

NOW & BEN
THE MODERN INVENTIONS OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
K-3

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Story Summary

Now and then, we think about Ben. Dr. Benjamin Franklin, to be precise. We think about his many inventions and the impact they continue to have on our lives. In this book, the reader will understand why inventions that Ben originated more than two hundred years ago can be referred to as “modern.” Many of the inventions documented in this book were inspired by Ben Franklin’s common sense and intelligence. Ben Franklin never patented his creations because he believed that people should have the freedom to modify and improve them. In this book you will see how Benjamin Franklin’s creativity and good sense have impacted upon our surroundings, community organizations, and historical documents.

Objectives

1. The children will develop an appreciation for what it means to be an inventor.
2. The children will identify specific inventions attributed to Ben Franklin.
3. The children will develop an appreciation for some of these inventions and understand the relevance to their lives.

Before viewing the video

Tell the children that they are going to view a video about an important American who was born in 1706, 300 years ago. His name is Benjamin Franklin and he worked very hard to make life better for people who live in our country. When he saw a problem, he tried to find a way to fix it. By fixing many problems he invented many things that we still use today. If you look carefully, you will see chairs that are used at home and in school. You will see an instrument that is still used in every automobile. You will see many community helpers who have jobs that were developed by Ben Franklin many years ago. After we view this video, we will have a chance to talk about what our lives would be like if Ben Franklin did not work to make America better.

Questions to ask after viewing the video

1. Why do we think of Ben Franklin when we see a newspaper filled with illustrations?
2. What are bifocals and why did Ben Franklin invent them?
3. How did Ben Franklin discover the true nature of electricity?
4. Ben Franklin invented the lightning rod. How is that helpful in protecting us today?
5. Ben invented a device that he called the Long Arm. How is that used today?
6. What did Ben do that is helpful to swimmers and ship captains today?
7. What is another invention you saw in the video that you would like to talk about?
8. What is daylight saving time and what part did Ben Franklin play in this?
9. Ben invented the odometer. Where can we see one today?
10. What are some of the community organizations Ben helped to develop that we still have today?
11. There are several documents that are important to the citizens of the United States. Can you name one of these documents that Ben helped develop?

Activities

1. Have the children look around the classroom and make a list of the “inventions” they see in their surroundings.
2. “Who is the inventor?” Have an internet or library experience to determine who is credited with some of the everyday things that make our lives easier.
3. Select one of the inventions or community organizations attributed to Ben Franklin in the video and encourage a discussion or writing experience about what life would be like without it.
4. Ask the children to draw a fantasy picture titled “If I Were an Inventor...” that would feature something they would like to see invented.