

Ben & Me

Study Guide



BEN *and* ME

A New and Astonishing *LIFE* of
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

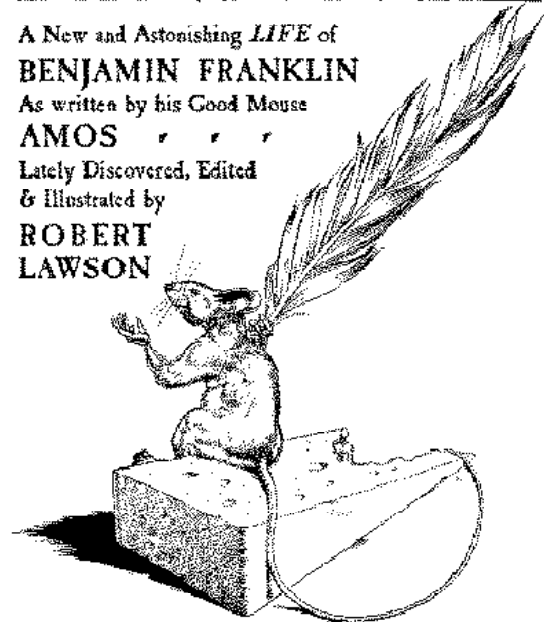
As written by his Good Mouse

AMOS

Lately Discovered, Edited

& Illustrated by

ROBERT
LAWSON



A Musical for Young Audiences

Book by Mark Amenta

Lyrics by Bill Vaananen & Mark Amenta

Music by Bill Vaananen

Presented by
Face to Face Productions

The Story of the Play

At a rally to denounce history's unfair treatment of mice, Amos takes the audience back in time to when he and Ben first met. After helping Ben devise what became the Franklin Stove, Amos proves that each of them can benefit from the other. Ben convinces Amos to put their partnership in writing. After all, "the pen is mightier than the sword." As a result, Amos inspires Ben's many inventions and discoveries, and Ben provides for Amos and his family. But when Ben makes Amos a "guinea mouse" during his electricity experiments, Amos revolts. Soon after, Ben and the other colonists are also revolting—against British rule. With the tables turned, Amos reminds Ben that "the pen is mightier than the sword," and inspires him to help write the Declaration of Independence.

Educational Goals

- ❖ Illustrate how trust, teamwork and partnership can mutually benefit the parties involved
- ❖ Show the impetus for and strategies behind inventions and experiments
- ❖ Develop and/or refine the idea of written agreements, and the significance of signing a document
- ❖ Demonstrate the results of broken agreements and unfair practices
- ❖ Show the power of the written word, and how it can help avoid confrontations and end disputes
- ❖ Foster an understanding of the role each citizen plays in the development of their country
- ❖ Teach the importance of personal integrity as it relates to the making and keeping of promises

Curriculum Applications

- ❖ Biography (Franklin's many contributions to history)
- ❖ Almanacs and their contribution of wit, wisdom and essential information
- ❖ Scientific studies of lightning and electricity
- ❖ Inventions, such as the Franklin stove, bifocal glasses and the lightning rod
- ❖ Publishing and the use of the printing press
- ❖ History of the Revolutionary War and the Declaration of Independence

Educator Comments

Congratulations on once again providing the children with an EXCELLENT production. Ben & Me was delightful and provided the children with a tremendous amount of factual information while entertaining them. – Judith Frank-Gonwa, Principal, Wescott School, Northbrook, IL

Thank you for your wonderful performance. The entertainment you provide is relevant and plays an important part in the education of young people. You provide a creative and innovative approach to events in history. – Tracy Deis-Doris, Public Relations Coordinator, Discovery Center, Rockford, IL

Your performance was truly delightful. The students were captivated and the feedback from teachers and parents has been nothing but positive. Many feel it's the best cultural arts program we've ever had—and we've had some good ones! – Mary Jo Cline, Cultural Arts Chairperson, Westview School, Wood Dale, IL

Events that Coincide with the Play's Themes

(See if you can book *Ben & Me* around the time of these events.)

- ❖ Ben Franklin's birthday – Jan. 17
- ❖ National Library Week (April)
- ❖ Any publishing your school does
- ❖ Study of the Revolutionary War and colonial times

Other Information

- ❖ Audience age: K-6
- ❖ For funding: Illinois Arts Council or Michigan Humanities Council
- ❖ Length of show: 40 minutes
- ❖ More info: 773-631-2013 or www.FacetoFaceProductions.com

Social Studies Connection: Finding the Key Cities

On a US map, have students find the cities that were important in colonial America during the life of Benjamin Franklin. See if they can find the cities without telling them what states they're in.

Augusta	Charleston	Princeton	Springfield
Baltimore	New York	Richmond	Trenton
Boston	Philadelphia	Savannah	Yorktown

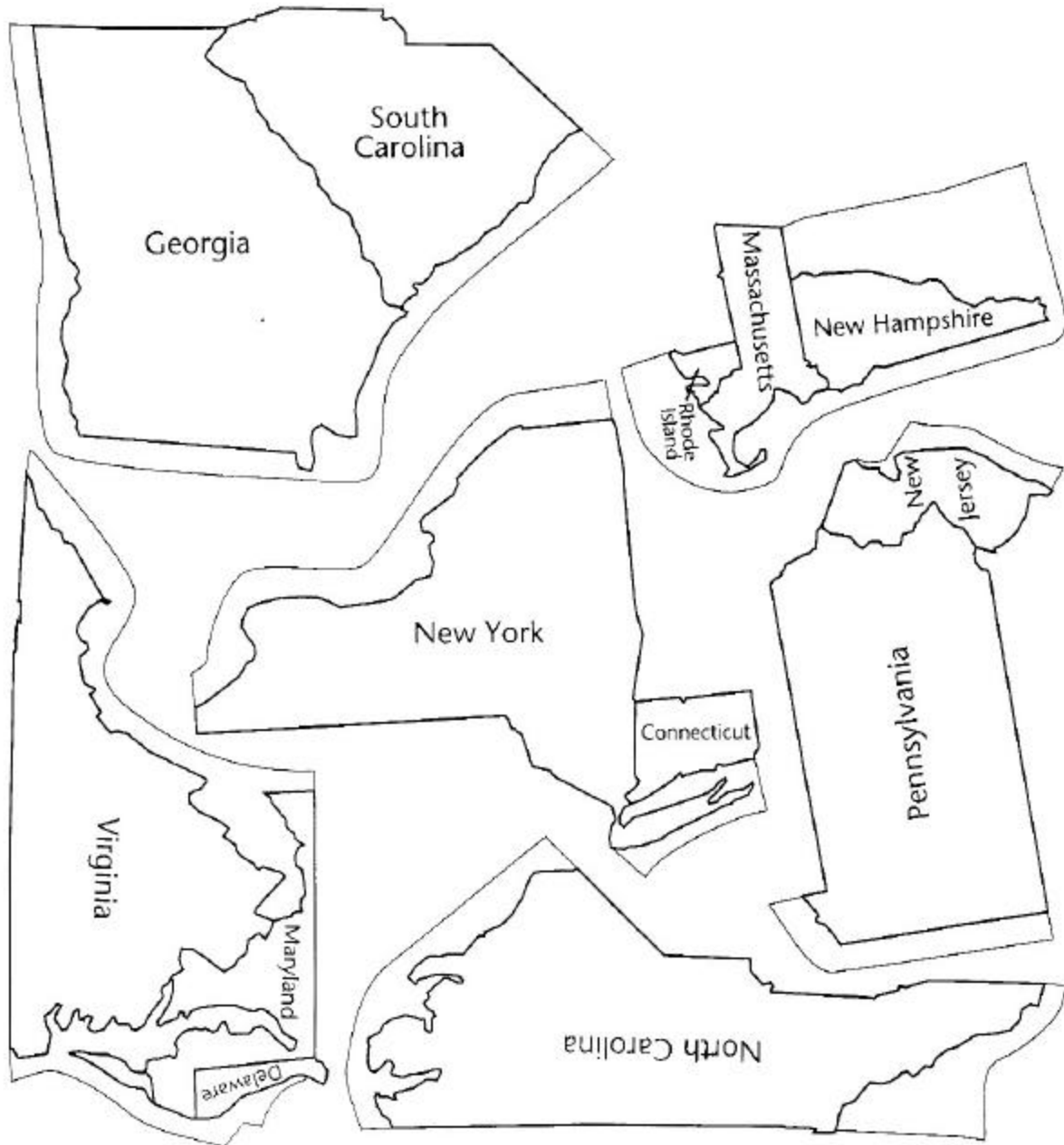
Social Studies Connection: Mapping the Colonies

Using a map of the United States, have the students identify the 13 original colonies:

Connecticut	Maryland	New Jersey	Pennsylvania	South Carolina
Delaware	Massachusetts	New York	Rhode Island	Virginia
Georgia	New Hampshire	North Carolina		

In place or in addition to this activity, have students put together a map of the 13 colonies from the puzzle pieces on the next page.





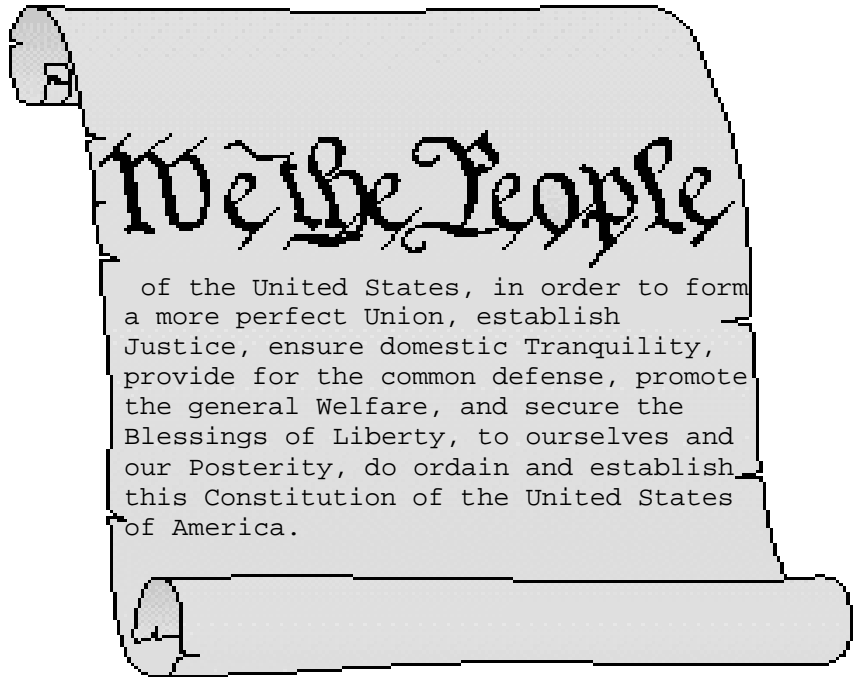
Art Connection: Drawing Scenes

After seeing *Ben & Me*, have your students draw a picture of their favorite part of the play. When they are finished, let them share their artwork with the class. If you wish, you may send the pictures to the address below. As a thank you, we will send your class an autographed picture from the production.

Face to Face Productions
7329 W. Fitch Av
Chicago, IL 60631-1012

Art Connection: Group Poster

Make a "WE THE PEOPLE" poster showing what the opening phrase of the Constitution means to students today. Have each student bring in one or several pictures from magazines or newspapers depicting all the different people of America that are protected by the Constitution.



Music Connection: Songs of the American Revolution

There are several collections of music that was popular during the American Revolution, colonial America and Ben Franklin's life:

- ❖ **Songs of Independence**, compiled and edited with historical notes by Irwin Silber, "The beginnings, growth and maturity of America's revolutionary spirit as seen through the sounds and music of colonial times." – Stockpole Books, Harrisburg, PA, 1973
- ❖ **Songbook of the American Revolution**, by Caroline Rabson; Peaks Island, Maine, 1974
- ❖ **A Williamsburg Songbook**, edited by John Edmund; Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1964 "Songs Convivial, Sporting, etc. Known to have been in libraries of colonial Virginia."
- ❖ **Songs of '76 – A Folksinger's History of the Revolution**, by Oscar Brand; M. Evans and Co., Inc., NYC, 1972. "Being a compendium of music and verses, patriotic and treasonous, sung both by the rebels and the adherents of His Royal Majesty George III."
- ❖ **The Bicentennial Collection of American Music**, Vol. 1 and 2, compiled by Elwyn A. Wienandt "1668-1800" Published by Hope, Carol Stream, IL, 1974.

Science & Language Arts Connection: The Franklin Stove

In the song “Use Your Head,” Amos complains about Ben’s fireplace ...

A fireplace that’s stuck inside a wall?
A locality that makes no sense at all!
The design is so confounded
That you cannot sit around it –
It’s a problem that can frustrate and appall
More than any other thing I can recall.

When Amos suggests building a fireplace away from the wall, he relates it to the warmth provided by a hot chestnut placed in the middle of his old “mouse house”:

At wintertime my dad would always meet
A friendly chap who sold hot chestnuts on the street.
As one would topple from the cup
My pop was quick to pick it up.
He’d bring it home to all of us
And we would sit around it thus. [*mimes warming his butt*]
In the center of the room it warmed us all
‘Cause it wasn’t stuck inside a stupid wall!

Ben capitalizes on the idea, and finds objects around his home to build this “fireplace in the middle of the room,” or, as he ends up calling it, the Franklin Stove:

For some height we’ll put this anvil here in place
And the metal plate can form a sturdy base.
[*picks up a piece of metal*] This worthless old invention
Is the front that we can wrench in.
For this side we’ll put the log bin
And the washboard can fit right in.
The top will be two pans that we combine
For this innovative fireplace design.

You can create several science and language arts activities based on the inventing of the Franklin Stove. For example:

- ❖ Have students think of another useful machine or invention that they can link to something in nature. For example, one could say a blender works on the principle of a tornado—the whirling motion of both crumbles or stirs up whatever comes in contact with it.
- ❖ Have students create something that “works” from items found in the classroom. It doesn’t matter if what they create doesn’t serve an important purpose (such as a rubber-band stretcher)—what’s important is for them to use their imagination with limited resources to create some item or machine that produces some result.
- ❖ Have students suggest improvements to commonly used items—how could they make a better DVD player, in-line skates, alarm clock, refrigerator, etc.

Language Arts Connections: Word Search

Find and circle the 44 words hidden in the puzzle. Words may be printed forward, backward, vertically, horizontally, and diagonally.

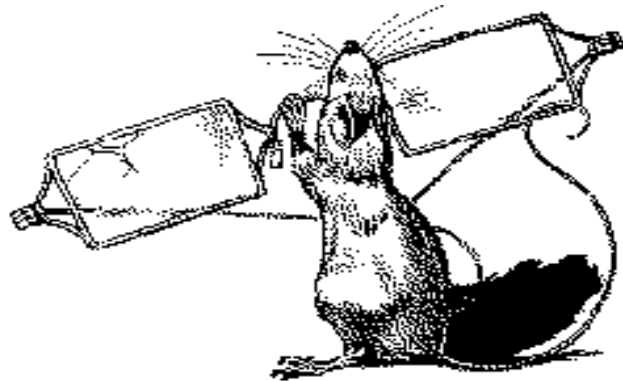
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E	T	T	I	Z	M	S	P	W	S	E	Y	Q	N	W	O	T	K	R	O	Y	H	J	N
E	R	S	L	P	R	A	T	E	N	O	I	T	U	L	O	V	E	R	C	L	I	E	Z
F	A	O	A	J	T	E	X	B	S	T	A	M	P	A	C	T	D	H	O	I	R	C	A
A	P	Q	Q	R	F	A	P	S	I	G	N	L	W	O	P	K	D	S	N	B	T	N	U
H	A	M	I	N	T	F	Z	R	T	S	A	B	T	B	S	K	D	I	G	E	E	A	S
P	E	O	N	S	O	R	R	A	E	W	E	N	L	T	G	S	G	T	R	R	E	R	H
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S	J	B	T	A	V	E	T	O	T	Y	E	I	F	I	C	W	K	R	S	Y	A	M	T
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H	I	I	B	B	N	M	M	R	Y	I	E	K	C	A	K	B	B	D	L	Z	T	O	D
I	N	V	U	I	A	T	U	O	F	N	T	L	A	K	T	K	V	A	E	Q	A	R	N
L	D	K	E	K	G	T	L	F	G	I	A	S	R	L	L	I	T	E	L	S	X	I	O
A	E	S	I	H	E	I	T	L	L	R	Y	W	N	O	T	N	O	J	W	M	A	E	T
D	P	Q	S	H	G	W	A	L	A	A	E	I	Y	O	E	N	B	N	X	X	T	S	G
E	E	U	T	B	R	N	S	T	E	X	G	A	T	N	C	D	A	Y	C	X	I	C	N
L	N	N	P	Z	D	T	I	T	N	V	N	G	I	H	H	R	W	I	I	G	O	G	I
P	D	I	O	X	A	O	R	A	T	K	O	T	K	O	N	O	P	L	T	Z	N	G	X
H	E	T	D	O	N	E	V	N	E	Y	N	T	L	I	W	C	V	S	W	I	I	L	E
I	N	E	C	I	A	A	X	E	R	O	S	J	E	U	I	N	V	P	D	D	L	S	L
A	C	D	L	S	L	Q	S	Z	C	Y	F	A	P	K	C	O	N	V	E	N	E	I	F
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R	N	M	V	Q	N	H	T	R	U	O	F	Y	L	U	J	H	I	C	R	S	U	X	V

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|
| BATTLE | DECLARATION | PATRIOTS | TAXES |
| BILL OF RIGHTS | ENGLAND | PHILADELPHIA | TEA PARTY |
| BLOCKADE | FLAG | REBEL | THIRTEEN |
| BOSTON | FRANCE | REDCOATS | TORIES |
| BRITISH | INDEPENDENCE | REPRESENTATION | TREASON |
| COLONIES | JULY FOURTH | REVOLUTION | UNITED |
| CONCORD | LEXINGTON | RIFLES | VOTE |
| CONGRESS | LIBERTY | RIGHTS | YANKEES |
| CONSTITUTION | LOYALISTS | SIGN | YORKTOWN |
| CONTINENTAL ARMY | MILITIA | STAMP ACT | |
| CONVENE | NAVAL | TAXATION | |

Language Arts Connection: Vocabulary

Below you will find words that are used in *Ben & Me*. Because of the wide age range of our audiences we have chosen a variety of vocabulary levels. Choose the words that best suit your students and have them look up the definitions and present their findings to their classmates who must then use the word in a sentence.

adage	fire	moon	smoke
almanac	fireplace	mouse	soldier
alphabet	gloves	musty	statesman
author	guilty	perceptive	sun
borrow	harbor	philosophy	tax
bread	idea	poor	tide
calculation	independence	print	tin
cheese	innocent	proverb	vestry
chestnut	intrude	rebellion	wire
chimney	invention	scientist	write
cloud	iron	silk	
cold	justice		
colony	kite		
counterfeit	labor		
current	liberty		
declare	lightning		
declaration	maxim		
determined	metaphor		
edit			
editor			
electricity			



Language Arts Connection: Clarifying the D.O.I.

Have upper-el students rewrite the opening sentence of the Declaration of Independence to make it more understandable in today's world:

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

Language Arts Connection: Maxims

In *Ben & Me*, Ben introduces Amos to the concept of maxims or wise sayings. Ben made up many maxims and published them in "Poor Richard's Almanac." The maxims would always begin with "Poor Richard says ..."

In the song "That Is to Say," Amos questions the meaning of Ben's maxims (as well as their wisdom), and Ben explains them.

Amos There's a phrase that makes no sense to me
"A stitch in time saves nine"
Why would someone save a stitch
I'd rather save a dime!

Ben Ah, yes: "A stitch in time saves nine"
That is to say: Do it on time
That is to say: Don't hesitate
Being prepared isn't a crime
Better beware not to be late

Amos "Open mouths catch only flies"??

Ben That is to say: Keep your mouth shut!

Amos "Haste makes waste" – that's not too wise

Ben That is to say: Better slow up!

Amos "Men and melons are hard to know"??

Ben That is to say: Seek and you'll find
Look inside—there's much to show

Amos I'd rather not, if you don't mind!

Say, what's this here that's underlined?

Ben "Early to bed, early to rise
It makes you healthy, wealthy, wise"

Amos Everything said—nothing but lies!

Ben Amos, you will see the truth
Of the maxims over time
Metaphoric, allegoric, and rhetoric with a rhyme

Ben "A picture's worth a thousand words"
Draw them a scene, they'll comprehend
But maxims make those words endure ... !

Amos That is to say: We'd better end!

Many of the maxims of "Poor Richard" appear on the next page. The ones used in *Ben & Me* are in bold. Have students explain a few of the maxims and/or create one of their own.

Poor Richard says: . . .

A true friend is the best possession.

Hunger never saw bad bread.

Great talkers, little doers.

Waste not, want not.

Speak little, do much.

Eat to live, and not live to eat.

A stitch in time saves nine.

Tongue double brings trouble.

Men and melons are hard to know.

A cat in gloves catches no mice.

Snowy winter, a plentiful harvest.

An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

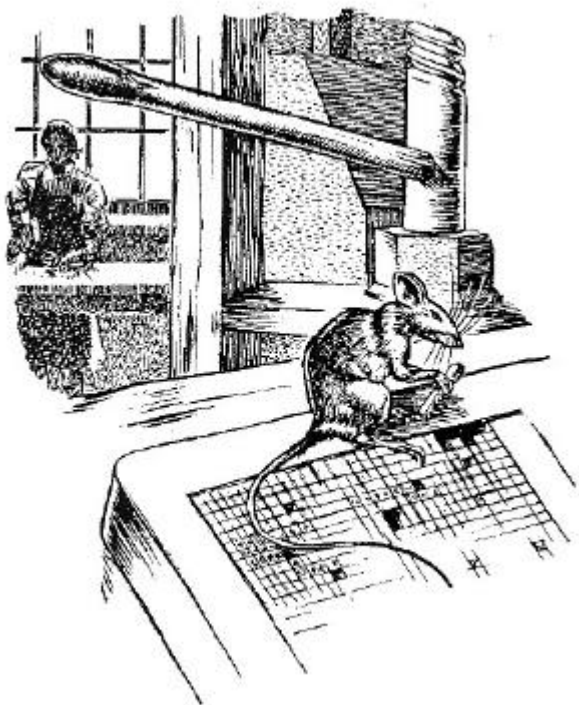
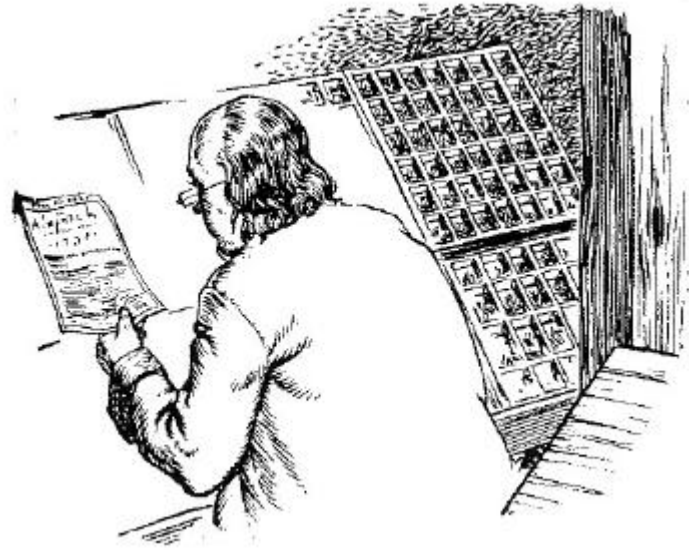
March windy and April rainy makes May the pleasantest month of any.

The poor have little, beggars none, the rich too much, enough not one.

Whatever's begun in anger ends in shame.

Teach your child to hold his tongue, He'll learn fast enough to speak.

The heart of a fool is in his mouth, but the mouth of a wise man is in his heart.



A penny saved is a penny earned.

Onions can make even heirs and widows weep.

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Lost time is never found again.

When you're good to others, you are best to yourself.

Fools make feasts and wise men eat them.

If your head is wax, don't walk in the sun.

Clean your finger before you point at my spots.

Paintings and fightings are best seen at a distance.

A pair of good ears will drain dry a hundred tongues.

Where sense is wanting, everything is wanting.

Do not squander time, for that's what life is made of.

Who pleasure gives, shall joy receive.

A picture is worth a thousand words.

Without justice, courage is weak.

Fish and visitors stink after three days.

Innocence is its own defense.

Light purse, heavy heart.

Haste makes waste.

Books on Ben Franklin

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN#	Ages
<i>Ben Franklin and the Magic Squares</i>	Frank Murphy	Random House	0375806210	5-8
<i>Ben Franklin & His First Kite</i>	Stephen Krensky	Simon & Schuster	0689849842	6-8
<i>A Picture Book of Benjamin Franklin</i>	David A. Adler	Holiday House	0823408825	6-9
<i>How Ben Franklin Stole the Lightning</i>	Rosalyn Schanzer	Harper Collins	0688169937	6-12
<i>Meet Benjamin Franklin</i>	Maggie Scarf	Random House	0375815244	7-9
<i>Who Was Benjamin Franklin?</i>	Dennis Brindell Fradin	Penguin Putnam Books	0448424959	8-10
<i>What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?</i>	Jean Fritz	Putnam Publishing	0698113721	8-11
<i>Ben and Me</i>	Robert Lawson	Little, Brown & Co.	0316517305	8-12

Ben Franklin Websites

Website	Address
Benjamin Franklin: Glimpses of the Man	sln.fi.edu/franklin/rotten.html
The Electric Franklin	www.ushistory.org/franklin/
Ben's Guide to US Government for Kids	bensguide.gpo.gov/benfranklin/
Ben Franklin: An Enlightened American	library.thinkquest.org/22254/home.htm
American Statesman & Inventor	www.lucidcafe.com/library/96jan/franklin.html
Ben Franklin as a Scientist	sln.fi.edu/franklin/scientst/scientst.html
A Quick Biography of Benjamin Franklin	www.ushistory.org/franklin/facts/
Humorous Quotes of Ben Franklin	www.workinghumor.com/quotes/benjamin_franklin.shtml