

Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin was one of the people who founded the United States of America. He was born in 1706. Benjamin was good at almost everything. He was one of the greatest scientists. He invented a lot of things we still use today three hundred years later. He was a famous writer and author. He made his own newspapers and books long before there were any computers or even typewriters. He printed them with a printing press, which was a machine with metal letters that were painted with ink and then smashed onto paper.

He wrote and printed an Almanac, which is a kind of book full of weather reports, recipes and facts. The Almanac is still printed today. In one of his books Benjamin wrote the sentence, "A penny saved is a penny earned," which is a famous phrase people still say today to mean that it is important to save your money, so that you will always have enough. Benjamin also believed that all people should be free, and he wrote about how bad slavery was a hundred years before most people thought it was wrong. He knew that it was terrible to own other people even though equality wasn't a popular idea yet.

Benjamin invented lots of things we still use today. He figured out that lightning is a large electric charge by tying a key onto a kite string. Even then, scientists knew that electricity is attracted to metal, so when the lightning kept going to the key, Benjamin proved lightning is electricity. Next, Benjamin invented the lightning rod, which is a metal rod that goes from the top of your house down to the ground. It takes the electricity from the lightning down into the earth, where it doesn't hurt anything. That is why your house doesn't burn up if it is hit by lightning in a storm. Without a Benjamin's lightning rods, lots of houses would get burned down by lightning. He also invented a lot of other things, like a better kind of stove, which is still called a Franklin stove, special reading glasses for people who can't see well and even the fins that people put on their feet so they can swim faster in the water.

1. How did Benjamin Franklin make newspapers with a printing press?

2. What is something Benjamin Franklin wrote that people still say today?

3. What are three more things Benjamin Franklin invented?

4. Why do you need a lightning rod?
