

# **Now & Ben: The Modern Inventions of Benjamin Franklin**

**By Gene Barretta**

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## **Common Core State Standards-English Language Arts-Literacy, Reading Informational Text Grade 3**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.2 Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.3 Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.7 Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.8 Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence).

### **Focus**

Students will listen to Now & Ben: The Modern Inventions of Benjamin Franklin and create a timeline reflecting his life including inventions.

### **Activation**

Introduce author Gene Barretta to students and share information about his website [www.genebarretta.com](http://www.genebarretta.com). Explain we will be reading a book written by Gene and talk about a very famous Pennsylvanian and inventor from long ago.

### **Pre Reading Conversation:**

- Who has heard of Ben Franklin? Where and when did he live? Aside from inventing, what else made him famous?
- What was life like during the 17th century? (In America and the rest of the world)
- What did they do for transportation?
- How did they communicate long distance?
- What were their homes like?
- Why are inventors a valuable part of society?

### **Post Reading Conversation:**

- How many of Franklin's inventions exist in your modern life?
- How similar or different are his designs from the more modern versions?
- Does he inspire you to invent something?

- How would the world function differently without certain inventions like the lightning rod, bifocals, odometers, post offices, etc?
- Do you think Ben Franklin could ever imagine our modern conveniences and achievements, like computers, space travel, TV, etc?
- Would Ben Franklin be a fascinating person to meet?
- Would you have preferred to live at the same time as Franklin?
- Which invention is your favorite or least favorite? Why?

### **Vocabulary:**

Invention

Transportation

Communication

Bifocal

Odometer

Originate

Political

Encourage

Colonies

Gadget

Current

Citrus

Ventilation

Churn

Sanitation

### **Details for Discussion:**

What was the state of our country at that period in time?

The diversity of ideas.

### **Other Discussion/Lesson Idea Points:**

#### **Journey of Ben Franklin, a Timeline-**

- Using text from book and other resources about Ben Franklin, create a timeline.
- Include personal information and/or inventions from Ben Franklin.
- Your timeline may include major events that were taking place during Ben Franklin's life.
- Your timeline may be on a specific invention from Ben Franklin and how it has changed over the years from long ago to today.

#### **Unpacking the process of inventing, using the book illustrations as a guide-**

- Inspiration and Design: understanding how Franklin saw the need for the items he invented or developed.
- Execution: Franklin's inventions on the right page of the spread.
- Evolution of the idea: The more contemporary items on the left page.
- How does one become an inventor? How old do you have to be?

- Name some famous inventions in the classroom.

### **Biography-**

- Talk about biography as a genre. What is it? You may wish to discuss how biography combines informational writing with narrative. It's filled with facts and usually based on research, but also tells the story of a person's life.
- What did you learn or what can you assume about Franklin's personal life?
- Is there enough information to describe his personality?
- What have you learned about Benjamin Franklin from reading Mr. Barretta's book that really made an impression on you?
- Some biographies begin with someone's birth and continue through to his or her death OR (if the person is still living) to the present time. Mr. Barretta's book focuses on Franklin's inventions, rather than his life story. Is it OK to leave out some information? Why? If the writer did try to cover everything, how long might this book become?

### **Character Counts/Student character building attributes:**

- Curiosity
- Creativity
- Ingenuity

### **Guided Instruction:**

- Have students think of a possible person they would like to have Mr. Barretta write about next.
- If students would like to research, have them access PebbleGo for more information.
- If students are using information from PebbleGo, have them cite their source.

### **Individual Learning:**

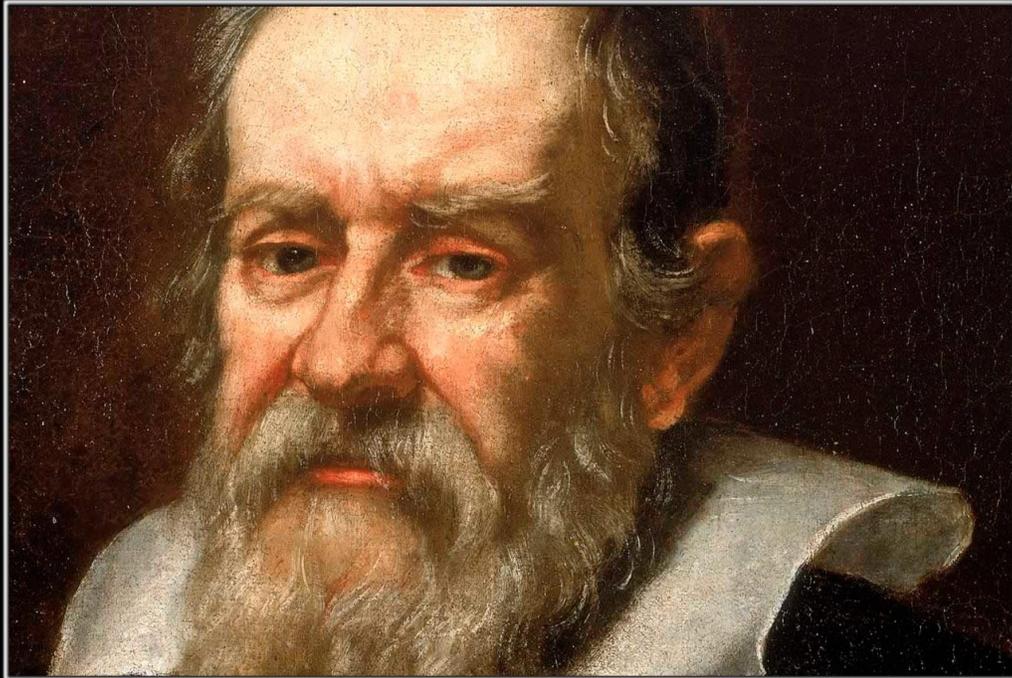
- Working in pairs (or individually), when students have found a person they wish to present to Mr. Barretta to write a book about, have them create a "Wanted" poster.
- Students will support their person with two reasons why they would like to see a biography written.
- The "Wanted Poster" can be created with simple paper and drawing materials. Or to incorporate computer technology, have students go to [www.bighugelabs.com](http://www.bighugelabs.com) Once there, students can select "Motivator" and fill in the fields to create a Wanted Poster.
- If Mr. Barretta is visiting the school, hang work or email and get him to get a conversation started: [gene@genebarretta.com](mailto:gene@genebarretta.com)

### **Technology:**

PebbleGo database  
[www.bighugelabs.com](http://www.bighugelabs.com)

**Reflection:**

See examples of WANTED poster attached below, first from Big Huge Labs, second from MSPublisher:

**WANTED: BOOK ON GALILEO**

I like how you made the characters come to life in Neo Leo and Now & Ben and would like to see the same kind of picture book on Galileo. Galileo was a great man who was treated unfairly and I would like students to know about his great contributions to science and astronomy.

# WANTED!

Dear Mr. Barretta,

Would you consider writing a biography about Galileo Galilei?

Here are my reasons:

1. I like how you made the characters come to life in Neo Leo and Now & Ben and would like to see the same kind of picture book on Galileo.
2. Galileo was a great man who was treated unfairly and I would like students to know about his great contributions to science and astronomy.

