



Electric Ben: The Amazing Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin (Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards (Awards))

By Robert Byrd



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***Electric Ben* is now a 2013 Boston Globe-Horn Book Nonfiction Book Award Winner, a Kirkus Reviews Best Children's Book, a Horn Fanfare Book, and a Robert F. Sibert Honor book!**

“a true standout...bright, witty, informative and cleverly organized as the man himself.” – *The New York Times*

A true Renaissance man, Benjamin Franklin was the first American celebrity. In pictures and text, master artist Robert Byrd documents Franklin's numerous and diverse accomplishments, from framing the Constitution to creating bifocals. The witty, wise, and endlessly curious Franklin is the perfect subject for Byrd's lively style and vibrant art. The pages pulse with facts, quotes, and captions, while the inventive design and intricately detailed illustrations make a striking tribute to the brilliant American.



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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 4-6-In the 1738 edition of Poor Richard's Almanac, Franklin printed this aphorism: "If you would not be forgotten/As soon as you are dead and rotten,/Either write things worth reading,/Or do things worth the writing." He succeeded admirably, as indicated by the ample catalog of Franklin biographies written for young readers from notables including Jean Fritz, James Cross Giblin, and Candace Fleming. *Electric Ben* represents a proficient but flawed addition to an already-crowded shelf. Using lucid phrasing and appealing detail, Byrd breaks the main narrative into two-page sections, each roughly related to an episode or subject. Unfortunately, excessive design elements and Byrd's fussy ink-and-watercolor illustrations threaten to overwhelm the informative text. Highlighted aphorisms and spot illustrations peppered throughout each page clutter the design and disrupt the flow of the author's readable account of Franklin's astonishingly fruitful life. The vibrant artwork shifts between intricately rendered tableaux and conceptual illustrations packed with symbols and biographical references, the latter, replete with celestial bodies and waves of energy. Finicky captions, which turn some of the electric-hued pictures into stealth diagrams, offer yet more facts and quotes. Byrd makes a few perplexing choices in his narrative, such as including only minimal mention of Franklin's wife, and identifying his illegitimate son, William, as adopted. In general, while the text may convey the wealth of Franklin's writing-worthy achievements, the visuals prove too frenetic even to capture the boundless energy and creativity of that consummate printer-author-scientist-inventor-statesman.-Robbin E. Friedman, Chappaqua Library, NYα(c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Large in format and ambitious in scope, this appealingly designed book spotlights Benjamin Franklin and his times. Each double-page spread presents an aspect of Franklin's life, moving chronologically from Ben's Beginnings and School Days through The Scientific Amusements and The Natural Philosopher to The American in Paris and Liberty and Justice for All. The topical approach allows for tightly focused discussions exploring facets of this complex man. Introducing him as a scientist, writer, inventor, philosopher, publisher, and statesman, the text clearly communicates a sense of Franklin's personality along with his varied experiences and accomplishments. As well researched as the text, and often given as much space on the page, the detailed ink-and-watercolor artwork creates a distinctive period look for the book and delivers plenty of historical information visually. Many pictures illustrate scenes literally (colonial firefighters attempt to save a house on fire), but others are more symbolic (Franklin standing atop the earth, surrounded by icons representing his scientific accomplishments). While several illustrations of varied sizes sometimes appear on the same spread, the overall effect is very pleasing. Best suited to advanced individual readers or one-on-one read-aloud sessions, this informative biography offers a vivid, striking portrayal. Grades 2-5. --Carolyn Phelan

Review

"A beautifully realized labor of love and affection brings to life one of our brightest founding fathers." – *Kirkus Book Reviews*, starred review

"...this book shimmers with excitement, begging to be read." – *The Horn Book*, starred review

"It's a fascinating and comprehensive portrait, and an asset for student research." – *Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"Large in format and ambitious in scope, this appealingly designed book spotlights Benjamin Franklin and his times." – *Booklist*, starred review

"Author/illustrator Robert Byrd presents highlights of the long and varied life of one of America's most famous citizens in this picture book biography." – *Library Media Connection*, starred review

"a true standout...bright, witty, informative and cleverly organized as the man himself." – *The New York Times*

***Electric Ben* is the 2013 Boston Globe-Horn Book Nonfiction Book Award Winner, a 2013 Bank Street Best Book of the Year, a 2013 Golden Kite Honor book, a *Kirkus Reviews* Best Children's Book of 2012, a 2012 Horn Fanfare Book, and a 2012 Robert F. Sibert Honor book!**

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Chris Bynum:

The knowledge that you get from *Electric Ben: The Amazing Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards (Awards)) could be the more deep you rooting the information that hide within the words the more you get serious about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to be aware of but *Electric Ben: The Amazing Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards (Awards)) giving you joy feeling of reading. The copy writer conveys their point in certain way that can be understood through anyone who read it because the author of this reserve is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We recommend you for having this particular *Electric Ben: The Amazing Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards (Awards)) instantly.

Steven Anderson:

A lot of people always spent their own free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them friends and family or their friend. Do you know? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, or playing video games all day long. If you want to try to find a new activity that is look different you can read a new book. It is really fun for yourself. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent all day long to reading a publication. The book *Electric Ben: The Amazing Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards (Awards)) it is very good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. These folks were enjoying reading this book. When you did not have enough space to develop this book you can buy typically the e-book. You can m0ore simply to read this book from your smart phone. The price is not very costly but this book provides high quality.

Johnnie McCormick:

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Mindy Munson:

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