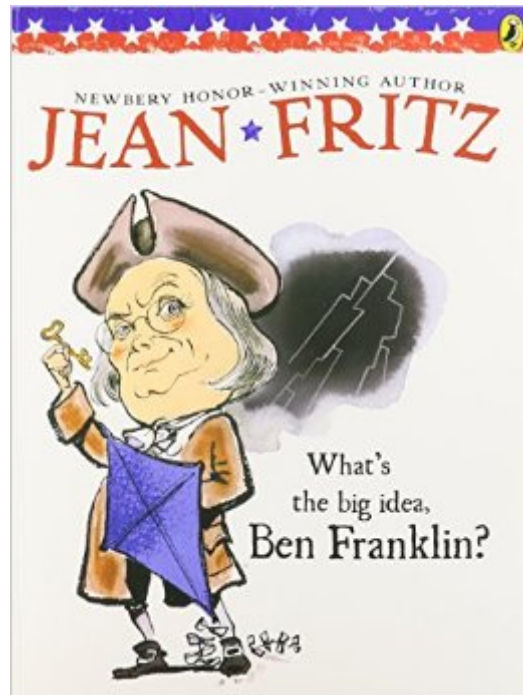


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# What's The Big Idea, Ben Franklin? (Elementary Science Trade Library)



## Synopsis

No matter how busy he was, Ben Franklin always found time to try out new ideas and he was also a man of many talents. He was also an ambassador to England, a printer, an almanac maker, a politician, and even a vegetarian (for a time).

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 830L (What's this?)

Series: Elementary Science Trade Library

Paperback: 48 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; Reissue edition (January 1, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0698113721

ISBN-13: 978-0698113725

Product Dimensions: 7 x 0.1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (27 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #208,560 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #49 in [Books > Children's Books > Science, Nature & How It Works > Inventions & Inventors](#) #79 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Political](#) #148 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > Colonial & Revolutionary](#)

Age Range: 7 - 9 years

Grade Level: 2 and up

## Customer Reviews

What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin? By Jean Fritz. Illustrated by Margot Tomes. Coward- McCann, Inc., 1976. 47 pages. Did you know that Ben Franklin had a hunch that a kite could act as a sail if one held it while swimming and another that ants could communicate with each other? But, as Newbery Honor Award winner and highly regarded biographer Jean Fritz points out, "A Big Idea . . . meant little to Ben Franklin unless he could put it to everyday use." Capitalizing on reader's prior knowledge while wetting young appetites with a hint of what's to come, Fritz presents a non-fictionalized Franklin. How "lucky" it was that Franklin's street had a name, states Fritz, because "people like to know where and when famous men are born." Fritz's signature humor and anecdotal style abound, respecting her audience's intelligence. She writes, "England was treating America as if it were a country of apprentices." Her humor-encrusted comparisons illuminate

abstract concepts, making this book a leading contender for a read aloud to third and fourth graders or for the fifth or sixth grader who craves a challenging but accessible read. Independent young minds must distinguish truths "sacred and undeniable" by Jefferson's pen from "self evident" ones with Franklin's correction. Tomes' illustrations help the reader visualize technical wording. Frustrating, would be Franklin's flexible, fishy swimming positions without Tomes' guidance. As a special treat, Franklin's personal handwriting acts as explanatory captions adjacent to pictures of his inventions. As usual, Fritz provides a child-centered notes page that includes supplementary information and points out accounts that disagree as she presents this delightful hero of American Independence.

I was quite surprised at the casual treatment of Benjamin Franklin's brother's death in the illustration on the second page of the story. The author casually mentions that he drowned in some soap bubbles, and you see a tub with a small child's feet floating up top that has drowned. I was kind of shocked since I really enjoy other books by this author. It was completely unnecessary and really rather crass. There are also three more questionable illustrations of a boy swimming naked with his buttocks and entire backside showing floating out of the water--although I realize that's just what they did in those days, I don't think it's necessary to include an illustration including the bare body parts. I have second grade boys who would find that sort of thing amusing, but I have a daughter that I would rather not indulge this sort of lewd humor with. We're going to go with D'Aulaire's book on the same subject matter and skip the Fritz on this one.

I was so impressed with the descriptive wording of this book. I'm not a normal biography reader, but this worked perfectly for my 3rd graders. It held their interest, made them laugh, and actually taught them something! A great read for all ages.

As a child I loved this book and I recently picked it up for nostalgia's sake. While I still like the illustrations and the story itself, I can't help but notice the frequency of poor grammar and clunky sentence structure. Where were the editors and proofreaders? How did this book make it to shelves without corrections? Anyway, it's still enjoyable... if a bit sloppy.

Loved this fun, whimsical biography of Ben Franklin and so did my granddaughter! I like to think I know a lot about Ben having taught US History for years, but I learned a few new things, too. Educational and fun!

I read this biography aloud to my children. It is recommended for ages 8-11, but even my 4 year-old enjoyed it. Fritz presents factual information in such a way that it is entertaining and fun! This is the second biography that we've read about Benjamin Franklin, and we think that he is the most remarkable historical figure! His inventions single-handedly changed America! From establishing the first circulating library to organizing Philadelphia's fire department, he is a truly brilliant man especially considering that he received no formal education (his father took him out of school when he was ten years old) and was largely self-taught! We loved this biography, and we plan to read more of Fritz's biographical series! This book makes a great complement to your American history studies!

We had to read this for Summer Reading. My 4th grade son enjoyed the cover, the pictures, and the nice descriptions. He enjoyed reading the information as well. He used the information from the book to make a book jacket as the project.

Although the baby drowning wasn't my favorite, we thought the swimming illustrations were hilarious for both my son and daughter. It is an informative and well written book in classic Jean Fritz style.

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