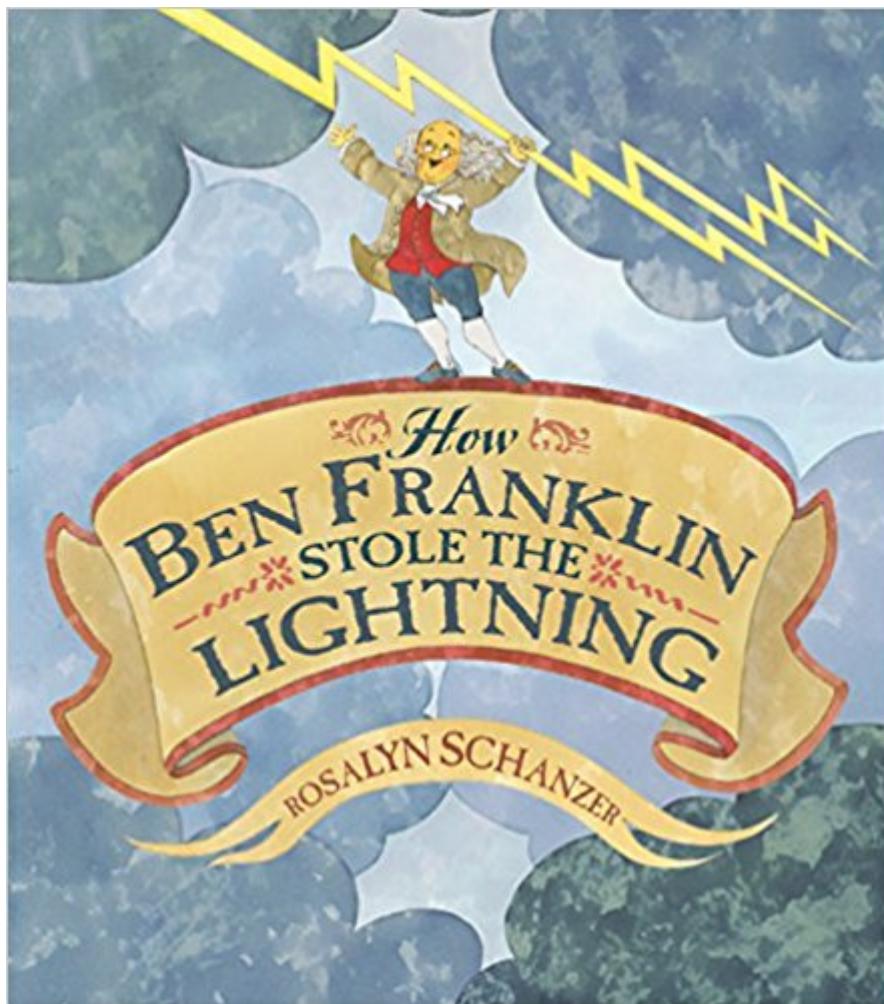


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# How Ben Franklin Stole The Lightning



## Synopsis

Ben Franklin was the most famous American in the entire world during colonial times. No wonder! After all, the man could do just about anything. Why, he was an author and an athlete and a patriot and a scientist and an inventor to boot. He even found a way to steal the lightning right out of the sky. Is such a thing possible? Is it. Take a look inside and find Ben busy at work on every spread. Then find out how he used his discovery about lightning to make people's lives safer. In an inventive way, Rosalyn Schanzer brings us a brilliant and ever-curious American original.

## Book Information

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Hardcover: 40 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

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Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: 1 - 7

## Customer Reviews

As with her *How We Crossed the West: The Adventures of Lewis and Clark*, Schanzer's lively writing and drawing style again makes history come alive. Here she gives appropriate spark to a picture-book overview of Benjamin Franklin's various inventions and scientific experiments, zeroing in on his discovery of lightning's electric power. The statement "It's true!" begins the exhilarating ride. From there the author summarizes, in a succinct and zippy style, many of Franklin's achievements as inventor, statesman, author, entrepreneur, activist, community leader and musician-a Renaissance man of boundless energy ("Didn't the man ever stop to rest?" she wonders). The artwork, a combination of vibrantly colored dyes and ink line, depicts an ebullient

Franklin smiling, with his hair flying, as he flits from one role to the next. But the author devotes a significant portion of the book to Franklin's curiosity about electricity (which he believed to be found in lightning) and its potential to cause devastating fires, including the story behind Franklin's famous experiment of flying a kite with a key on its string during a thunderstorm. The compositions, which include period detail and accessible illustrated renditions of Franklin's documented projects and inventions, match the chipper tone of the text. An extensive author's note provides further information on Franklin's life and works, and spiffy endpapers reproduce diagrams and notes from Franklin's papers in Philadelphia's American Philosophical Society. This fitting tribute to a memorable leader emphasizes the playfulness that accompanies a curious mind and the boundless energy required for great accomplishments. Ages 6-12. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 2-4-Even in childhood, Franklin was inventing better ways to do things. "He lay on his back, held on to a kite string, and let his kite pull him lickety-split across a big pond." This spirited account of the most prodigious inventor echoes the tall-tale humor Schanzer employed in *Davy Crockett Saves the World* (HarperCollins, 2001). Her subject comes across as larger than life, even though the lively, color cartoon sketches often depict him in miniature. The book begins with Franklin's accomplishments but quickly moves on to his many inventions and his growing interest in electricity, culminating in his capture of lightning in the legendary kite experiment. The author does a nice job of explaining the historical context and the ultimate value of the lightning rod in saving lives. The deftly drawn comic scenes and the folksy tone lend folklore flavor, but this brisk account is not fictionalized. The concluding author's note adds information on Franklin's work as inventor, and the endpapers superimpose a small, cheerful depiction of him on a pleasant layout of his own sketches. Well conceived and crafted, this fresh view is particularly welcome as few of the fine picture-book accounts of the popular patriot remain in print. Enjoyable reading fare, this volume will pair neatly with Lisa Jo Rudy's *The Ben Franklin Book of Easy and Incredible Experiments* (Wiley, 1995). Margaret Bush, Simmons College, BostonCopyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I have a doctorate in education with literacy my area of specialization and use Picture Books to introduce content to secondary students who struggle to read and comprehend facts/information from their text books. *How Ben Franklin Stole the Lightning* serves as an excellent introduction to Colonial America with some advanced vocabulary and wonderful "visuals" that match the text. It is a great supplement to the history text...

Great book!

My favorite Ben Franklin book. Loved the details, the illustrations, the story-telling component. The quirky pictures. The facts. All of it made it an EXCELLENT primer for learning about Ben Franklin and just whetted our appetites for more! This is a biographical picture book done right! My boys ages 6, 8 and 10 all loved it.

Great historical book. Easy reading and full of terrific info.

I loved this book! I am so impressed with the way Rosalyn Schanzer approached the subject matter and made it a fun read for kids and grown up's alike. The book is a biographical look at the life and inventions of Ben Franklin, but written in very kid-friendly language and in a way that keeps your child's attention throughout the entire book. While the title references him "stealing" lightning, and hence laying the groundwork for electricity, it is just one of the many inventions she talks about in his lifelong pursuit of making things better for all of society through his marvelous inventions. Ben Franklin really was the epitome of a Renaissance Man. His curiosity led to some great inventions, but he was also a statesman, musician, author, philanthropist, and even started the first public lending library (a new fact I had not known). After reading about all of his adventures, I wished I had been around when he was alive just to see how exciting it must have been to live during a time when all of these things came about. I loved this book because it presented one of the greatest Americans in such a fresh and engaging way, that my 8-year old son was more than willing to sit through the book with me and asked to hear it again. It lead to many follow up discussions about his inventions and how they apply to the world today. The author made the story so engaging it did not feel like you were getting a history lesson while you read the book, but that is exactly what you got. And it was fun. And the illustrations were great. I hope she continues to write books about other popular historical American figures, because she writes these books so well. This is exactly the type of book kids need to read to get excited about history. Which leads me to one side note. She has written other historical picture books for kids, like "John Smith Escapes Again" and "How We Crossed the West". They were good books. But, those two books were much more in-depth and the stories took a lot longer to read. My son was not nearly as enthralled with those books because they were much longer and the stories were far more complex, so do not think that this book will be like those. It is a shorter book, an easier read, and far more engaging. Teachers should use this book in

the classroom when discussing Ben Franklin, and any parent who has a child who likes historical fiction or historical non-fiction will absolutely love this book. My son is not all that interested in historical non-fiction and he LOVED this book. You will not be disappointed if you buy this book.

My kids & I enjoyed this book. I expected it to focus just on the lightning story but we were pleasantly surprised to see it discuss his other inventions & areas of study. A nice quick read with good information & great illustrations.

The illustrations place this book at the top of the heap. Rosalyn Schanzer did an amazing job putting meaning and detail into the illustrations. There is so much information on the page -- there's the text, and then all the information in the illustrations. It's marvelous. Actually, Ben Franklin comes across as quite adorable in this book. Extremely well-done book. I'm impressed.

"It's true! The great Benjamin Franklin really did steal lightning right out of the sky! And then he set out to tame the beast. It goes to figure, though, because he was a man who could do just about anything..." So begins Rosalyn Schanzer's engaging introduction to one of colonial America's most fascinating men. Ben Franklin was a man of many talents and accomplishments. He was a writer, politician, soldier, musician, inventor, and entrepreneur. He helped lead our country to independence, and traveled the world as a statesman. But he often best known for his inventions and boundless curiosity. This of course leads to his interest in electricity and the well known kite and key experiment..... Ms Schanzer's entertaining text is written in an easy to read, conversational style, and is rich in history, trivia, fun facts, and wit. Her playful illustrations complement the text beautifully and are filled with bold color, humor, and captivating, eye-catching details. Together word and art provides a clever and appealing history lesson that is sure to whet the appetite and send kids out looking for more. With a marvelous Author's Note at the end to further enlighten and augment the story, How Ben Franklin Stole The Lightning is a masterpiece of fun-filled learning, perfect for kids 7-11, that shouldn't be missed.

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