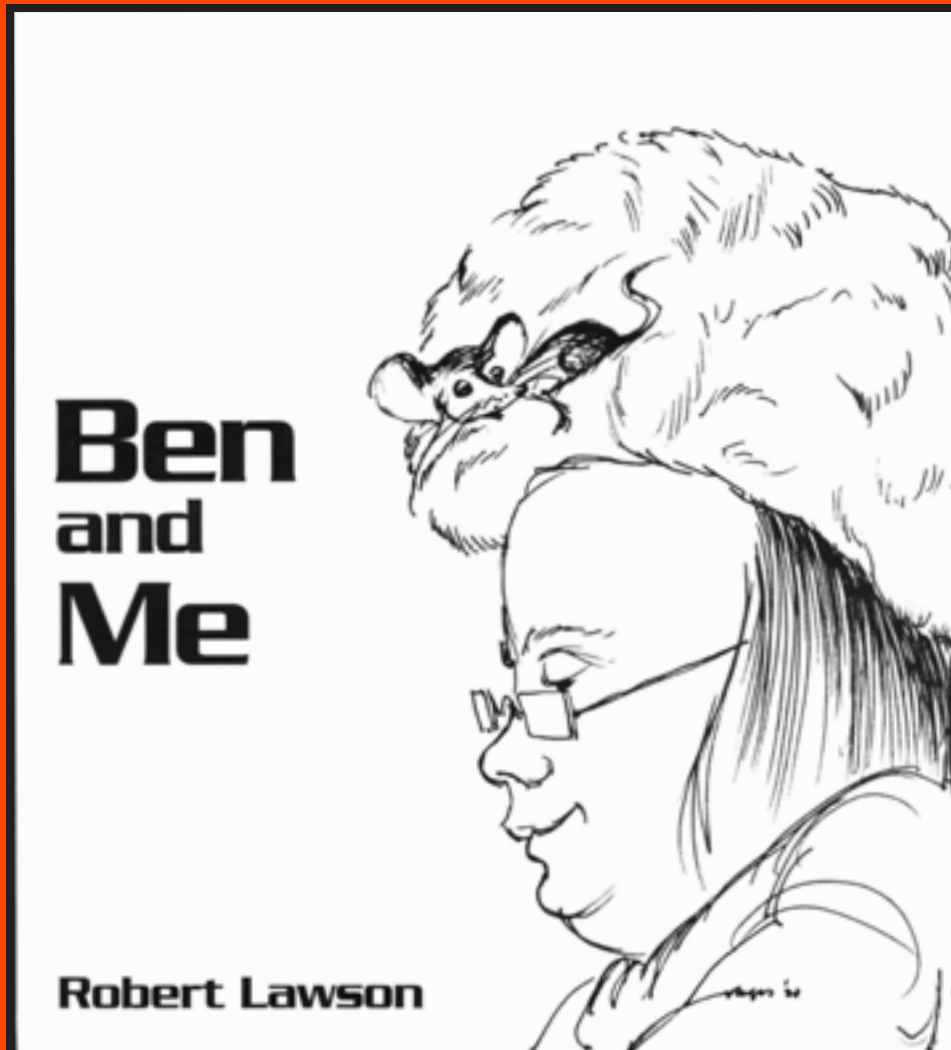


Novel·Ties



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with a specific novel consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel on its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title and the author's name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. What do you think the book will be about? When and where does it take place? Do you think this book will be about real events, imagined events, or both?
2. Read the Background Information on page two of this study guide and do some additional research on Benjamin Franklin. Which of Franklin's many achievements do you think was the most important? Why? What did he do that affected the course of history? What did he do that contributed comfort and convenience to others? What did he do that benefited humanity?
3. Make a list of qualities that you think made Ben Franklin a great man. As you read *Ben and Me*, notice the clever sayings that he devised and those of others that he liked to quote. Based on these sayings, or maxims, what qualities did Ben think were needed for success in life?
4. View a film set in colonial times (perhaps a film about a famous early American, the Declaration of Independence, or Colonial Williamsburg). Observe the clothing, the means of transportation, the houses and buildings and the furnishings inside, the way the colonists cooked their food, heated their homes, and lit their homes at night. Discuss the differences between life in colonial times and life today.
5. Locate Philadelphia on a map that shows the original thirteen American colonies and then on a current map. Do some research to find out how important this city was in colonial times. Find out if Philadelphia is still an important city today.
6. In *Ben and Me*, Amos the mouse gives an account of Ben Franklin's accomplishments that is different from the one we find in history books. Are history books always accurate? Do you think official accounts of historical events ever omit certain facts? Why would they? Can you think of any examples of events in American history that have been presented in an incomplete or biased way?
7. Read to find out about the issues and the events that led up to the American War for Independence, particularly the Stamp Act and the creation of the Declaration of Independence.
8. Do some research to find pictures of the Palace of Versailles and read about life at the French Court during the eighteenth century. This will give you some idea of the dramatic changes in lifestyle Ben Franklin must have experienced when he left Philadelphia for his diplomatic mission to France during the American Revolution.

Foreword, Chapters 1, 2 (cont.)

Read to find out how a mouse got to know Ben Franklin.

Questions:

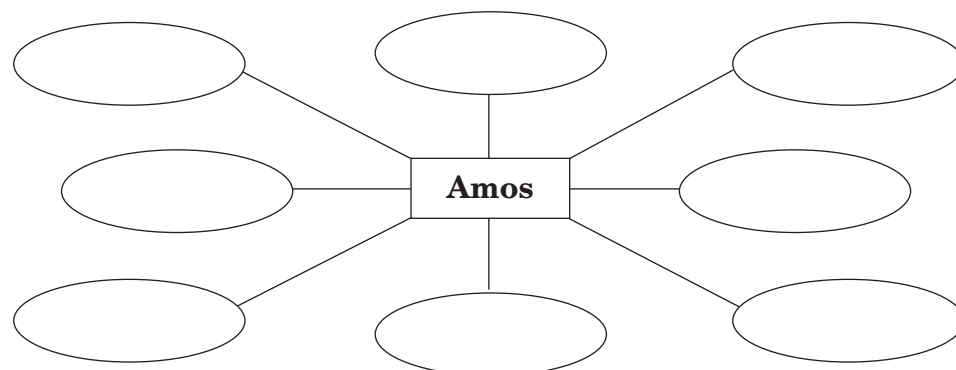
1. At the beginning of the Foreword to *Ben and Me*, Robert Lawson described how the book was discovered. What evidence showed that the “writer” of the manuscript was not human?
2. Robert Lawson admitted that Amos’ account of the career of Ben Franklin differed from those written by historians. Why did Lawson claim that Amos’ account was probably the most reliable?
3. Why did Amos leave home?
4. How did Amos describe Ben Franklin’s house?
5. How did Amos describe Ben Franklin?
6. According to Amos, how was the Franklin stove invented? What part of this description was fact and what part was fiction?

Science Connection:

Do some research to learn about the Franklin stove. Draw a diagram of the stove, showing its parts and how it operates. Explain how it was an improvement over existing ways to heat a home at the time it was invented.

Literary Element: Characterization

Write a word that describes Amos in each of the ovals in the word web below. Add words to the web as you continue to read *Ben and Me*.



Writing Activity:

Imagine that you were the person at the National Museum of Natural History who was assigned to examine the tiny manuscript found in Philadelphia. Write a short report of your findings and conclusions.