

Name: _____

Teacher: _____

Date: _____

Reading informational texts

Lesson Quick Codes for this set: LZ1757, LZ1758, LZ1759, LZ1760, LZ1761, LZ1762

Common Core State Standards addressed: RI.4.1, RI.4.10, RI.4.2, RI.4.4, RI.4.5

Lesson Text: “Duke Ellington” by Kira Freed, adapted from *America’s Story* courtesy of the Library of Congress

Assessment Text: “Benjamin Franklin: Scientist, Writer, Inventor” by Kira Freed, adapted from *America’s Story* courtesy of the Library of Congress

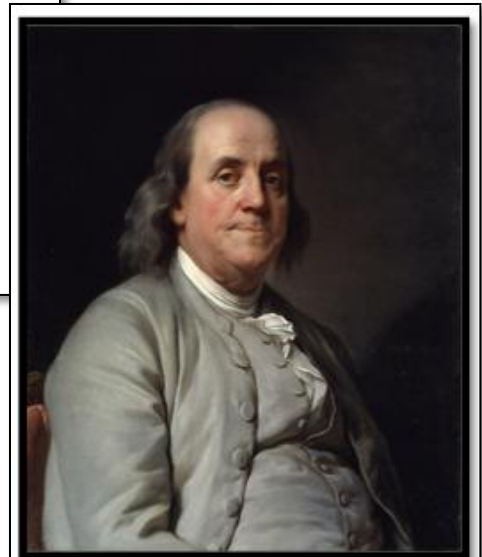
Directions: Today you will be taking a short test using what you have learned about reading nonfiction texts.

- 1) **(RI.4.10)** Below you will see the title of an article, along with a picture and caption from the article. Using these features, explain what you think this text will mostly be about.

**Benjamin Franklin:
Scientist, Writer, Inventor**

Adapted from America’s Story by the Library of Congress

By Kira Freed



This portrait of Benjamin Franklin as an older man now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC. It was painted by Joseph Duplessis in 1778. This portrait is the same as the one used on the \$100 bill, which is often called a “Benjamin” as a tribute to the man featured on it.

2) **(RI.4.10)** Now preview the rest of the article. After previewing the rest of the article, what do you think this text will teach you? What words or clues did you use to help you understand this?

Now read the article, *“Benjamin Franklin: Scientist, Writer, Inventor”*

3) **(RI.4.5)** Below you will see the beginning of a timeline that a student created for the section of the article, “Benjamin Franklin, the Printer.” Using information from this section, add at least three important events from Benjamin Franklin’s life as a printer and writer.



4) **(RI.4.2)** What is the main idea of the paragraph below?

Franklin wanted to do something with this knowledge to help solve a problem. At the time, many people’s houses burned down after being struck by lightning. Franklin knew that lightning usually hit the highest part of a building. He also knew that the electrical **current** in lightning could start a fire – so he invented the lightning rod. Made of metal, a lightning rod is attached to the highest point of a house. The lightning hits the rod instead of the house. The electrical current from the lightning travels into the ground and leaves the house unharmed.

5) **(RI.4.4)** Use the glossary from the article to determine the meaning of the word “widow” below. Then, rewrite the sentence using your own words to replace the word “widow.”

Franklin made up a character by the name of Silence Dogood. As Dogood, Franklin claimed to be a middle-aged **widow**. People suspected that Dogood was not who she said she was, but many were surprised to find out that young Franklin had written the letters.

- 6) **(RI.4.1)** Reread the section from “Benjamin Franklin: Scientist, Writer, Inventor” below. Write down three questions that you could use to quiz a classmate about the information in this section. (*Hint: you may want to use the question starters “who,” “what”, “where” “why”, or “when” to help you*)

In the 1740s, people used electricity for magic tricks by creating sparks and shocks. Scientists did experiments with electricity, but scientific thinking about electricity had not changed much in hundreds of years. Electricity wasn’t “useful” yet.

Yet electricity **fascinated** Ben Franklin. He wanted to know more than just the popular tricks. He had an idea about electricity and the lightning that he saw during thunderstorms. Franklin noticed that both created light, made loud crashes when they exploded, were attracted to metal, and had the same smell. Based on these similarities, Franklin thought electricity and lightning were the same thing. A few people shared his belief, but no one had ever tested it.

- 7) **(RI.4.2)** What is the main idea of the article, “Benjamin Franklin: Scientist, Writer, Inventor?”

Benjamin Franklin: Scientist, Writer, Inventor

Adapted from America's Story by the Library of Congress

By Kira Freed

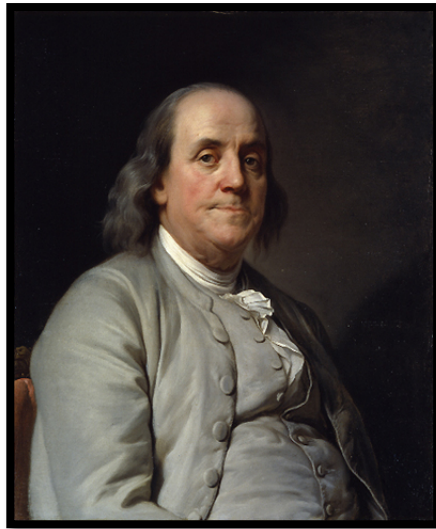
When you hear the name “Ben Franklin”, you might think about the smiling face that appears on a hundred dollar bill. You might already know about the role Ben Franklin played in the America Revolution. But did you know that Ben Franklin was also a scientist, writer, and inventor? As a scientist, he is best known for his experiments with electricity. As a writer, he is known for *Poor Richard's Almanac* and letters about his life. He is also known as the only person to sign all three **documents** that **established** the United States. These were the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the peace treaty with Britain that ended the Revolutionary War.

Ben Franklin and Electricity

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Yet electricity **fascinated** Ben Franklin. He wanted to know more than just the popular tricks. He had an idea about electricity and the lightning that he saw during thunderstorms. Franklin noticed that both created light, made loud crashes when they exploded, were attracted to metal, and had the same smell. Based on these similarities, Franklin thought electricity and lightning were the same thing. A few people shared his belief, but no one had ever tested it.

Franklin knew that to test his theory, he would need to do an experiment. He needed to get something close enough to the clouds to attract lightning, and so, he flew a kite high into the sky with an iron key attached to the top of it. The key was attached to a metal wire. He put the other end of the wire into a container that could store an electrical charge. His experiment worked! Electricity traveled from the kite to the key and then down the wire into the container. Franklin and a few other scientists in Europe (who did their own experiments) proved that lightning and electricity were the same thing.



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Ben Franklin, the Printer

In the 18th century, children didn't have much choice about what they wanted to do when they grew up. In most families, the father would decide what job his son would take when he grew up. For this reason, Ben's father sent him to school to become a preacher. But school was expensive and would

have taken many years, so his father took him out of school after only two years. He put 10-year-old Ben to work at the family business, making soap and candles.

But Ben wasn't any more interested in soaps and candles than he was in preaching. What Ben really wanted to do was to go to sea. He was a great swimmer, loved the ocean, and dreamed of working on a ship. However, one of Ben's older brothers had died at sea, so Ben's father forbid him from pursuing his dream. When another brother, James, returned from England to set up a

printing business, Ben became his brother's apprentice, or helper.

In Ben's time, apprentices had to sign papers agreeing to **obey** and work for their "master" (boss) for a certain amount of time. Although Ben wasn't happy about it, he signed up to be his brother's apprentice for nine long years, until he

was 21. Ben worked hard and learned quickly, but he ran away at the age of 17 to try to make it on his own.

Ben opened a successful printing shop in Philadelphia. His shop printed all kinds of materials, including money for the state of Pennsylvania as well as his own newspaper and books. Despite all of the other achievements that would come later in his life, Ben thought of himself as a printer for the rest of his life.

Ben Franklin loved to read. When he was young, he borrowed books from anyone who would lend them. He read about all kinds of subjects. Franklin also wanted to write, but he didn't know how, so he taught himself.

Franklin's hard work paid off. When he was 16, his brother's newspaper published 14 of his letters. In the 18th century, many people wrote for publications using pseudonyms, or fake names. Franklin made up a character by the name of Silence Dogood. As Dogood, Franklin claimed to be a middle-aged **widow**. People suspected that Dogood was not who she said she was, but many were surprised to find out that young Franklin had written the letters.

Franklin's most famous pseudonym, however, was Richard Saunders, also known as Poor Richard of *Poor Richard's Almanac*. An almanac is a reference book for everyday life that's filled with information like calendars and weather forecasts. As Poor Richard, Ben Franklin presented himself as a slightly dull, but often funny, country fellow who believed in hard work and simple living. Many of Franklin's most famous quotes are from *Poor Richard's*. These include "haste makes waste" and "early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

Poor Richard's Almanac, first published in 1732, was an instant success. Franklin published one each year for the next 26 years and sold almost 10,000 copies annually. During his lifetime, he also wrote newspaper articles, letters about his life, and letters on a wide range of subjects. These included politics, science, libraries, and even fire stations. More than two centuries after his death, Ben Franklin's contributions are still remembered by the many towns, counties, schools, and companies named after him.

Ben Franklin, the Inventor

In addition to the lightning rod, Ben Franklin invented many other things. **Here are a few:**

- **Bifocals:** glasses with lenses that have two parts, one for near vision and the other for distant vision
- **The Franklin stove:** a fireplace lined with metal that was safer for burning wood than an open fireplace
- **Long arm:** a grasping device for getting books off high shelves

Glossary

Current (<i>n</i>)	A flow or stream that moves in one direction. An electrical current is a flow of electrical charge that moves through an object called a conductor.
Documents (<i>n</i>)	Written or printed papers that contain important information
Established (<i>v</i>)	To start or begin; usually a business, school or nation is established
Fascinated (<i>v</i>)	To be very interested in or curious about
Obey (<i>v</i>)	To follow orders or commands, to listen to directions
Widow (<i>n</i>)	a woman whose husband has died