**A Rising People: Benjamin Franklin and the Americans**

**Teacher’s Workshop Lesson Plans**

Ben and Me  
D. Kathleen Myers  
5th grade Reading & Social Studies  
Six, 60-minute class periods.

**Overview (2-3 sentences)**

Students will explore and discover societal issues as they relate to the time-period of America’s beginning as a nation during the life of Benjamin Franklin. Students will understand the connection between historical facts and historical fiction and be able to distinguish fact from fiction or make-believe.

**Maryland VSC and Objectives**


Reading Standard 2 (informational) & 3 (literary)

*Students will read, comprehend, interpret, analyze, and evaluate informational & literary texts*

- Determine and analyze important ideas and messages in informational & literary texts.
- Identify and explain the author's/text's purpose and intended audience
- Determine important ideas and messages in literary texts
- Explain the implications of the text for the reader and/or society
- Identify and explain the relationship between a literary text and its historical context

Social Studies Standard 2: People of the Nation and World

*Student will understand the diversity and commonality, human interdependence, and global cooperation of (Benjamin Franklin) through a multicultural and a historic perspective.*

- Students will describe colonial societies and how the environment influenced them
- Describe how environment and location influenced the cultures and lifestyle

**Materials**

Teaching resource taken from *Ben’s Guide to Government for Kids:*

Ben’s Guide: Benjamin Franklin  
http://bensguide.gpo.gov/benfranklin/index.html

Multiple copies of *Ben and Me* by Robert Lawson

Copies of different tiers for reading *Ben & Me*; Reader’s Response Guide(s) – RRG

**Activity Outline**

**I. “Warm-up” and gathering of prior knowledge**

Day 1: *As a class, dialogue about what students think or know about Benjamin Franklin as a person and as a colonist. Place ideas on a shared web on the overhead; suggested roles: printer, librarian, inventor, and statesman.*

Next, students will work in heterogeneous teams (3-4 students), to extend their knowledge of one idea or role of Benjamin Franklin’s within colonial society. *This will become their “research teams.”*

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Student teams will research facts using the internet, biographical information and/or history text books to research four roles of Benjamin Franklin during his lifetime: that of a printer, a librarian, an inventor, and a statesman.

Concluding activity for each team: Complete the knowledge (K) section of a K-W-L chart.

II. Activity

Day 2 through 4: Working within Literature teams:

- Students will now be placed into homogeneous groups based on reading ability. Student groups are assigned one chapter (or a set of chapters depending on ability level of group) from the story Ben & Me by Robert Lawson. This will become their “literature teams.”

- Students will work in assigned research teams to identify the role of Benjamin Franklin in “his world” of America. The teams will become “experts” on the economic concerns (colonial needs, colonial wants, trades/jobs, and spending trends) for their time period of Benjamin Franklin’s life. Students will be able to organize their research while also enabling rehearsal of their knowledge.

Day 5 – After reading opportunity project(s): This culminating activity may need between one to two 45 minute periods. Refer to RRG Post-Reading activity selections.

Day 6 – Debriefing of facts that we were able to learn through our literature study with historical fiction. (Complete KWL chart as a class)

III. Context – students will respond to the following questions.

a. When were the various documents written?
b. Where were the various documents written?
c. Who wrote each document?
d. What type of document are they reading?
e. What is the purpose of the document?
f. Who is the audience for the document?

IV. Extensions (differentiation opportunities)

A Ben & Me reading response guide (RRG) can be used in three tiers. All students will begin our reading by listen to the first chapters on tape.

**Tier 1:** Students re-read the first three chapters of the book. Questions are discussed within group prior to responding in writing. Student focus is on Benjamin Franklin’s character traits.

**Tier 2:** Students will re-read the first three chapters of the book (with a partner or individually). Students primary reading focus is on when Benjamin Franklin as an inventor. Students are then able to select one more chapter from the first half of the story to further explore Ben Franklin (chapter 4 – 8).

**Tier 3:** Students primary reading focus is on the second half of Ben & Me – Benjamin Franklin as a statesman. Students are working more independently within literature circle teams & roles.

All students are responsible for completing one Post Reading Activity.

**Additionally, have a book basket available with multiple levels of reading on Benjamin Franklin and the colonial time period that he lived.**

K. Myers 2007
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L</th>
<th>What did you learn?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>What do you WANT to know? (Need at least 4 things)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>What do you know? (Identify at least 4 ideas)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before You Read:

1. Ben and Me is based on the life of Benjamin Franklin. Complete the K & W sections of a KWL chart on Benjamin Franklin.

2. Create a story using the words: hoax, account, credit, incredible, achievements, critical

Illustrate your story: Remember your picture must connect to the story you created above.
## Prediction based on Table of Contents

**Tier 1 – 2 – 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forward</td>
<td>v</td>
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<tr>
<td>I, Amos</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>We Invent the Franklin Stove</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bargain</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Do Some Printing</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lightning Rod</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That Kite</td>
<td>56</td>
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</table>

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The “second half” BEN and ME
(- Tier 3 -)

War page 66

La Belle France page 71

At Court page 76

Plans page 84

The Battle of Versailles page 91

Home page 104

Happy Birthday! page 109

Tier 3 – Use with Literature circle roles see:
http://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/tovashal/bcoley/litecircles.htm

K. Myers 2007
Before We Read – Make Predictions:

Electricity

The Lightning Rod

That Kite
While you Read
- Tier 2 -

Read chapter VI “Electricity”
RR on selected reading text

1.) Are the facts in Ben and Me accurate? Give some proof from other sources.

2.) Explain and cite examples from the test that prove Ben and Me is historical fiction. Go back and use your historical fiction web to help you support your answer.

Go back to your prediction for this chapter. What was correct what was incorrect? Support your answer with what you now know from the text.

Read chapter VII “The Lightning Rod”
RR on selected reading text

3.) Identify some of the character’s feelings in this book that are like feelings you have had. Tell what the feelings are and how they are like the character’s feelings.

4.) What skills does Ben have in this book and how does he use his many skills throughout the story?

Go back to your prediction for this chapter. What was correct what was incorrect? Support your answer with what you now know from the text.

Read chapter VIII “That Kite”
RR on selected reading text

5.) Summarize what happens to Amos while Ben is “flying the kite”. Include his actions, feelings and thoughts. Extend your answer – what do you think you would have done, felt, and thought if you were in Amos’s place?

6.) Describe the conflict that arrives in chapter 8. How do Ben and Amos resolve this conflict? Cite evidence to support your answer.

Go back to your prediction for this chapter. What was correct what was incorrect? Support your answer with what you now know from the text.

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1. Identify the time period of this story. Use specific text to explain how you know this.

2. Identify and describe the setting; you may wish to draw a picture based on the text clues given.

3. Analyze what brought Amos to Ben's house. Determine whether this information is implied or stated directly in the text.

Amos says Ben looks like ... Amos says Ben does...

4. Analyze how Amos describes Ben. Explain your conclusions based on text support and your own opinions and knowledge of Ben Franklin

5. Summarize the steps taken by Ben and Amos to create the stove.

6. Based on what you read and your own opinion, explain why Ben shared credit for the creation of the stove with Amos. Do you think this is only Amos's point of view?

7. Describe how Amos' feelings change throughout the story. Remember to use sequence words when you cite examples from the text. (i.e. In the beginning…, After that …, In the end …).

8. Identify how the main events affect the story's characters. Support your answer with examples from the text

9. Choose one additional chapter from Ben’s life as an inventor (chapter 4 – 8) to read. Summarize the story. Think about (at least) four main events from the text.

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Post Reading Extension:

1. Historical fiction has many facts mixed with fiction (non-facts). Distinguish the facts from the fiction in Ben and Me. Use ideas and examples from what you read to complete the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fact</th>
<th>Fiction</th>
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2. Evaluate what the author had to know to write this story. Support your opinion with details from the story as well as from your own ideas and experiences.

□ Complete the L section of your KWL Chart
□ Complete one Post Reading Activity

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Writing Connection:

Throughout the novel, we hear several experiments that Ben conducted with Amos' help. Your task is to make connections to and discuss one of Ben's scientific studies. Choose one of the following activities to complete.

Choice One:

Pretend that you are Amos at the end of *That Kite*. Write a letter of recommendation for Ben to the Science community.

Remember the parts of a letter when you write.

Choice Two:

Pop up book: (See example)

1. Capture one main event from your story in a picture.
2. Select items that will be 3-dimensional or “pop” out of the frame.
3. Finally, create a summary to describe your main event. You must include the sequence of actions and explain the importance or relevance of this event to your character’s development.

Date

Greeting,

Body to include at least three separate paragraphs. The first paragraph introduces.

The second paragraph informs the king of Ben’s great qualities (character traits) as a scientist. Give specific examples that we read in our story.

The final paragraph persuades the science community to take Ben's investigations seriously.

Closing,


Final project must have a cover. Your cover should include the title of your book, the original author, the date and your name (retold by: ______).

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Imagine that you work for a newspaper in 1775 in their advertisement department. Ben Franklin has commissioned your paper to create an ad for his stove. Your editor has asked everyone to present a proposal for the ad. You need to persuade your paper's readers to buy this stove. In order to do this, you must include its advantages, cost and a catchy slogan.

Use the 4-square writing model to create your graphic organizer then identify the TAP-F. Attach your organizer, first draft and proposed ad to this packet. Remember to write and illustrate the ad.