

# Ben Franklin and lightning

(Thunder and lightning)



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

# Ben Franklin and lightning

(Thunder and lightning)



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

# Weather around the world

Matches the requirements of the Literacy Strategy and designed to integrate with your normal subject studies. (This material is independent of any specific text book and can be used alongside any publisher's books including our textbook.)

## Contents

### Unit 6: Ben Franklin and lightning

	Ben Franklin and lightning	2
	Understanding words	4
	Finding key words	5
	Summarising	6
	Sequencing	7
	Get to the facts (AF 2-3)	8
	Whys and wherefores (AF 4-5)	9
	Opinions matter (AFs 6-7)	10
	Talking it through	11
	Make a story...	12
	Print the story (from PDF)	13



# Ben Franklin and Lightning

In 1746, a famous scientist called Benjamin Franklin was living in a town called Boston in North America. One day, he read about something quite new. It was all about making electricity. Franklin got very excited about this. So he quickly turned his home into a laboratory.



In the autumn of 1749, Franklin wrote that lightning and electricity seemed to be the same thing. Soon, he decided to try and prove this was true.

In 1750, Franklin began to think about how to protect buildings from being hit by lightning. Soon, he had an idea for a lightning rod. He wrote down that a metal pole should put on top of tall buildings, with a wire going from the pole to the ground. The lightning would strike the pole and run down the wire to the ground, instead of into the building.

In June of 1752, Franklin was in Philadelphia. He decided to use a kite to get close to storm clouds and a metal key to attract an electrical charge. He attached the key to the kite. Then he tied the kite string to a silk ribbon, to protect his hand from the electricity.

The kite was struck by lightning. The electricity travelled down the string to the key. When Franklin touched the key, he got a shock and he knew that lightning was made up of electricity. He was lucky not to be killed!



In the autumn of 1752, Franklin wrote about how people could protect their homes from lightning and he put a lightning rod on his own house.



# Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

**a** Write a sentence in which you found the word '**electricity**'.

**b** From that sentence, write what you think '**electricity**' means.

**c** Write a new sentence using the word '**electricity**'.

**d** Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to '**electricity**'.

**e** Describe some different ways that you use '**electricity**' in your home.



# Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: excited	thrilled



3

# Summarising

(the gist of the story)

To summarise means to rewrite the story in a shorter version using as many of our key words from Task 2 as needed.

**1** Write a heading for your summary.

**2** Now write the main idea in one sentence.  
e.g. "This story tells us..."

**3** Now add some detail to the main idea by writing more sentences after it.



**Finally,  
can you rewrite your  
summary to make it better?**

- 1. Look out for errors such as using the same word too often – use alternatives.**
- 2. Make sure you have summarised the author's purpose in your OWN words.**
- 3. Make sure your summary is in a logical order.**
- 4. Is your summary informative AND interesting to others?**

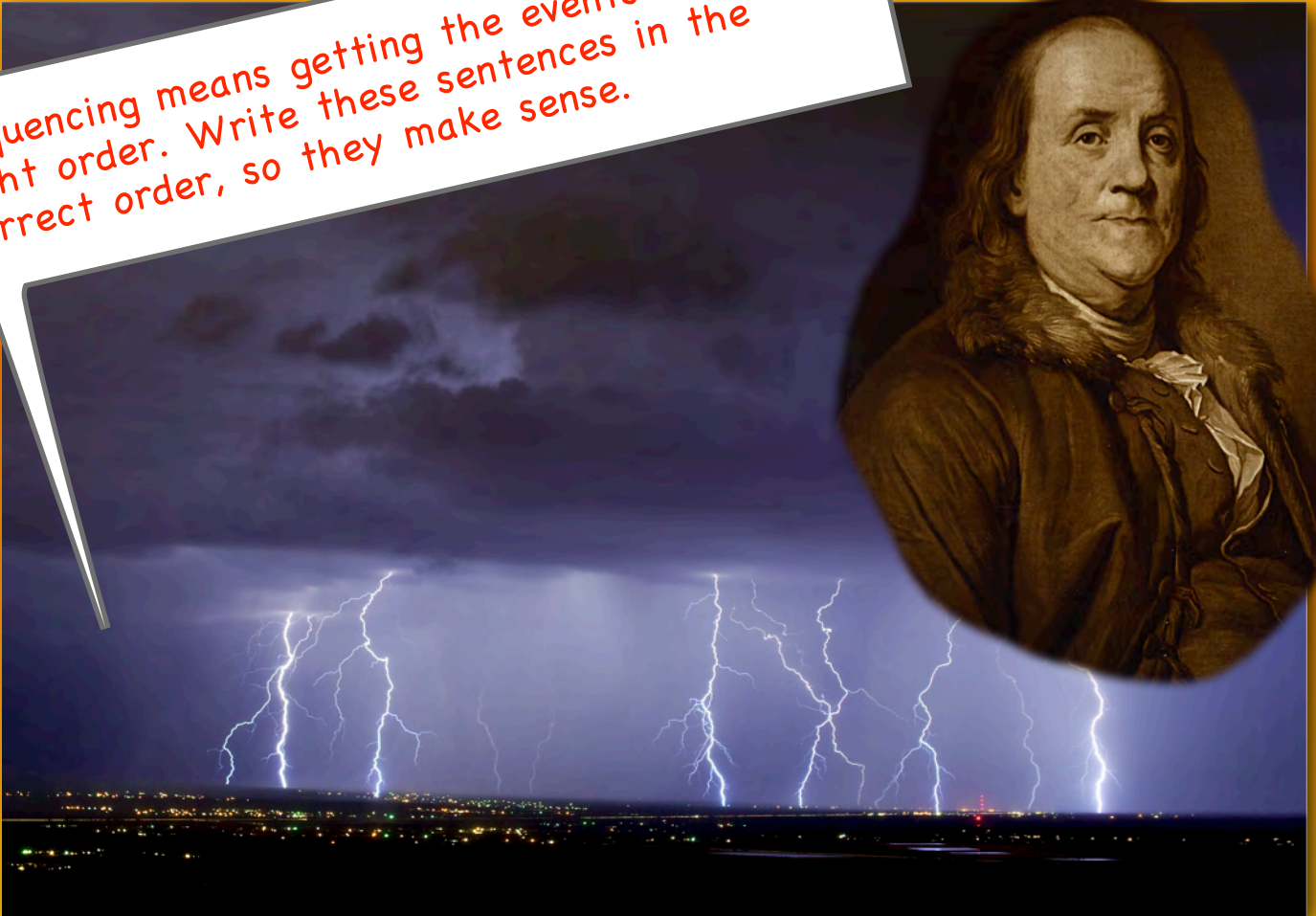
**There is  
nothing wrong  
with rewriting; even  
the best authors  
rewrite their  
work.**



123  
4

# Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.



In the autumn of 1749, Franklin wrote that lightning and electricity seemed to be the same thing.

In 1750, Franklin began to think about how to protect people and buildings from being hit by lightning.

In the autumn of 1752, Franklin wrote about how people could protect their homes from lightning and he put a lightning rod on his own house.

In 1746, a famous scientist called Benjamin Franklin was living in a town called Boston in North America.



# Get to the facts

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the facts of the story.



1 Where did Franklin live in 1746?

2 What did Franklin write about in 1752?

3 What a lightning rod made of?

4 What city was Franklin in when he tried his experiment with a kite?

5 What struck the kite?



# Whys and wherefores

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the meanings in the story and how it was written.



1 Why did Franklin attach a silk ribbon to the kite string?

2 Why did Franklin use a kite in his experiment?

3 Why did Franklin use a key in his experiment?

4 What did Franklin write about in 1952?





# Opinions matter

Answer these questions to give your views and to develop the story.



1 Why didn't Franklin think he was in danger?

2 How did the lightning rod help people?

3 What was Franklin trying to prove in the autumn of 1752?

4 Do you think Franklin's experiment with the kite was safe?

5 Why did Franklin get excited in 1749?



# Talking it through

It often helps if a group of people get together and discuss a problem.



## Discussion topic: Ben Franklin

Do you think we would still investigate things in the same way as Franklin? Why or why not?



# Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.



## A kite in a storm

The year is 1752. You are in Philadelphia with Ben Franklin and are helping him with his experiments. It is a stormy night, just right for lightning...

(Now write a story describing how you help Franklin and what happens when he flies his kite ...)



# Ben Franklin and lightning

In 1746, a famous scientist called Benjamin Franklin was living in a town called Boston in North America. One day, he read about something quite new. It was all about making electricity. Franklin got very excited about this. So he quickly turned his home into a laboratory.

In the autumn of 1749, Franklin wrote that lightning and electricity seemed to be the same thing. Soon, he decided to try and prove this was true.

In 1750, Franklin began to think about how to protect buildings from being hit by lightning. Soon, he had an idea for a lightning rod. He wrote down that a metal pole should put on top of tall buildings, with a wire going from the pole to the ground. The lightning would strike the pole and run down the wire to the ground, instead of into the building.

In June of 1752, Franklin was in Philadelphia. He decided to use a kite to get close to storm clouds and a metal key to attract an electrical charge. He attached the key to the kite. Then he tied the kite string to a silk ribbon, to protect his hand from the electricity.

The kite was struck by lightning. The electricity travelled down the string to the key. When Franklin touched the key, he got a shock and he knew that lightning was made up of electricity. He was lucky not to be killed!

In the autumn of 1752, Franklin wrote about how people could protect their homes from lightning and he put a lightning rod on his own house.