

Benjamin franklin: the world's most influential inventor assignment

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? Benjamin Franklin: The World's Most Influential Inventor Benjamin Franklin once said, " Hide not your talents. They for use were made. What's a sundial in the shade? " 1 Throughout history there have been many amazing inventors who used their talents to innovate beyond their time period. People like Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and Alexander Graham Bell were examples of such talented innovators with inventions that are in one way or another still used in today's day to day life.

To beat them all, Benjamin Franklin is famous not for one but multiple inventions that are still in use today. Franklin reinvented the postal service, optometry, invented the Franklin Stove, and made important discoveries with electricity, all of which proves why Benjamin Franklin is one of the world's greatest and most influential inventors. The postal service would be nothing if not for Benjamin Franklin. He was appointed head Postmaster of Philadelphia in 1737 and Postmaster General for the United Colonies in 1775. Under Franklin's guidance the time for mail service between major cities in the Colonies was cut in half. He did this by establishing and improving multiple components to the postal service to reach this admiral achievement. The first enhancement Franklin established to the postal service was he completely reinvented the old, outdated mapping system that was previously used. He did this by inventing a simple odometer that attached to the side of his carriage. 3 When he went out on the old postal routes, Franklin used this odometer to survey the paths and find better, faster routes.

Franklin's main goal while surveying was to find more direct routes so that a mail service between two towns was as short as humanly possible for the <https://assignbuster.com/benjamin-franklin-the-worlds-most-influential-inventor-assignment/>

time period. The second main enhancement Franklin did for the postal service was he placed milestone markers on the routes to help guide other mail carriers along the paths and shortcuts that he had found while surveying. The third thing he did was while he was on the journey of surveying routes and placing milestone markers, he made sure to stop at each town's post office to examine them and to find any way possible to improve efficiency in each.

He made improvements such as, reorganizing and changing the layouts of the postal buildings so that mail flowed in and out more fluently. 4 Another one of Franklin's revolutionary inventions was the Franklin Stove or the Pennsylvania fireplace, as it was sometimes called. Franklin was extremely proud of this invention. He said, " it made my living room twice as warm as it used to be with a quarter of the wood I formerly consumed..." 5 This just goes to show how revolutionizing this invention really was. It heated a room twice as warm as the traditional stoves.

The stoves of that day were growing more and more expensive all because the wood that was used was being used in a way that was extremely inefficient, and much of the heat was lost up the chimney. Franklin's fireplace solved this problem by using multiple air vents. These air vents pulled in the cold air from outside, heated it, and then blew it into and throughout the room. He said " your whole room is equally warmed, so that the people need not crowd so close round the fire, but may sit near the window, and have the benefit of the light for reading, writing, and needlework. 6 The most interesting and innovating part of Franklin's stove

was the chimney. Instead of being open all the time, as was the traditional stoves, Franklin put a cover that could be easily opened and closed to keep out the cold in the winter and keep the heat from the fire from going up and out of the chimney. Benjamin Franklin left his mark on more than just the postal service and home stoves. He also worked with electricity. Even though he did not invent electricity, he did discover many things about it that was previously unknown and misunderstood.

While studying electricity, Franklin discovered many similarities between it and lightning. He saw that they both created light, they both made a crashing sound when they exploded, and both were attracted to metal. Following these observations, Franklin hypothesized that lightning and electricity were the same. ⁷ The problem arose when he tried to prove it. His plan required something tall like a building or a tower to get close to a storm cloud to attract the lightning, but there were no tall buildings in Philadelphia during that time period.

So Franklin had to work with what he had and he came up with his famous kite experiment. It was a dark, June day in 1752 when he conducted this experiment. He and his son tied the kite to a silk string and connected a key about half way down the string. They then tied a metal line from the key to a Leyden jar. The Leyden jar was how they were to tell if his conclusion was correct. In its' time the Leyden jar was the best and only way to contain electricity. It was the battery of their day. After Franklin got the kite flying, he immediately retreated to a nearby barn so he wouldn't get wet.

They waited. A storm was soon upon them. The negatively charged particles quickly passed from the clouds to the kite, down the silk string, to the key, and down the metal line to the Leyden jar. Franklin's experiment worked and he proved his hypothesis correct! 8 After Franklin discovered that lightning was just uncontrolled electricity, he was determined to find a way to control it. In his time, this was a big problem. Tall buildings were all the time catching on fire from uncontrolled lightning in storms. Most of the time the uncontrolled lightning hit churches.

This is because the churches were usually the tallest buildings in each town and since they were made mostly of wood, the buildings would burst into fire and be burnt to the ground. In Franklin's attempt at trying to control lightning, he discovered that electricity was always attracted to metal. With that, combined with his knowledge that lightning was more often to hit a tall house than a shorter one, Franklin invented the lightning rod. Franklin had previously observed that sharp, iron needle would pull the electricity out of a charged orb.

So making pointed, metal lightning rods to put on top of buildings just made sense. Just a few years after Franklin invented them, lightning rods could be found on top of several churches and courthouses throughout the colonies. As?? Benjamin Franklin?? grew older, his vision, which had never been the best, deteriorated even further. Just like the many other instances in his life when a challenge presented itself, Franklin devised an invention that would help. In this case he invented spectacles that helped him to see long distances and be able to continue his favorite hobby, reading.

Benjamin Franklin's version of spectacles?? would soon come to be known as bifocals. The process of their invention was quite simple. Franklin wanted to take both his long distance glasses and his reading glasses and put them together in one frame. There is further evidence from other Founding Fathers that Franklin did fashion his own pair of these " double spectacles. " Even though Ben Franklin spent the majority of his time testing and inventing, he somehow still had time to make contributions to the field of music. In 1761 Franklin invented the armonica or as more popularly called the glass armonica. Franklin was so in love with this instrument that he called it his most pleasurable and favorite invention he had ever invented. Franklin got the inspiration for this instrument when he attended a concert given on wineglasses in 1757. 10 He thought the sound from the glasses was the sweetest sound he had ever heard but he wanted to improve upon it. He wanted to hear more chords and harmonies with the main melody. So he went to work and the end result was different?? size bowls with holes and corks in the center that were put onto a horizontal spindle and rotated by a fly wheel and a foot pedal.

The armonica was an instant success. Composers started writing for it like the most famous Mozart and Beethoven. Sadly though, by the mid-1800's, the armonica suddenly lost all its popularity, and gradually vanished. Superstitions ran wild that the armonicas would drive performers mad and evoke spirits of the dead because of its eerie and haunting sound. It is now believed that the performers of the armonica just got lead poisoning and subsequently " went mad. " 11 Never the less, Franklin's glass armonica is still in use and it has even made its appearance in Pink Floyd's track, " Shine

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On You Crazy Diamond. 12 So, in conclusion, Benjamin Franklin was more than just your average citizen of his day. Every time he saw an opportunity for innovation, he perused it and worked on it until he has made it better than when he started. One of his most admirable qualities is that he never let anything small stop him. All of Benjamin Franklin's inventions were created to help mankind and to make life more efficient. Most of his inventions are still in use today and through modifications and modernizing, have enhanced the lives of American citizens past, present, and future.

Truthfully, just saying he was one of the most influential innovators in history is an understatement. I believe he is the most influential innovators in American history. Bibliography Bellis, Mary. "The Inventions and Scientific Achievements of Benjamin Franklin." About.com Inventors. http://inventors.about.com/od/fstartinventors/ss/Franklin_invent_7.htm (accessed November 19, 2013). "Ben Franklin." Hearst.com. <http://www.hearth.com/talk/wiki/ben-franklin/> (accessed November 21, 2013). "Ben Franklin's Lightning Rod at The Franklin Institute." Ben Franklin's Lightning Rod at The Franklin Institute. <http://www.fi.edu/learn/sci-tech/lightning-rod/lightning-rod.php?cts=benfranklin-weather-electricity> (accessed November 19, 2013). Benton, Michael. "Benjamin Franklin." Lightning Rod Ben Franklin. <http://benjaminfranklinbio.com/benjamin-franklin-lightning/144/> (accessed November 20, 2013). Dudley, E. Lawrence. Benjamin Franklin. New York: Macmillan Co., 1915. Franklin, Benjamin. Poor Richard's almanack. Mount Vernon, N. Y.: Peter Pauper Press, 1738. PBS. "Glass Armonica." PBS. http://www.pbs.org/benfranklin/l3_inquiring_glass.html (accessed November 21, 2013). PBS. "In The Classroom." PBS. [https://assignbuster.com/benjamin-franklin-the-worlds-most-influential-inventor-assignment/](http://www.pbs.https://assignbuster.com/benjamin-franklin-the-worlds-most-influential-inventor-assignment/)

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