

The Shocking Truth

Here's a shocking story about Ben Franklin. The story that he discovered electricity while flying a kite is not exactly accurate, historians say.

"Even if he did do it, we don't know exactly when or where, which is also part of the problem," said historian Richard Rosen.

According to an old legend, Franklin and his son, William, set out one cloudy day in June 1752 to prove that lightning was electrical in nature.

They tied a metal key to a kite string and flew the kite in a storm. Lightning struck the kite and the key, shocking Franklin.

The actual truth may be less shocking. Franklin's friend Joseph Priestly wrote that lightning didn't zap Franklin's kite.

Priestly said Franklin had a silk ribbon wrapped around his hand. Franklin saw that the strands of the ribbon were standing up. Franklin recognized that as a characteristic of static electricity. Franklin then reached out to test the key and was shocked.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the legend, when did Ben Franklin prove that lightning is electrical?

- A 1652
- B 1752
- C 1819
- D 1750

2. This passage compares the old legend of Ben Franklin's discovery to a description of the event from Joseph Priestly. Which of the following describes the main difference between the old legend and Joseph Priestly's description?

- A Ben Franklin's son William was not actually there when Ben did the experiment.
- B Franklin did not actually find any electricity.
- C Ben Franklin first noticed electricity in the strands of a silk ribbon, not a kite.
- D Ben Franklin did not actually tie a key to a kite.

3. Based on the passage, which of the following conclusions can be made?

- A Historians still do not know if the old legend of Ben Franklin is true.
- B Ben Franklin and Joseph Priestly were not good friends.
- C Ben Franklin may not have discovered electricity at all.
- D Historians believe that Ben Franklin did discover electricity using a kite and key.

4. Read the following sentence: "According to an old legend, Franklin and his son, William, set out one cloudy day in June 1752 to prove that lightning was electrical in nature."

As used in the passage, **legend** means

- A historian
- B lie
- C truth
- D story

5. This passage is mostly about

- A historians saying that the old legend about Ben Franklin is true
- B historians saying that an old legend about Ben Franklin is not accurate
- C Ben Franklin using a kite to discover electricity
- D Ben Franklin making many important and exciting discoveries in his lifetime

6. According to the passage, what did Franklin recognize as a characteristic of static electricity?

7. Based on the passage, how did historians most likely decide that the old legend about Ben Franklin might not be accurate?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

The old legend about Ben Franklin says that he discovered electricity by using a kite and key, _____ historians say this story isn't accurate.

- A before
- B however
- C because
- D after

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Ben Franklin may have discovered electricity in 1752 by using a silk ribbon.

Who? Ben Franklin

What? _____

When? _____

How? _____

Directions: Read the vocabulary word and definition below to complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

Vocabulary Word: **accurate** (ac·cu·rate): precise or exact.

10a. Read the sentences below and underline all forms of the word **accurate**.

1. When she retold the story she added a few new details so the story could not be considered accurate.
2. The police asked her for an accurate description of the man who stole her wallet so they could find him.
3. When you cook it's important to be accurate, so use measuring tools to figure out the correct amount of the ingredients to use.
4. I'm always on time because my watch always has the accurate time.
5. Make sure you have the correct punctuation and spelling in order to write an accurate sentence.

10b. Which image shows something that can best be used to determine that calculations are accurate?



11. What could a student do to make sure that their work on a math test is accurate?

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 870

Featured Text Structure: Compare/Contrast – the writer presents similarities and differences between two or more objects, places, events or ideas

Passage Summary: This passage compares the old legend of how Ben Franklin discovered lightning to the actual truth of what happened, according to historians. The old legend states that lightning first struck Ben Franklin's kite and the key he had attached. According to historians, Franklin's friend Joseph Priestly wrote that lightning didn't actually zap Franklin's kite.

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6. According to the passage, what did Franklin recognize as a characteristic of static electricity?

Suggested answer: Ben Franklin recognized static electricity when the strands of the ribbon tied around his hand stood up. [paragraph 6]

7. Based on the passage, how did historians most likely decide that the old legend about Ben Franklin might not be accurate?

Suggested answer: Historians most likely decided that the old legend isn't accurate because Joseph Priestly wrote that the actual event had happened differently. Historians may believe Priestly because he was a friend of Ben Franklin, and may have been alive at that time to either see or hear about the event. [paragraph 5]

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

The old legend about Ben Franklin says that he discovered electricity by using a kite and key, _____ historians say this story isn't accurate.

- A before
- B however**
- C because
- D after

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Ben Franklin may have discovered electricity in 1752 by using a silk ribbon.

Who? Ben Franklin

What? **may have discovered electricity**

When? **in 1752**

How? **by using a silk ribbon**

To the Teacher: ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

Vocabulary Word: **accurate** (ac-cu-rate): precise or exact.

Step 1: Introduce the word

- a. Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (ac-cu-rate)
- b. Teacher says: "This word is accurate. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "accurate."]

Step 2: Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: "Accurate means very precise or exact."
- b. Teacher says: "In the passage, the story says that Ben Franklin discovered electricity using a kite and key, but this story may not be accurate because the true story is that he first noticed electricity after observing the strands on his silk ribbon stand up."

- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "accurate."]

Step 3: Practice the word

Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the first sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to your students.

Directions: Read the vocabulary word and definition below to complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

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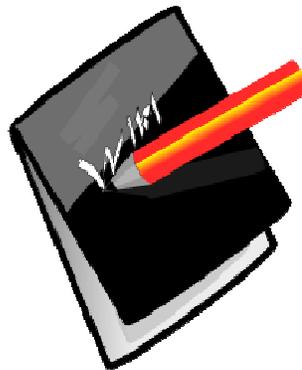
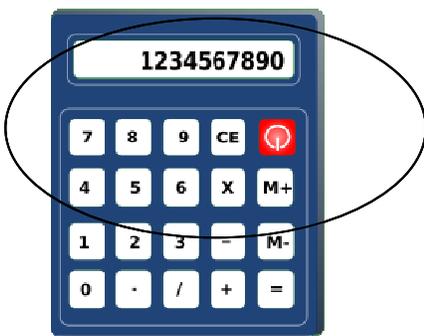
10a. Read the sentences below and underline all forms of the word **accurate**.

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4. I'm always on time because my watch always has the accurate time.
5. Make sure you have the correct punctuation and spelling in order to write an accurate sentence.

Step 4: Check for student understanding

To the Teacher: This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

10b. Which image shows something that can best be used to determine that calculations are accurate?



11. What could a student do to make sure that their work on a math test is accurate?

Suggested answer: To make sure their work on a math test is accurate, or correct, a student should check their work before handing the test in to their teacher.

Suggested Additional Vocabulary: legend, electrical, static