http://fi.edu/franklin/rotten.html>

Benjamin Franklin: Glimpses of the Man: His family tree, inventions, accomplishments, and legacy in today's world. (Franklin Institute Science Museum)

### Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary

<http://www.benfranklin300.com/>

Ben Franklin: In Search of a Better World: Use this site to learn about events, publications, web links, and images related to the celebration of Ben's 300th birthday.

### **Benjamin Franklin | PBS**

<http://www.pbs.org/benfranklin/>

Benjamin Franklin: An Extraordinary Life, An Electric Mind. A witty, interactive site that appeals to both children and adults. (Twin Cities Public Television, Inc.)

### **Penn in the Age of Franklin**

<http://sceti.library.upenn.edu/franklin/>

A close-up look at documents relating to the early history of the university Ben helped found. (University of Pennsylvania Library in collaboration with the University Archives and Records Center).

### **The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin**

<http://eserver.org/books/franklin/bf1.html>

The full text of "The Private Life of the Late Benjamin Franklin, LL.D.", first published a year after his death. (Eserver Books.)

### **Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids**

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/>

Ben makes government easy for big and little kids to understand. (Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office).

**Source:** [www.library.phila.gov](http://www.library.phila.gov)

## **Additional Resources**

***Ben Franklin's Almanac: Being a True Account of the Good Gentleman's Life*** by Candace Fleming (2003, Atheneum/Anne Schwartz Books) A beautiful book for older children (ages 9-12), which will also be thoroughly enjoyed by adults.

***Poor Richard's Almanack by Benjamin Franklin*** (various editions) Franklin's wit and wisdom is found in abundance in his Almanack.

***Ben and Me*** (1974, USA) Directed by Hamilton Luske, this animated Walt Disney film is based on the children's classic by Robert Lawson.

***Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World*** edited by Page Talbott (2005, Yale University Press) Essays by ten eminent scholars cover diverse aspects of Franklin's remarkable life.

***The Life of Benjamin Franklin*** by J.A. Leo Lemay (2005, University of Pennsylvania Press) The remarkable Professor LeMay has published Volumes One and Two of a planned seven-volume biography.

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Haverford Township Free Library  
The "Hawaiians"  
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Independence Place  
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International Spy Museum  
Jefferson University Hospital  
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Ben Franklin Volunteer Expo  
National History Day Philly  
National Liberty Museum  
National Museum of American Jewish History  
Nexus/Foundation for Today's Art  
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North Wales Library  
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Office of Mayor John F. Street  
Opera Barber Shop  
PECO, An Exelon Company  
People's Emergency Center  
People's Light and Theatre Company  
Penn Center House Apartments  
Pennsylvania Ballet  
Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Library  
Pepper Hamilton LLP  
Perelman Jewish Day School  
The Philadelphia Area Consortium  
of Special Collections Libraries/PACSL  
Philadelphia Center for Psychoanalysis  
Philadelphia Corporation for Aging  
Philadelphia Daily News  
Philadelphia Family Court  
Philadelphia Great Books Council  
Philadelphia History Book Club  
The Philadelphia Inquirer  
Philadelphia Mennonite High School  
Philadelphia Museum of Art  
Philadelphia Newspapers, Inc.  
The Philadelphia Orchestra  
Philadelphia Phillies  
Philadelphia Reading Olympics  
Philadelphia Reads  
The Philadelphia School  
Philadelphia Theatre Company

Philadelphia Weekend Film Festival  
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