

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson

Benjamin Franklin An American Life by Walter Isaacson: A Deep Dive into an Iconic Figure

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson offers readers an engaging and thorough exploration of one of America's most fascinating founding fathers. Walter Isaacson, renowned for his biographical works on titans like Steve Jobs and Leonardo da Vinci, turns his meticulous eye to Benjamin Franklin, unraveling the complexities behind the man who was a polymath, inventor, diplomat, and visionary. This biography stands out not only for its vivid storytelling but also for the nuanced perspective it brings to Franklin's life, achievements, and legacy.

The Genius of Benjamin Franklin Through Isaacson's Lens

What makes "Benjamin Franklin An American Life by Walter Isaacson" so compelling is Isaacson's ability to humanize Franklin. Rather than presenting a one-dimensional hero, Isaacson reveals Franklin as a deeply curious and often contradictory individual. Franklin's life was a tapestry of achievements—from his experiments with electricity to his role in shaping the American Revolution—yet he was also a pragmatist and a shrewd politician who understood the art of compromise.

Isaacson's narrative captures Franklin's relentless self-improvement ethos. Franklin famously created a list of thirteen virtues he aimed to cultivate, reflecting his belief in personal growth and discipline. This focus on character building resonates strongly today and offers timeless lessons on leadership and perseverance.

Franklin's Early Life and Formative Years

One of the strengths of the book lies in its detailed account of Franklin's early years. Born into a modest family, Franklin's path to prominence was anything but predetermined. Isaacson explores how Franklin's apprenticeship at a printing press nurtured his love for writing and ideas, laying the foundation for his future as a publisher and communicator.

The biography also highlights Franklin's early experiments with civic engagement, such as founding the Junto club, a gathering of like-minded individuals who discussed philosophy, politics, and science. These formative experiences reveal how Franklin's curiosity was paired with a commitment to community and public service—traits that defined his later public career.

Benjamin Franklin's Role in Shaping America

Isaacson's book doesn't shy away from Franklin's critical role during the American Revolution and the

founding of the United States. The biography illustrates how Franklin was a master diplomat, particularly in securing French support that was vital to the colonies' victory over Britain. His skillful negotiations and charm helped shape international alliances that altered the course of history.

Diplomacy and Political Acumen

Isaacson details Franklin's time in Europe, where he balanced complex political interests with the goal of American independence. His ability to navigate the French court, manage delicate treaties, and maintain American interests abroad demonstrates his keen intellect and social finesse.

This section also sheds light on Franklin's involvement in drafting key documents, including the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Isaacson portrays these efforts as part of Franklin's lifelong dedication to creating a functional and fair society.

Inventor, Scientist, and Innovator: Franklin's Intellectual Legacy

Beyond politics, "Benjamin Franklin An American Life by Walter Isaacson" delves into Franklin's contributions to science and innovation. Franklin's experiments with electricity, including the famous kite experiment, are well-known, but Isaacson goes further to contextualize these achievements within Franklin's broader quest for practical knowledge.

Practical Inventions That Changed Everyday Life

Franklin's inventions were often driven by practical problems. From the lightning rod to bifocal glasses and the Franklin stove, Isaacson illustrates how Franklin's inventive mind sought to improve daily living. These innovations underscore Franklin's blend of curiosity and utilitarianism, emphasizing his belief that knowledge should serve society.

The Intersection of Science and Philosophy

Isaacson also explores Franklin's philosophical outlook, particularly how Enlightenment ideals influenced his scientific pursuits. Franklin saw science as a tool for progress and believed in the democratization of knowledge. His role in founding the American Philosophical Society reflects his commitment to intellectual exchange and education.

The Personal Side: Franklin's Relationships and Character

One of the most fascinating aspects of Isaacson's biography is its attention to Franklin's personal life.

The book paints a portrait of a man who was charming and witty but also complex in his relationships. His interactions with family, friends, and political adversaries reveal a multifaceted personality.

Family and Social Networks

Isaacson discusses Franklin's complicated family dynamics, including his relationship with his son William, who remained loyal to the British crown during the Revolution. This tension adds depth to Franklin's story, showing how political convictions could impact private lives.

Franklin's Wit and Wisdom

Throughout the biography, Franklin's famous wit and aphorisms come alive. Isaacson captures the humor and wisdom that made Franklin a beloved figure, from his maxims in *Poor Richard's Almanack* to his candid letters. These elements make the biography not only informative but also entertaining.

Why Walter Isaacson's Biography Stands Out

What sets "Benjamin Franklin An American Life by Walter Isaacson" apart from other biographies is its balanced portrayal and rich contextualization. Isaacson combines exhaustive research with a narrative style that feels fresh and accessible. Readers gain insight into the historical era as well as Franklin's enduring relevance.

Isaacson's work also benefits from his ability to connect Franklin's life to broader themes—innovation, democracy, self-improvement—that continue to resonate today. For anyone interested in American history, leadership, or the spirit of inquiry, this biography offers valuable perspectives.

Tips for Readers to Get the Most from the Book

- **Reflect on Franklin's Virtues:** Consider how Franklin's thirteen virtues might apply to your own life and personal growth.
- **Explore the Historical Context:** Supplement your reading with additional resources on the American Revolution to appreciate Franklin's role fully.
- **Notice the Intersection of Science and Politics:** Observe how Franklin's scientific mindset influenced his political strategies and vice versa.
- **Engage with Franklin's Writings:** Read selections from *Poor Richard's Almanack* or his letters to experience his voice firsthand.

Benjamin Franklin's life was a blend of ingenuity, diplomacy, and relentless curiosity, and Walter Isaacson's biography captures this blend with remarkable clarity. The book invites readers to explore how one man's ideas and actions helped shape a nation and left a legacy that continues to inspire innovation and civic responsibility. Whether you are a history enthusiast or simply curious about the man behind the iconic kite experiment, this biography provides a rich, engaging journey into the life of an American legend.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the central theme of 'Benjamin Franklin: An American Life' by Walter Isaacson?

The central theme of the book is the exploration of Benjamin Franklin's multifaceted life as a founding father, inventor, diplomat, and writer, highlighting his contributions to American society and his embodiment of the Enlightenment ideals.

How does Walter Isaacson portray Benjamin Franklin's personality in the biography?

Isaacson portrays Franklin as a pragmatic, curious, and ambitious individual who was constantly reinventing himself. He emphasizes Franklin's wit, wisdom, and his ability to navigate complex political and social landscapes.

What new insights does Walter Isaacson provide about Benjamin Franklin's role in American history?

Isaacson provides a nuanced view of Franklin's diplomatic skills, especially his role in securing French support during the American Revolution, as well as his scientific experiments and inventions which were crucial to his legacy beyond politics.

Does 'Benjamin Franklin: An American Life' cover Franklin's personal life and relationships?

Yes, the biography delves into Franklin's personal life, including his family relationships, friendships, and his sometimes complicated interactions with his son, shedding light on the man behind the public figure.

Why is 'Benjamin Franklin: An American Life' by Walter Isaacson considered a significant biography?

The book is considered significant because Walter Isaacson combines thorough research with engaging storytelling to present a comprehensive and accessible portrait of Benjamin Franklin, making it relevant for both historians and general readers interested in American history.

Additional Resources

Benjamin Franklin An American Life by Walter Isaacson: A Definitive Portrait of a Founding Father

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson offers readers an expansive, meticulously researched biography that delves deep into the complexities of one of America's most multifaceted founding fathers. Walter Isaacson, renowned for his authoritative biographies of figures such as Steve Jobs and Leonardo da Vinci, brings the same investigative rigor and narrative finesse to this work. The book not only chronicles Franklin's public achievements but also explores his private contradictions, intellectual curiosity, and enduring influence on American identity.

In this comprehensive examination, Isaacson unpacks the life of Benjamin Franklin beyond the myths and folklore, presenting a nuanced portrait that captures the essence of an 18th-century polymath whose legacy still resonates today. The biography stands out in the crowded field of historical works on Franklin by seamlessly blending scholarly insight with accessible prose, ultimately providing both academic and general audiences a fresh perspective on a familiar figure.

Exploring the Multifaceted Life of Benjamin Franklin

Walter Isaacson's biography explores the vast spectrum of Franklin's activities—from printer and inventor to diplomat and statesman—highlighting how these roles contributed to the shaping of early American society. The title, **Benjamin Franklin An American Life by Walter Isaacson**, encapsulates the essence of the narrative: an intimate exploration of an individual whose personal ambitions and public endeavors embodied the spirit of a nascent nation.

Isaacson pays close attention to Franklin's formative years in Boston and Philadelphia, detailing his rise from modest beginnings to becoming a central figure in colonial politics. This trajectory is particularly important in understanding Franklin's self-made mythos, which the author dissects with a critical eye, balancing admiration with a clear-eyed assessment of Franklin's flaws and contradictions.

The Intellectual Curiosity Behind the Founding Father

One of the most compelling aspects of **Benjamin Franklin An American Life by Walter Isaacson** is the portrayal of Franklin as an insatiably curious mind. Isaacson emphasizes Franklin's relentless pursuit of knowledge, from his early experiments with electricity to his inventions such as the lightning rod and bifocals. These scientific endeavors are presented not merely as hobbies but as extensions of Franklin's practical philosophy and belief in progress.

Isaacson's narrative also highlights Franklin's role as a publisher and writer, particularly his contributions to the **Pennsylvania Gazette** and **Poor Richard's Almanack**. These publications were instrumental in shaping public opinion and disseminating Enlightenment ideals, underscoring Franklin's influence on American intellectual culture.

Diplomacy and Political Acumen

The biography further explores Franklin's diplomatic career, particularly his pivotal role in securing French support during the American Revolution. Isaacson delves into the intricacies of 18th-century international relations, illustrating how Franklin's charm, wit, and strategic thinking were crucial in forging alliances that ultimately tipped the balance in favor of American independence.

Moreover, the book examines Franklin's participation in the drafting of foundational documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Isaacson provides insight into Franklin's pragmatic approach to politics, his advocacy for compromise, and his vision of a united republic, all of which contributed to the enduring framework of American democracy.

A Balanced Perspective on Franklin's Contradictions

While many biographies tend to idealize Franklin, Isaacson's treatment is notably balanced, acknowledging the complexities and contradictions inherent in Franklin's character. The author does not shy away from addressing Franklin's early complicity in the institution of slavery and his gradual but incomplete evolution toward abolitionism. This nuanced approach adds depth and credibility to the biography, reflecting broader historiographical trends that seek to reconcile the legacies of historical figures with contemporary ethical standards.

Isaacson also explores Franklin's personal life, including his relationships with family members and colleagues. By shedding light on Franklin's sometimes difficult personality traits—his vanity, occasional arrogance, and pragmatic compromises—*Benjamin Franklin An American Life by Walter Isaacson* transcends hagiography to offer a humanized portrayal that resonates with modern readers.

Comparative Insights: Franklin in the Canon of American Biographies

When placed alongside other seminal works on Franklin, such as Carl Van Doren's Pulitzer Prize-winning biography or Walter Isaacson's own earlier essays, this book distinguishes itself through its breadth and integration of newly uncovered archival materials. Isaacson's use of Franklin's extensive correspondence and writings enriches the narrative, providing readers with direct access to the founder's voice.

Unlike more traditional historical accounts that focus narrowly on political milestones, this biography situates Franklin within the broader Enlightenment context, juxtaposing his scientific and philosophical contributions with his political achievements. This multidimensional approach enhances the reader's understanding of Franklin not just as a historical figure, but as a prototype of American ingenuity and pragmatism.

Key Features and Highlights of the Biography

- **Comprehensive Coverage:** Spanning Franklin's entire lifespan from 1706 to 1790, the book

offers a chronological and thematic exploration of his life.

- **Rich Primary Sources:** Isaacson's extensive use of Franklin's letters and personal writings adds authenticity and immediacy to the narrative.
- **Balanced Portrayal:** The biography neither lionizes nor vilifies Franklin, instead presenting a rounded character study.
- **Contextual Depth:** Franklin's life is contextualized within the social, political, and intellectual currents of the 18th century.
- **Engaging Prose:** Isaacson's accessible writing style ensures the biography is suitable for both scholars and casual readers.

Potential Limitations and Considerations

While *Benjamin Franklin An American Life* by Walter Isaacson* has been widely praised for its depth and readability, some critiques have emerged regarding its pacing and scope. The exhaustive detail, while enriching, can occasionally slow the narrative momentum, potentially challenging readers less familiar with historical biographies. Additionally, some historians argue that the book could further interrogate Franklin's contradictions, particularly his views on race and class, with even more critical scrutiny.

Nevertheless, these critiques are minor in comparison to the overall achievement of the work, which stands as a definitive modern biography that invites renewed engagement with Franklin's life and legacy.

Walter Isaacson's biography ultimately reaffirms Benjamin Franklin's role not only as a pivotal figure in American history but also as an enduring symbol of curiosity, innovation, and civic responsibility. By threading together the various strands of Franklin's polymathic endeavors, the book offers a textured, insightful narrative that enriches our understanding of the man behind the myth and the nation he helped forge.

[Benjamin Franklin An American Life By Walter Isaacson](#)

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benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: Benjamin Franklin Walter Isaacson, 2003-07 Rescuing Benjamin Franklin from the cliché of genial codger, this book celebrates the most interesting, advanced, and earthy of the founding fathers. 16-page four-color insert.

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: *Benjamin Franklin* Walter Isaacson, 2004-05-04 During his 84-year life Benjamin Franklin was America's best scientist, inventor, publisher, business strategist, diplomat, and writer. He was also one of its most practical political thinkers. America's first great publicist, he carefully crafted his own persona, portrayed it in public and polished it for posterity. In this riveting new biography Walter Isaacson provides readers with a full portrait of Franklin's public and private life - his loyal but neglected wife, his bastard son with whom he broke over going to war with England, his endless replacement families and his many amorous, but probably unconsummated, liaisons. But this is not just a biography of Benjamin Franklin but rather a fascinating look at American and European political history at that time. Isaacson examines the run up to the Revolutionary War, the intimate relations between Britain, France and the colonies and the decisive events that led to America's independence. Just as David McCullough brought life to the historic figure of John Adams, Isaacson portrays Franklin in the flesh, showing readers how this radical man helped define America's national character and personality.

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: **Benjamin Franklin** Walter Isaacson, 2004-06-01 Presents a portrait of Benjamin Franklin as a scientist, inventor, diplomat, writer, business strategist, and statesman while tracing his life as one of America's Founding Fathers.

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: *Quicklet on Walter Isaacson's Benjamin Franklin: An American Life* Steven John, 2012-03-14 ABOUT THE BOOK In the study of Benjamin Franklin's life, one travels through a historical period in which the prosperous colonies of a mighty empire grow in anger from discontent to empowerment, finally rising in arms. Then from the ashes of war, there rose our nation. So surely, an equally acceptable title for this authoritative biography could have replaced An, with The. To attempt to tell the tale of America's beginnings without speaking at length of Ben Franklin would be as great a folly as to attempt to tell Franklin's life story without mentioning America: both are simply intertwined. In this biography of Franklin not the first, but perhaps the finest Walter Isaacson comes tantalizingly close to laying out the whole tapestry of the man's life, all while laying it down atop the tableau of the times. This is no easy feat. At just shy of 500 pages, Isaacson's book is no mere primer but that shouldn't scare off the more casual reader. MEET THE AUTHOR Steven John is a writer living and working in Los Angeles, by way of Washington DC, originally. His first novel will hit shelves on 3/27/12 and when not working on books, he fills his time with various freelance writing work, hiking, mumbling at his pets and thinking up more interesting activities he can tell his wife he has been involved with. EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK As this is, of course, a biography of a man's life, it follows that Walter Isaacson has chosen to tell that life's story chronologically. Fortunately for his reader, though, he opens the book with a few intriguing insights into Benjamin Franklin's character: He was, during his eighty-four-year-long life, America's best scientist, inventor, diplomat, writer, and business strategist and he was also one of its most practical, though not most profound political thinkers....the most interesting thing that Franklin invented, and continued to reinvent, was himself. And just then, when we want to know more--to know it all--Isaacson takes us back; takes us away to a land across the ocean. In so doing he lays down the framework upon which B. Franklin would live his life and offers us a much greater understanding of our subject. Isaacson takes us to the 16th Century, the earliest point in time when a direct ancestor of Benjamin Franklin can be found (largely due to the fact that before such time, the surname Franklin did not even exist). The author explains, in a quick primer, the changing nature of the populace in Western Europe in this Renaissance-cum-Elizabethan era, as commoners and peasants began to emerge from the veil of feudalism in England, as the merchant class arose and as, slowly, merit began to surpass bloodline in dictating one's future. This change would not come into fruition until the founding of the American state, and is arguably a line of thinking that strongly informs much of the American identity to this day. CHAPTER OUTLINE Quicklet on Walter Isaacson's Benjamin Franklin: An American Life Walter Isaacson's Benjamin Franklin: An American Life + About the Book + About the Author + A Summary, in Brief + The Junto, Poor Richard, Meanwhile & The Fire Department + ...and much more

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: A Benjamin Franklin Reader

Benjamin Franklin, 2003 From Poor Richard's Almanac to letters to Jefferson and Adams, the words of the America's favorite Founding Father are edited and annotated in this delightful new reader.

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: Benjamin Franklin

Hugh Newmont, 2025-04-18 This comprehensive biography delves into the extraordinary life of Benjamin Franklin, exploring his multifaceted roles as printer, writer, inventor, scientist, civic leader, diplomat, and statesman. From his humble beginnings in Boston to his rise as a prominent figure in Philadelphia, London, and Paris, the book traces Franklin's relentless pursuit of self-improvement and his profound impact on the birth and character of a nation. It examines his scientific breakthroughs, including his groundbreaking work with electricity, alongside his tireless civic activism, which transformed Philadelphia into a model of urban progress. More than just a chronological account, this biography illuminates Franklin's complex character, acknowledging his ambition, pragmatism, and the personal compromises that shaped his life, offering a complete and human portrait of the First American. The book delves into Franklin's pivotal role in the American Revolution, from his early advocacy for colonial union to his masterful diplomacy in securing the crucial French alliance. It details his contributions to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, highlighting his wisdom, humor, and commitment to compromise. Furthermore, the biography explores Franklin's lasting legacy, focusing on his tireless promotion of education and abolition, even in his final years. By drawing upon his voluminous writings, including letters, essays, and his iconic Autobiography, the book vividly portrays Franklin's journey from printer's apprentice to world-renowned figure, revealing his motivations, triumphs, failures, and the contradictions that make him such a compelling and enduring figure in American history. Through meticulous research and engaging prose, this biography offers a nuanced understanding of Benjamin Franklin's life and times, exploring his impact on science, politics, and society. It examines the evolution of his thinking on key issues like slavery and self-governance, and highlights the enduring relevance of his ideas on individual ambition, community responsibility, and the pursuit of a more perfect union. This is not just a story of the past; it's a timeless exploration of American identity and the ongoing experiment in democracy that Franklin helped to shape.

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: Summary and Analysis of

Benjamin Franklin Worth Books, 2017-02-28 So much to read, so little time? This brief overview of Benjamin Franklin tells you what you need to know—before or after you read Walter Isaacson's book. Crafted and edited with care, Worth Books set the standard for quality and give you the tools you need to be a well-informed reader. This short summary and analysis of Benjamin Franklin by Walter Isaacson includes: Historical context Chapter-by-chapter overviews Character profiles Detailed timeline of events Important quotes Fascinating trivia Glossary of terms Supporting material to enhance your understanding of the original work About Benjamin Franklin: An American Life by Walter Isaacson: In his thorough examination of one of America's Founding Fathers, biographer Walter Isaacson explores the life and times of Benjamin Franklin and his legacy as a scientist, writer, diplomat, printing mogul, and voice for the common man. Isaacson follows Franklin from young runaway teenager in Philadelphia, to the savvy statesman coordinating the Franco-American alliance during the Revolutionary War, to the wise, 80-year-old politician at the Constitutional Convention. In between, we learn about Franklin the person—his complicated relationships, his scientific curiosity and brilliant discoveries, and the civic-mindedness that caused him to found a library, a fire department, a university, and a hospital. Franklin's principles of democracy and admiration for the middle class continue to be at the foundation of American society. The summary and analysis in this ebook are intended to complement your reading experience and bring you closer to a great work of nonfiction.

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: Walter Isaacson: The Genius

Biographies Walter Isaacson, 2017-11-07 The Genius Biographies boxed set from New York Times bestselling author Walter Isaacson featuring his definitive biographies: Steve Jobs, Einstein, and Benjamin Franklin. "If anybody in America understands genius, it's Walter Isaacson." —Salon Walter

Isaacson's beloved biographies of American geniuses—now in one boxed set: *Steve Jobs: The riveting biography of legendary Apple cofounder Steve Jobs*. The story of the roller-coaster life and intense creative entrepreneur whose passion for perfection and ferocious drive revolutionized six industries: personal computers, animated movies, music, phones, tablet computing, and digital publishing. Isaacson's portrait touched millions of readers. *Einstein: How did his mind work? What made him a genius?* Isaacson's biography of Albert Einstein shows how his scientific imagination sprang from the rebellious nature of his personality. His fascinating story is a testament to the connection between creativity and freedom. *Benjamin Franklin: In this colorful and intimate narrative, Isaacson provides the full sweep of Ben Franklin's amazing life, showing how the most fascinating Founding Father helped forge the American national identity.*

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: *The First American* H. W. Brands, 2002-03-12 PULITZER PRIZE FINALIST • Benjamin Franklin, perhaps the pivotal figure in colonial and revolutionary America, comes vividly to life in this “thorough biography of ... America's first Renaissance man” (The Washington Post) by the two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist, bestselling historian, and author of *Our First Civil War*. The authoritative Franklin biography for our time.” —Joseph J. Ellis, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Founding Brothers* Wit, diplomat, scientist, philosopher, businessman, inventor, and bon vivant, Benjamin Franklin's life is one every American should know well, and it has not been told better than by Mr. Brands (The Dallas Morning News). From penniless runaway to highly successful printer, from ardently loyal subject of Britain to architect of an alliance with France that ensured America's independence, Franklin went from obscurity to become one of the world's most admired figures, whose circle included the likes of Voltaire, Hume, Burke, and Kant. Drawing on previously unpublished letters and a host of other sources, acclaimed historian H. W. Brands has written a thoroughly engaging biography of the eighteenth-century genius. A much needed reminder of Franklin's greatness and humanity, *The First American* is a work of meticulous scholarship that provides a magnificent tour of a legendary historical figure, a vital era in American life, and the countless arenas in which the protean Franklin left his legacy. Look for H.W. Brands's other biographies: *ANDREW JACKSON, THE MAN WHO SAVED THE UNION* (Ulysses S. Grant), *TRAITOR TO HIS CLASS* (Franklin Roosevelt) and *REAGAN*.

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* Gordon S. Wood, 2005-05-31 “I cannot remember ever reading a work of history and biography that is quite so fluent, so perfectly composed and balanced . . .” —The New York Sun “Exceptionally rich perspective on one of the most accomplished, complex, and unpredictable Americans of his own time or any other.” —The Washington Post Book World From the most respected chronicler of the early days of the Republic—and winner of both the Pulitzer and Bancroft prizes—comes a landmark work that rescues Benjamin Franklin from a mythology that has blinded generations of Americans to the man he really was and makes sense of aspects of his life and career that would have otherwise remained mysterious. In place of the genial polymath, self-improver, and quintessential American, Gordon S. Wood reveals a figure much more ambiguous and complex—and much more interesting. Charting the passage of Franklin's life and reputation from relative popular indifference (his death, while the occasion for mass mourning in France, was widely ignored in America) to posthumous glory, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* sheds invaluable light on the emergence of our country's idea of itself.

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: *I am Benjamin Franklin* Brad Meltzer, 2020-10-13 The 21st book in the New York Times bestselling series of biographies about heroes tells the story of Benjamin Franklin, one of the Founding Fathers of the U.S. who helped draft the Declaration of Independence while making important scientific contributions. This friendly, fun biography series focuses on the traits that made our heroes great—the traits that kids can aspire to in order to live heroically themselves. Each book tells the story of an icon in a lively, conversational way that works well for the youngest nonfiction readers and that always includes the hero's childhood influences. At the back are an excellent timeline and photos. Driven by his curiosity from a young age, Benjamin Franklin's observations about the world led to key discoveries about electricity

and other contributions that remain important today. This friendly, fun biography series inspired the PBS Kids TV show *Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum*. One great role model at a time, these books encourage kids to dream big. Included in each book are: • A timeline of key events in the hero's history • Photos that bring the story more fully to life • Comic-book-style illustrations that are irresistibly adorable • Childhood moments that influenced the hero • Facts that make great conversation-starters • A virtue this person embodies: Benjamin Franklin's commitment to self-improvement is the highlight of this biography You'll want to collect each book in this dynamic, informative series!

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: *Benjamin Franklin: The Inventive Founding Father* L.L. Owens, 2007-08-01 Discusses the life and accomplishments of the eighteenth-century American printer, scientist, statesman, and inventor.

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: *Beyond News* Mitchell Stephens, 2014-04-29 For a century and a half, journalists made a good business out of selling the latest news or selling ads next to that news. Now that news pours out of the Internet and our mobile devices—fast, abundant, and mostly free—that era is ending. Our best journalists, Mitchell Stephens argues, instead must offer original, challenging perspectives—not just slightly more thorough accounts of widely reported events. His book proposes a new standard: wisdom journalism, an amalgam of the more rarified forms of reporting—exclusive, enterprising, investigative—and informed, insightful, interpretive, explanatory, even opinionated takes on current events. This book features an original, sometimes critical examination of contemporary journalism, both on- and offline, and it finds inspiration for a more ambitious and effective understanding of journalism in examples from twenty-first-century articles and blogs, as well as in a selection of outstanding twentieth-century journalism and Benjamin Franklin's eighteenth-century writings. Most attempts to deal with journalism's current crisis emphasize technology. Stephens emphasizes mindsets and the need to rethink what journalism has been and might become.

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: *499 Facts about Hip-Hop Hamilton and the Rest of America's Founding Fathers* Stephen Spignesi, 2016-10-25 You want a revolution? So did Alexander Hamilton and the Founding Fathers! America has fallen in love again with Alexander Hamilton and the Founding Fathers. Here is a popping fresh collection of facts and forgotten trivia surrounding the American Revolution and our forefathers – from those you'd expect (George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin, and Hamilton, of course) to those you may never have heard of, but you probably should have (who the heck was Rufus King?): Alexander Hamilton was born on foreign soil and became an American hero - the founder of the U.S. Mint and the U.S. Coast Guard. The naval communication book he wrote was still being used by the US Navy and Coast Guard through the Cuban Missile Crisis. Roger Sherman (of Connecticut) was one of only two Founding Fathers who signed the three bulwark documents of our republic: The Declaration of Independence, the Articles of the Confederation, and the Constitution. (Give props to this guy.) By the time he was thirty, George Washington had had smallpox, pleurisy, dysentery, and malaria. Readers will be left with a greater appreciation and deeper respect for these human beings who were just trying to accomplish the incredible: create the greatest nation in history. Skyhorse Publishing, as well as our Arcade imprint, are proud to publish a broad range of books for readers interested in history--books about World War II, the Third Reich, Hitler and his henchmen, the JFK assassination, conspiracies, the American Civil War, the American Revolution, gladiators, Vikings, ancient Rome, medieval times, the old West, and much more. While not every title we publish becomes a New York Times bestseller or a national bestseller, we are committed to books on subjects that are sometimes overlooked and to authors whose work might not otherwise find a home.

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?* John Fea, 2011-02-16 Fea offers an even-handed primer on whether America was founded to be a Christian nation, as many evangelicals assert, or a secular state, as others contend. He approaches the title's question from a historical perspective, helping readers see past the emotional rhetoric of today to the recorded facts of our past. Readers on both sides of the issues

will appreciate that this book occupies a middle ground, noting the good points and the less-nuanced arguments of both sides and leading us always back to the primary sources that our shared American history comprises.

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: The Struggle for Power in Colonial America, 1607-1776 William R. Nester, 2017-10-11 America's colonial era began and ended dramatically, with the founding of the first enduring settlement at Jamestown on May 14, 1607 and the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776. During those 169 years, conflicts were endemic and often overlapping among the colonists, between the colonists and the original inhabitants, between the colonists and other imperial European peoples, and between the colonists and the mother country. As conflicts were endemic, so too were struggles for power. This study reveals the reasons for, stages, and results of these conflicts. The dynamic driving this history are two inseparable transformations as English subjects morphed into American citizens, and the core American cultural values morphed from communitarianism and theocracy into individualism and humanism. These developments in turn were shaped by the changing ways that the colonists governed, made money, waged war, worshipped, thought, wrote, and loved. Extraordinary individuals led that metamorphosis, explorers like John Smith and Daniel Boone, visionaries like John Winthrop and Thomas Jefferson, entrepreneurs like William Phips and John Hancock, dissidents like Rogers Williams and Anne Hutchinson, warriors like Miles Standish and Benjamin Church, free spirits like Thomas Morton and William Byrd, and creative writers like Anne Bradstreet and Robert Rogers. Then there was that quintessential man of America's Enlightenment, Benjamin Franklin. And finally, George Washington who, more than anyone, was responsible for winning American independence when and how it happened.

benjamin franklin an american life by walter isaacson: Neither Snow Nor Rain Devin Leonard, 2016-05-03 "[The] book makes you care what happens to its main protagonist, the U.S. Postal Service itself. And, as such, it leaves you at the end in suspense." —USA Today Founded by Benjamin Franklin, the United States Postal Service was the information network that bound far-flung Americans together, and yet, it is slowly vanishing. Critics say it is slow and archaic. Mail volume is down. The workforce is shrinking. Post offices are closing. In *Neither Snow Nor Rain*, journalist Devin Leonard tackles the fascinating, centuries-long history of the USPS, from the first letter carriers through Franklin's days, when postmasters worked out of their homes and post roads cut new paths through the wilderness. Under Andrew Jackson, the post office was molded into a vast patronage machine, and by the 1870s, over seventy percent of federal employees were postal workers. As the country boomed, USPS aggressively developed new technology, from mobile post offices on railroads and airmail service to mechanical sorting machines and optical character readers. *Neither Snow Nor Rain* is a rich, multifaceted history, full of remarkable characters, from the stamp-collecting FDR, to the revolutionaries who challenged USPS's monopoly on mail, to the renegade union members who brought the system—and the country—to a halt in the 1970s. "Delectably readable . . . Leonard's account offers surprises on almost every other page . . . [and] delivers both the triumphs and travails with clarity, wit and heart." —Chicago Tribune

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