

Topic:

Ben and Me: Meet an Early American Statesman and Inventor through Literature

Time:

7-10 days

Grade:

1-5

Core:**Objectives:**

1. Students will become acquainted with Benjamin Franklin, an American author, inventor, statesman, and Constitutional delegate.
2. Students will experience historical fiction.

Procedure:

1. Ask students if they have ever heard of Ben Franklin. What have they heard? OR Ask if they know who said, “Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise,” and who discovered electricity or invented bifocals and the Franklin stove.
2. You may also want to differentiate — especially for older students — between “autobiography” and “biography.”
3. Ben and Me is a biography by a fictional good friend of Ben Franklin’s, Amos the mouse. Telling the story this way allows us to glimpse personal details and emotions (many of them probable, but fictional) about Ben Franklin without Ben, himself, writing the book. We can see a humorous and human side of a great American that the subject himself would not have exposed.
4. Then read with students the book Ben and Me by Robert Lawson. With very young students, you may want to select only a few chapters to read.
5. After appropriate chapters, let students write in the appropriate cartoon what Ben and Amos have been doing and what Amos is saying.
6. In the final cartoon, you may want to get a Poor Richard’s Almanac and take some familiar sayings from it or let the students take the cartoon home and have parents or older brothers and sisters help.
7. Older students may want to use the one-page cartoon, fill in the speech balloons, and continue the cartoon.
8. If you continue to study Franklin’s life and/or the Constitutional Convention, older students could write a short sequel to the book: “Ben and Amos Help Write the Constitution.”

Additional Resources:**Author:**

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