

INTRAMUSIC
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THEATRICALS

frankly BEN



The Science of Achievement!

STUDY GUIDE

Book
by
Timothy A. McDonald

Music and Lyrics
by
Anthony Afterwit

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Greetings and welcome to *Frankly Ben!*

TYA or "Theatre for Young Audiences" has a long and noble history. When you produce a musical for young audiences you are introducing them to not only themes and concepts of a show, but to the magic of theatre—and isn't that a great thing to do? You are nurturing the next generation of writers, directors and performers and also the next generation of audiences. Many think this is the single most important thing we can do in the theatre, and I agree.

This Study Guide provides teachers and parents with all the tools necessary to turn a day at the theater into an interactive educational experience. It contains biographies of the show's creators, the history of the story, curriculum connections in a variety of content areas, and activities to do before and after the production.

So please take advantage of these resources and thank you in advance for making the world a better place!

Enjoy the show.

Timothy A. McDonald
iTheatrics.com

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Plot Synopsis

During a meeting of the Founding Fathers regarding the Declaration of Independence, an elderly **BENJAMIN FRANKLIN** falls asleep and begins to dream. He awakens to find he has transformed into a fifteen-year-old **BEN**. When his older brother, **JAMES**, starts yelling at him to get to work, Ben decides he must find a way to get his brother to listen. Slowly Ben's Alter Egos, **MRS. SILENCE DOGOOD**, **ALICE ADDERTONGUE** and **POOR RICHARD**, appear to give Ben confidence and encouragement (*Frankly Ben*) so he can declare independence from his brother.

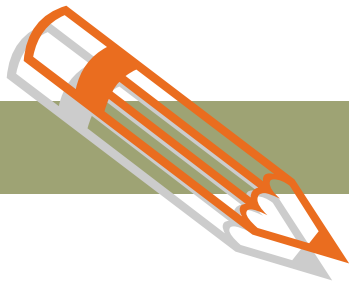
Ben isn't sure what is happening, but Richard convinces him to form a club with the Alter Egos that will be useful and help improve the world (*Junto Together*). The Alter Egos are helping Ben on his way to independence. Ben discusses how he likes to solve problems and invent things (*Science and Invention*), but the group agrees that Ben needs to learn more if he is to gain his independence.

The first meeting of the club materializes as a game show with Ben as the contestant. The stakes are high. If Ben loses he must suffer the abuse of his brother forever, but if he wins he will make the world a happier, more prosperous place. During the game, Ben learns from Silence that he must work hard and know right from wrong (*The Art of Virtue*) if he wants to declare independence. However, Alice takes over to show Ben how he can get ahead by making others look bad (*Scandal*). Before winning the game, Ben must guess the point of Alice's song. Ben answers incorrectly and the fun quickly ends.

Ben finally meets **POLLY**, a girl who has been hanging around the Alter Egos the whole time, but kept herself separate from Ben. Polly explains she is from Ben's future and she is there to teach him about the world (*Know Your World*). Ben is in love. He has found a girl who likes science. James quickly interrupts them and tells Polly to stay away from Ben because he is a waste of time. Ben is embarrassed by how James treats him and realizes that Alice's song about making others look bad was a trick. The Alter Egos cheer for Ben. He is learning. As Richard congratulates him with a song of famous quotes, Ben decides the quotes would be more interesting if Richard "hipped it up" a little (*Poor Richard's Rap*).

Just when Ben is gaining the knowledge he needs to become an independent person, James comes and apologizes to Ben. Ben listens and decides to play it safe and stick to printing papers. The Alter Egos try to rally Ben (*It's Up To You*) and make him believe that, even though he's young, he can still make a difference in the world. Ben looks within himself (*You'll See*) and learns that he can stand up against his brother and tyranny.

Old Benjamin Franklin wakes up. His dream has helped him organize his thoughts and inspires him to make an important change to the Declaration of Independence. As the Founding Fathers acknowledge Benjamin's great idea, Ben, the Alters and Polly celebrate their independence together (*Our Junto, Our World*)!



The Creators



Timothy McDonald

(Book)

Originally from Northern California, Tim is the founder and Executive Director of iTheatrics. Tim was the founding director of Music Theatre International's Broadway Junior Collection as well as creating the School Edition, KIDS Collection and TYA Collections of musicals with MTI. As an author of musicals, Tim was selected by the Roald Dahl estate to adapt *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* for the stage.

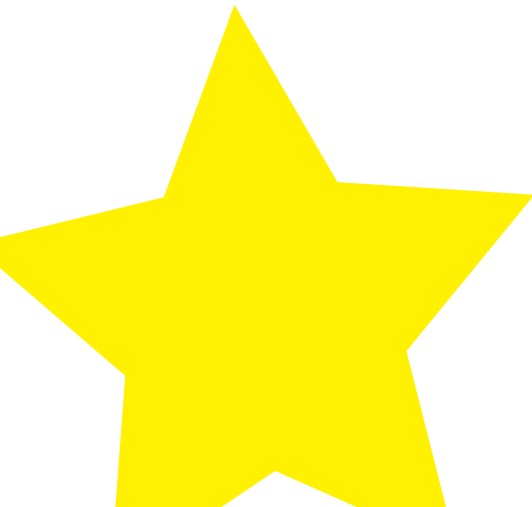
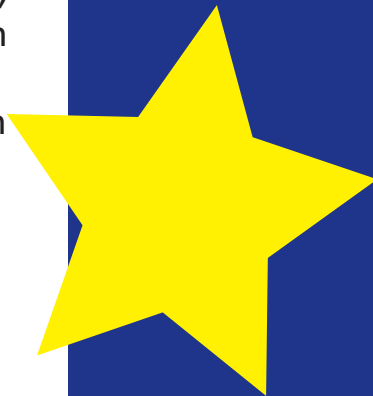
Incorporating the score created by Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley, *Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka* premiered at the Kennedy Center in 2004 and is scheduled for release for amateur and TYA licensing in 2007.

Working with Macmillan McGraw-Hill, Tim developed a musical theatre curriculum for grades one through eight for the *Spotlight on Music* textbook series, which has repositioned the study of American musical theatre from an extra curricular activity to a part of the core curriculum. Most recently, Tim is developing a new musical based on the book *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl as well as the stage adaptation of Jim Henson's *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas* with Paul Williams.

Anthony Afterwit

(Music and Lyrics)

A native of Boston, student of Philadelphia, and citizen of the world, Anthony's musical influences include Mozart, Beethoven, Green Day, and Bach. Currently working on a new musical based on the *Treaty of Paris*, his music can be heard regularly around the dinner table wherever a half-empty wine glass can be found. Many thanks to the "Founding Fathers" for their foresight, inspiration, and courage to "buck the system." We couldn't have done it without you! Props to TJ, JA, GW and all the gang from the "Market Street" crew.



Benjamin Franklin - A Brief Biography

Benjamin Franklin was born on January 17, 1706 in Boston, Massachusetts, the tenth son of Josiah Franklin. At the age of eight, Franklin went to grammar school for about one year and then transferred to a school for writing and arithmetic. At the age of ten he left school to work with his father in their candle shop. Eventually Franklin's father sent him to be an apprentice at his brother James's printing shop. James would compose the pamphlets, Franklin would set the type, and then Franklin would also have to head out to the street to try to sell them.

James started *The New England Courant*, the first newspaper in Boston that carried local articles, shipping schedules, and opinion pieces written by James's friends. Franklin wanted to write for the paper too, so at 16-years-old he created the fictional widow, Silence Dogood, who was filled with advice. Franklin would sneak the letters under the door at night so James would not discover who was writing them. These letters became a big hit with the readers. Once James discovered Franklin wrote these letters, the two brothers' relationship started to deteriorate. Eventually Franklin could take the abuse no longer, and even though running away from an apprenticeship was illegal, he left Boston in 1723.

Franklin ended up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After a few years, including one spent in England, he was able to establish his own printing shop and soon business was thriving. In 1729, he bought *The Pennsylvania Gazette* which he printed, and often contributed pieces of his own to the paper under aliases. His newspaper soon became the most successful in the colonies.

In 1733, Franklin started publishing *Poor Richard's Almanack*. He used the guise of a man named Richard Saunders, a poor man who needed money to take care of his wife, to sell these almanacs. What distinguished Franklin's almanac from others were his witty sayings and lively writings. Many of the famous phrases associated with Franklin, such as, "A penny saved is a penny earned," come from *Poor Richard's Almanac*.

Franklin continued to have major influence on Philadelphia and the nation throughout the next two decades. His civic work was highlighted with advancements in areas including the fire department, a library system, insurance, and a hospital. By 1749, Franklin retired from business and started concentrating on scientific experiments and inventions full time. He had already invented a heat-efficient stove called the Franklin stove six years earlier. In the early 1750's, Franklin turned to the study of electricity. His observations, including his now famous kite experiment, verified the nature of electricity and lightning. Franklin was now a man respected on all levels.

Franklin was elected to the Second Continental Congress and worked on a committee of five that helped to draft the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Franklin died on April 17, 1790 at the age of 84 and 20,000 people attended the funeral.

Benjamin Franklin - Some Accomplishments

Benjamin Franklin's Inventions:

Bifocals
Lightning Rod
Glass Armonica
Library Chair
Odometer
Swim Fins
Franklin Stove
Catheter



Benjamin Franklin's Discoveries:

The Gulf Stream
Whirlwinds
Electrostatic Machine
Properties of Lightning

Benjamin Franklin Established:

The Library Company
Fire Company
Post Office
Insurance
Street Lighting
Road Paving
Daylight Savings Time

Institutions Started by Benjamin Franklin:

The University of Pennsylvania
Franklin and Marshall College
Pennsylvania Hospital (co-founder)
American Philosophical Society



Declaration of Independence - Brief History

One of the most revered symbols of American History, the Declaration of Independence is considered to be the cornerstone of the foundation on which America was created. It was written to express the colonies' need to separate from Great Britain and listed "self-evident" truths, including every person's right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The Declaration of Independence was written in June of 1776, although it was not signed until more than a month later. Thomas Jefferson served as its primary author. On July 2, 1776 twelve of the thirteen colonies in the Second Continental Congress voted to approve it. July 4, 1776, the day America celebrates Independence Day, was not actually the day the Declaration of Independence was signed, but the day it was read publicly in Philadelphia.



"The Declaration of Independence" by John Trumbull

Vocabulary

Almanac – annual publication that includes weather forecasts and other information arranged according to the calendar

Alter Ego – another aspect of one's self

Indentured – a contract by which a person is bound to service

Junto – a small group united for a common interest

Loyalty – faithfulness to a person, your country or your commitments

Philosophy – the study of the principals of being, conduct and knowledge

Scandal – a publicized event that brings about disgrace

Status Quo – the current common state or condition

Treason – a crime against one's government

Tyrant – any person in a position of authority who exercises power unjustly

Witticisms – a witty remark or sentence, a joke

Virtue – moral excellence; goodness

Poor Richard's Sayings

"A quarrelsome man has no good neighbors."

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

"Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."

"Employ thy time well if thou meanest to gain leisure."

"Fish and visitors stink after three days."

"Fools need advice most, but only wisemen are the better for it."

"Glass, china and reputation are easily cracked and never well mended!"

"Half the truth is often a great lie."

"Haste makes waste."

"I am a strong believer in luck and I find the harder I work the more I have of it."

"Life's Tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late."

"One today is worth two tomorrows."

Pre-Show Activities

- 1) Go over all the background information on Benjamin Franklin from the Study Guide with your students.
- 2) Get a copy of the transcript of the Declaration of Independence to show to your students. Have them specifically read the second paragraph to give them insight to the area of the document they will hear about in the show.
- 3) In the musical, the same actor will portray both Young and Old Benjamin Franklin. Have students brainstorm ways in which they think one actor will be able to do this without a major costume or make-up change. Remind them to think of all aspects of theatrical performances including vocal quality, gestures, movements, etc.
- 4) Assign one of Franklin's (*Poor Richard's*) sayings to each of your students. Have them translate the saying into more contemporary language so its meaning is clear to the students in your class.
- 5) Talk with your students about the idea of independence. Have them make a list of ways in which they currently are independent and ways which they expect to be in the future. Compare and contrast the lists of all the students in your classroom.
- 6) The musical numbers in *Frankly Ben* are contemporary. Find some music from the time when Franklin was alive and play it for your students. Then play a piece of contemporary music and make comparisons.
- 7) Have your students research clothing that would have been typically worn during the 18th Century. Have them notice the shape of the clothes as well as the colors. Discuss with your students how you think the characters from the show will be costumed.
- 8) Benjamin Franklin was a printer for a large portion of his life. Students should research what a printer had to do in the 1700's to gain an understanding of the type of lifestyle that Benjamin Franklin may have had as a printer.
- 9) Discuss with your students the etiquette of being an audience member at a live theatrical performance. Items for discussion: appropriate responses, no chewing gum, no talking, going to the bathroom before the performance, etc.

Post-Show Curriculum Connections

A show like *Frankly Ben* is full of obvious curriculum connections in all content areas, especially history and science. We encourage you to use the themes and specific matter of the show to reinforce your teaching of these subject areas. While we can't list all of the possible ways to use *Frankly Ben* as a learning tool, the following activities can be used as a springboard to expand the scope and style of your potential lesson plans.



SCIENCE

While Benjamin Franklin is not credited with "creating" electricity, he is credited with making many important discoveries and advancements in that area. His knowledge was used to invent the lightning rod. Draw a large diagram on poster board that explains the principles of electricity that Franklin discovered through his famous kite experiment using current scientific language.

National Standards for Science: Physical Science

Benjamin Franklin invented swim fins in order to assist people to move through water faster and more efficiently. Study the principals of a body of water and determine how and why fins make this possible.

National Standards for Science: Physical Science

Franklin was one of the first to accurately chart the Gulf Stream and how it affected weather patterns. Determine what other factors affect weather patterns and how the Gulf Stream works with them and/or against them.

National Standards for Science: Physical Science



GEOGRAPHY

Franklin moved from Boston to Philadelphia as a young man. It is written that he took a boat from Boston to New York, walked to New Jersey and then took another boat to Philadelphia. Find a map of the East Coast from the 1720's and chart the course you think that Franklin might have taken for his journey.

National Standards for Social Sciences: Geography



ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

Many of Benjamin Franklin's writings were done under a pen name. Discuss the reasons why Franklin might publish anonymously. Find other authors who also wrote under a pen name and see if you can determine why.

National Standards for Language Arts: Developing Research Skills

English

There are many books written about Benjamin Franklin's life and his contributions to society. Select one of these books that your teacher or librarian suggests for you. Write your own brief biography of him based on what you read.

National Standards for Language Arts: Reading for Understanding

1+2 MATHEMATICS

During Benjamin Franklin's life he traveled to England four times and to France twice. As airplanes didn't exist while he was alive, Franklin must have taken a boat. Calculate the amount of time Franklin spent on a boat traveling to and from Europe. Compare this number with the years he lived to find out exactly how much time he spent on the sea.

National Standards for Mathematics: Data Analysis

Post-Show Curriculum Connections (Continued)

MUSIC

Franklin's glass armonica was a popular instrument in its day, but is rarely seen today. Compare and contrast the glass armonica with other instruments in both the sounds they make and how the different instruments make the sound.

National Standards for Fine Arts: Music Analysis

The music in *Frankly Ben* is quite contemporary in composition. Reflect on the use of modern pop music to tell a story from a different time in history.

National Standards for Fine Arts: Music Analysis

SOCIAL SCIENCE

Benjamin Franklin established the concept of Daylight Savings Time. Research the reasons why Franklin came up with this concept and how it originally helped individuals. While Daylight Savings Time is still observed in most parts of the country, there are some areas that do not change their clocks twice a year. Why do you think that is and do you think Franklin would approve?

National Standards for Science: Social Perspectives

HISTORY

Franklin is considered one of America's Founding Fathers. What do you think this term means? Who else is considered a Founding Father? What projects and events did these people work on together to contribute to the shaping of the United States of America?

National Standards for Social Sciences: History



TECHNICAL THEATRE

During the performance of *Frankly Ben*, we first see all of the characters in silhouette. It appears that they are wearing clothes from the 1700's, but when they walk into the light we see that the costumes are not authentic period clothing. What aspects of their costumes look like they are from the 1700's, and what costume details makes them look contemporary?

National Standards for Fine Arts: Theatre Design



Study Ben Franklin Through Song

Many of the songs heard in *Frankly Ben* were inspired by writings of Benjamin Franklin. In some cases, his words appear in tact. Below is a guide to help you and your students trace the actual 'words' of Benjamin Franklin through the songs in *Frankly Ben*.

Go to www.franklyben.com and click on 'Study Ben' to download the resource material outlined below.

Song Title From the Show: *Frankly Ben*

Franklin was a musician and invented the instrument called a Glass Armonica. Mozart wrote a number of pieces for it. Our show opens with an arrangement of Mozart's Adagio in C for Glass Armonica.

Download Resources: *'Adagio' original sheet music, mp3 of excerpt from show.*

Song Title From the Show: *Junto Together*

In 1727 Franklin brought together his young friends to form a "club of mutual improvement". He called this club the Junto. The lyrics in this song are based on a list of questions Franklin devised to guide the discussions at Junto meetings.

Download Resources: *Song Lyrics, The Junto Writings*

Song Title From the Show: *Science & Invention*

Benjamin Franklin invented many things throughout his lifetime. His most famous invention—and used to this day—is the lightning rod. In addition, he invented the musical instrument the Glass Armonica.

Download Resources: *Song Lyrics, Experiment with Lightning Rods, Franklin with Glass Armonica*

Song Title From the Show: *The Art of Virtue*

Franklin believed that to live a good life required practice. He formulated a series of exercises to try to achieve this goal.

Download Resources: *Song Lyrics, Writings on Virtue*

Song Title From the Show: *Scandal*

Franklin often created characters to argue opinions opposite to his own beliefs. By using humor and sarcasm he exaggerated his character's argument to demonstrate the incorrectness of the position.

Download Resources: *Song Lyrics, Alice Addertongue's Letter*

Study Ben Franklin Through Song (Continued)

Song Title From the Show: *Know Your World*

Franklin was an avid naturalist. He wrote on topics ranging from the atmosphere, to the aurora borealis, to lakes and water creatures. Franklin met Polly Stevenson who captivated him with her shared enthusiasm for science and nature.

Download Resources: *Song Lyrics, Who is Polly?*

Song Title From the Show: *Poor Richard's Rap*

Franklin is famous for his many witty proverbs spoken through the voice of 'Poor Richard Saunders'. These sayings made for an ideal rap. "Poor Richard's Rap" uses 45 of these sayings.

Download Resources: *Song Lyrics, 45 Original Sayings*

Additional Resources found at 'Study Ben':

The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary Scene by Scene Study Guides:

Detailed study guides by topic.

Benjamin Franklin Resume: *At-a-glance overview of Franklin's accomplishments.*

Great Websites:

<http://www.ushistory.org/franklin/>

<http://www.pbs.org/benfranklin/>

<http://www.benfranklin300.org/>

