

# THE INVENTOR: BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



## Characters

**Narrator 1**  
**Narrator 2**  
**Deborah**

**Mr. Franklin**  
**Townsperson**  
**Benjamin**

## Setting

This reader's theater takes place during the 1770s in America and London.



Benjamin



Deborah

## Act 1

- Narrator 1:** Benjamin Franklin lived many years ago. Even though he became very well known, his life did not start out that way.
- Narrator 2:** Benjamin was the youngest son in a large family from Boston, Massachusetts.
- Deborah:** His father was a candle and soap maker.
- Mr. Franklin:** All of my boys were expected to be tradesmen like me.
- Townsperson:** But Ben was special. Even though he was only a young boy, we could all tell that he was smart.
- Mr. Franklin:** I wasn't sure what to do with Ben. I decided to send him to school to learn Latin. Maybe he would grow up to be a preacher.
- Benjamin:** At first, I didn't know if I would like moving away from my family to go to school. But, I loved it!
- Deborah:** Ben did really well in school. He was at the top of his class.
- Mr. Franklin:** After Ben finished his first year of school, I realized that sending him away to school was too expensive.

# Inventors Lesson Plan

## Objectives

- **Fluency:** Students will read passages fluently and accurately within an oral reading activity, focusing on correct phrasing.
- **Content Area:** Students will learn about inventors and some famous and important inventions.

## Summary

This script is based on the true story of the life of Benjamin Franklin. As a boy, Ben becomes an apprentice to a printer, but questions about science spark his curiosity and Ben becomes one of the most famous and important American inventors.



## Materials

- *The Inventor: Benjamin Franklin* script booklets
- *Inventors Character Masks*

## Introduce the Literature

Read the book, *What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?* by Jean Fritz, to your students. Ask them to think about wonderful inventions in recent years. Draw their attention to inventions that have forever changed our way of life, such as the light bulb, the internal combustion engine, the telephone, and computer technology. Explain to students that there are many people (past and present) who have invented things that we use every day. Point out that Benjamin Franklin was one of these people and his life as an inventor is the focus of this reader's theater.

## ELL Support



The concept of inventions may be difficult for your English language learners to understand. If possible, pair these students with other bilingual students in your class to discuss inventors and inventions. Try to help them locate famous inventors from their home countries.

## Involving All Students

While this script has only six roles, there are various ways to involve all of your students. Assign the main roles to six of your students. Then, divide the rest of the class into two groups. One group is responsible for preparing the poem. The other group is responsible for preparing the song. These two groups need to figure out creative ways to present the poem and song. The performances should include hand and body motions as well as a clear reading or singing of the piece. Before the actual reader's theater starts on the day of the performance, each of these groups will present its piece to the whole class. Let each group spend about five minutes teaching the hand and body motions and the words to the whole class. Then, move on to the reader's theater performance. During the reader's theater, at the designated times in the script, the whole class will read or sing the poem or song using the motions provided by the two groups.