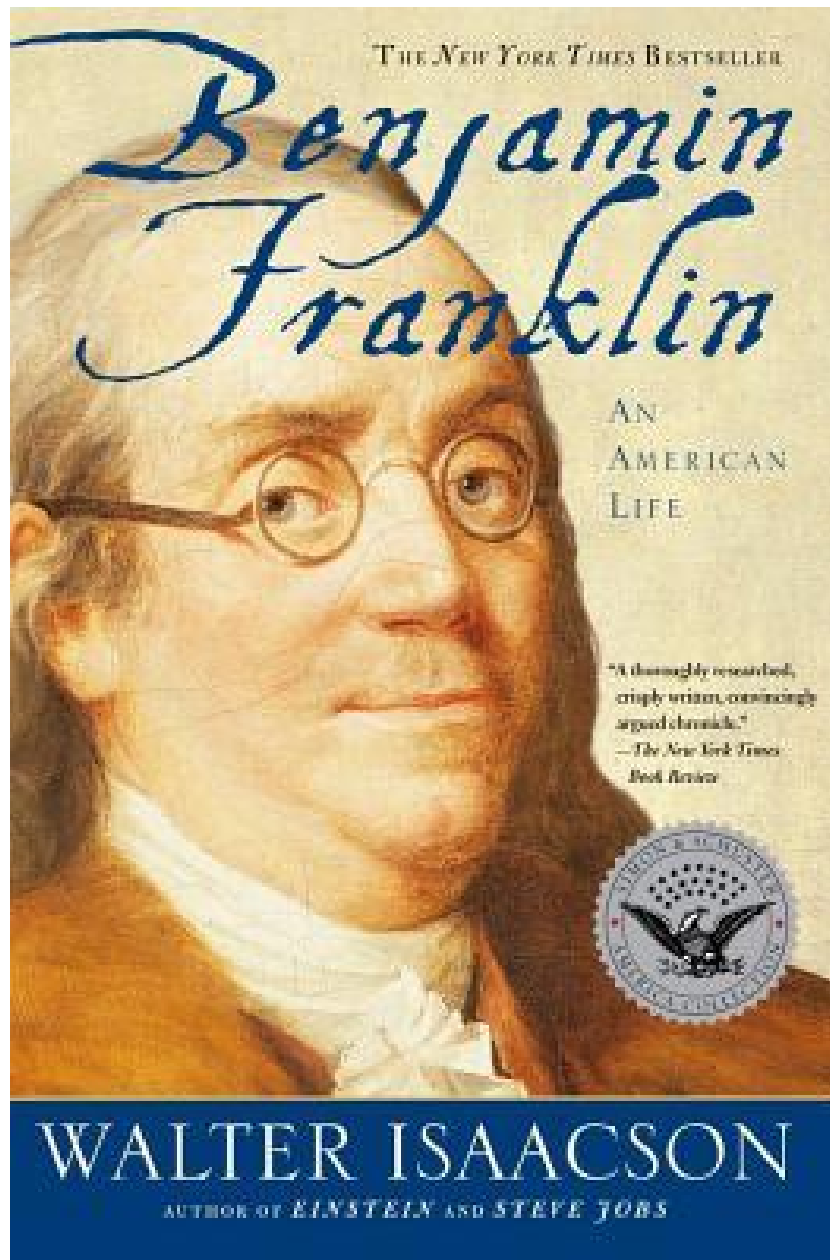


# Benjamin Franklin: An American Life Book PDF Download



**By:**  
**Walter Isaacson**

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### Dylan

If Alexander Hamilton is one of the most underappreciated of the Founders then Benjamin Franklin is one of the most misunderstood. Isaacson ends his book with a concluding chapter that details this misunderstanding. Throughout history each generation has taken a new look at Benjamin Franklin. As the author points out, Thoreau mocked him, Carnegie adored him and D.H. Lawrence despised him. So who was right, and why?

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Isaacson, while pointing out his faults and follies, does not hide his own admiration for Franklin. An interesting historical test is to consider that Franklin's style and personal life often overshadow his professional accomplishments and civic contributions. Because he lived apart from his wife, flirted with women, wrote about the science of farts and beget an illegitimate child the general public has ignored his historical importance. Rather than donning the frills and wigs of Paris, a trap Jefferson quickly fell into, Franklin purposefully wore plain suits, no wig and often times his famous fur hat. A man who set trends without trying, one of Franklin's greatest gifts was the ability to accomplish great things without anyone else realizing it.

His feigned naivete, strategic avoidance of conflict and simple appearance made him the perfect man to discover electricity and promote the lightning rod; propose a union of the colonies in 1759; negotiate for the repeal of the Stamp Act; carve out a treaty with and multiple loans from France; negotiate peace with Britain; champion the Connecticut compromise for a bi-cameral legislature, one with representation based on population, the other with equal representation from each state; and propose the complete abolition of slavery.

Isaacson makes clear, and he is quite convincing, that while Franklin had his faults, he was revered in his own time, accomplished as much or more than any other Founder, and deserves to be considered as one of America's most historically important statesman. Franklin's personal creed was that doing good things for others was the ultimate form of religion. In life and in death (in his will he set up a trust fund for young tradesman in Philadelphia and Boston) he practiced his religion dutifully. A religion that we in America would do well to retrieve.

## Jason Koivu

An excellent start-to-finish biography,

begins by touching on his childhood as best as it can considering the lack of material to work with. After that, Isaacson takes the reader through a more detailed account of Franklin's early entrepreneurial life, through his many inventions, and into his later statesmen days. I was struck by the author's well-balanced hand for both time, achievements, personal and professional details, and philosophical and political ide

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provides a nice, concise, well-rounded look at a well-rounded man.

## Chrissie

ETA: I decided to change this to four stars since I enjoyed the author's even more, and I gave that four.

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Why do YOU want to pick up a book about Benjamin Franklin? If you want his biographical details

you need not even read a book, just check out Wikipedia. I wanted more. I wanted to understand his soul. I wanted to get under his skin. I wanted all the historical details in Wikipedia and more. I got what I wanted. Benjamin was an amazing person; people have only a

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Why do YOU want to pick up a book about Benjamin Franklin? If you want his biographical details you need not even read a book, just check out Wikipedia. I wanted more. I wanted to understand his soul. I wanted to get under his skin. I wanted all the historical details in Wikipedia and more. I got what I wanted. Benjamin was an amazing person; people have only a superficial idea of who he really was. He is the guy who invented the lighting pole, that jolly fat man with a twinkle in his eye. He is the only person to have signed (and extensively worked on) the Declaration of Independence, the Peace Accord with England and the Treaty with France following the Revolution and the American Constitution. So this is a man of politics, you surmise. Yes, he was, but he was so much more.

This is a man who changed history in not one way or two ways or merely ten ways. The world would not be the same today without this man. He has shaped the American character, given us wide ranging inventions and, yes, signed all those documents.

This is not a review of who Benjamin is, for that read

## LuÃ-s C.

A so-called Founding Fathers of the United States, Benjamin Franklin is among the most influential figures of his time, whose scientific discoveries and philosophical and business ideas reverberate around the world. It is also a flesh and blood man who was instrumental in the development of what is now the most powerful nation in the world.

Writer, scientist, inventor, diplomat and journalist.

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Writer, scientist, inventor, diplomat and journalist.

Isaacson shows how this incredible life beyond their own time, and how the collaboration of Franklin in documents such as the Declaration of American Independence helped shape the modern world.

## **Lisa (Harmonybites)**

This was a pleasure and just the kind of biography I find trustworthy. The kind that acknowledges other views and controversies and with extensive notes and sources in the back. More than that, it's the rare biography that can inspire smiles and even giggles--I'd mark this up to five stars if I could credit Isaacson for that--but the source of the humor is the frequent quotes from Benjamin Franklin himself. Isaacson said in his introduction that "Benjamin Franklin is the Founding Father who wink

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Franklin has his faults, goodness knows, and Isaacson doesn't gloss over them, but they just make him all the more poignantly human. I've heard it said that the Revolutionary War was really a civil war given how the lines between Patriots versus Loyalists cut through families. Of all the Founding Fathers, the cut was sharpest with Benjamin Franklin--his own son was the King's Governor of New Jersey and chose the opposing side. I did know that before reading this biography but there was

plenty I didn't know--for instance that this man so identified with Philadelphia was born and grew up in Boston and spent so many years in England as well as Paris. Isaacson, who wrote biographies of Einstein and Steve Jobs, does justice to not just Franklin the statesman but the inventor and scientist as well. And throughout and especially in his epilogue gives us not just an assessment of the man but the biography of how he was received by others such as Sinclair Lewis, D.H. Lawrence and John Updike. An engaging and lively biography.