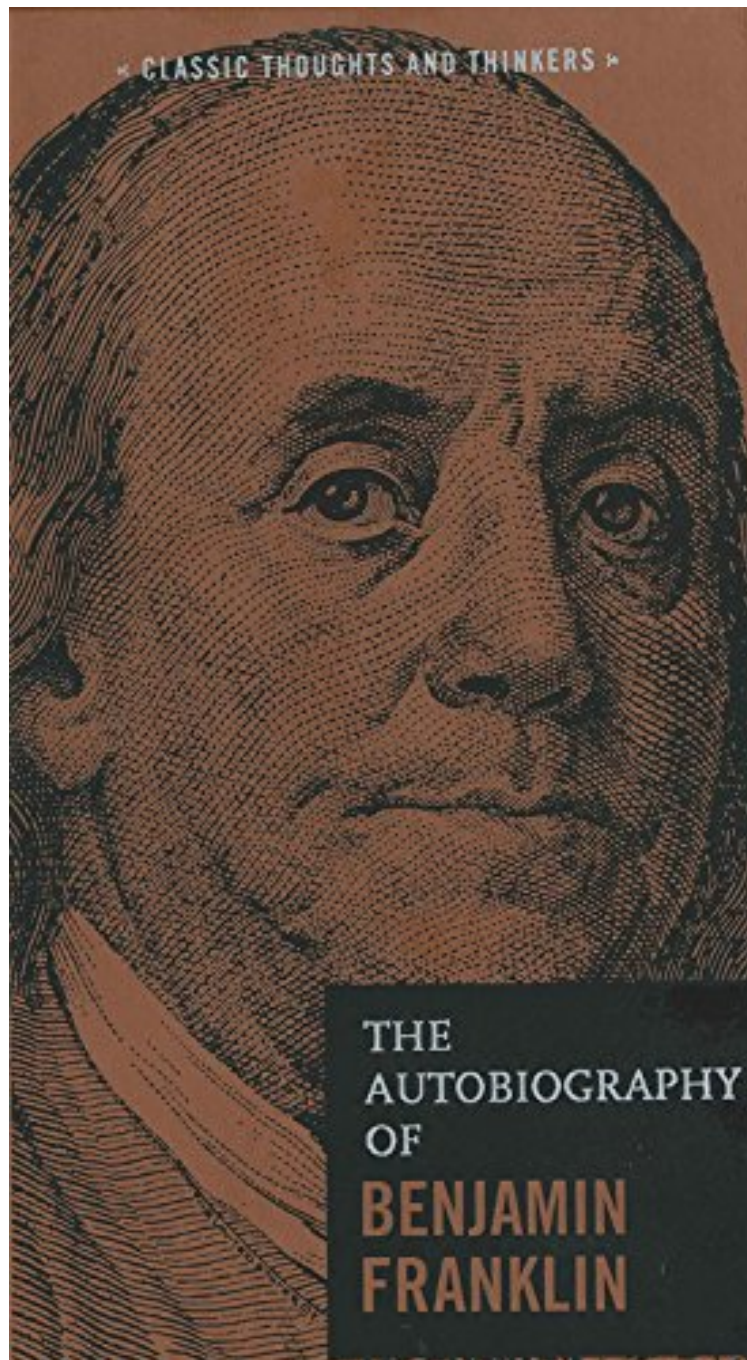


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The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin

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Benjamin Franklin : The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin before purchasing it in order to gage whether or

not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin:

693 of 705 people found the following review helpful. The Original American Dream By T. S. It's a little presumptuous to write a "review" of a book as historically important as this, so I'll just give a few reasons why you should read it. It's well-written and engaging, even 200+ (nearing 300+; Franklin was born in 1706) years later. It stops in 1760, well before his involvement with the Revolution, but it covers in detail his youth, apprenticeships, the formation of his philosophy and ideals, and his path from poor roots to business and social success -- the first telling of the American Dream, the idea that a poor young man could Find His Fortune in the New World through enterprise, wisdom, and work. There is a high degree of self-hagiography here, and it would be amusing to tally up (for example) how many times Franklin praises himself vs. how many times he advises on the virtue of humility. He smooths over controversial topics like his illegitimate son, he doesn't mention his membership in the Freemasons, etc. The construction is also a bit rambling ("Then I did this thing. Next, I did another thing. Then I did a third thing"), but Franklin simply did so many interesting things -- even in this short slice of his life -- that the book is interesting despite that. There's a great deal of discussion on his scientific and inventive accomplishments, and he talks at length about his development of his own personal moral code and how he achieved business success (along with Franklin's Personal Method You Can Use for Self-Improvement -- in some ways, this is the first self-help book!) All in all, this is very much worth reading, and gives a compelling picture of Franklin's life and times. I particularly liked the picture Franklin draws of contemporary American society -- free, open, and small, with most people in most towns all knowing each other, and business opportunities are wide open for anyone with industry and pluck. I'm not sure how similar modern-day America still is to Franklin's Philadelphia, but it's certain that Franklin -- and this book -- helped set the image that we still *want* to believe America conforms to. And for that alone, it's worth reading. If you like this book, you might also be interested in reading Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, for another view of colonial-era America, or any of Mark Twain's nonfiction (*Life on the Mississippi*, *Roughing It*, etc.), for similar accounts of America's growth and development a hundred-odd years further on. Any of those should be available as a free Kindle download.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. In many ways Franklin is the quintessential American. By Gene Rhea Tucker This version of Franklin's autobiography (*The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, Volume One: 1706-1757*, ISBN 9781596980303) is edited by Mark Skousen. His main work was to "complete" the autobiography, which Regnery publishing has made a volume two to this volume (*The Completed Autobiography by Benjamin Franklin, Volume Two: 1757-1790*) by piecing together Franklin's other pieces into a similar autobiographical form. Skousen doesn't do much annotating here. Just a few footnotes explaining old terms (what's an "eleve"?) and adding a few details to Franklin's text (like, editing a date or name here and there). There is a short and interesting introduction to the project, a "cast of characters," a chronology, and an index. Unlike the Skousen-edited *Completed Autobiography*, there are no images. Read in tandem, these two volumes provide the classic *Autobiography* and the "completion" in the same mode, even the same font and styling, which makes for a unified experience. It is well worth buying both if you can. As to the classic text of Franklin's *Autobiography*, what more can be said that already hasn't for a century. A story of pluck and determination. A story of hard work and humility. A story of virtue versus vice. A story of humor and wit. A story that encourages all the morals and values that made America great. You can see definitely why American children were made to read this all through the 1800s and early 1900s. It is a sort of shame that that is not the case now. Franklin's pragmatism, ecumenicism, public-mindedness, entrepreneurship, and *joie de vivre* is a story that should be told and emulated by all no matter their gender, age, creed, race, or color, i.e., by every American. In many ways Franklin is the quintessential American.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Arguably the best autobiography ever written. By JD Being a huge history buff and a lover of autobiographies, this is amongst my favorites. Franklin's writings are food for the soul. Such a man of integrity of humble beginnings, there seemed to be nothing this man couldn't accomplish. So many things attributed to him, everyone knows the kite and lightning experiments, but he also started the first fire Dept, was a postmaster general, a printer, writer, ambassador, the list goes on and on. If you read no other autobiography, read this one, you will be better for it. The writing of the time is sometimes hard to follow, but still worth reading one of the most intelligent statesman and forefather of our country. Poor Richards Almanac is another great read. Published under the pseudonym of Richard Saunders, these are great nuggets of truth, interspersed with some comedy. Well worth the time.

The *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* is the unfinished record of Benjamin Franklin's life written by Franklin himself and is one of the most influential examples of an autobiography ever written. Franklin's account of his life is divided into four parts, reflecting the different periods at which he wrote them. The first publication of *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, Part One*, was published in Paris, in French in 1791. It wasn't until 1818 that the full version of Franklin's autobiography was published by his grandson, William Temple Franklin, who did not include Part Four because he has previously traded away the original holograph of the *Autobiography* for a copy that contained only the first three parts. In addition, Franklin's grandson felt free to make stylistic revisions to his grandfather's autobiography. W.T. Franklin's text was the standard version of the *Autobiography* for half a century,

until John Bigelow purchased the original manuscript in France and in 1868 published the most reliable text that had yet appeared, including the first English publication of Part Four. This edition of *Autobiography of Ben Franklin* comes from the original manuscript of Ben Franklin's *Memoirs* and is presented in its entirety for enjoyment by all English speakers.

"The acting is superb." -- LA Times "This well-known work by one of our nation's founding fathers was certainly given to the right individual to narrate. Fredd Wayne, whose one-man show, "Benjamin Franklin, Citizen," has also been recorded by Audio Editions, seems to have captured Franklin's persona." -- Dick Richmond, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, October 19, 1997
From the Publisher Also available by Edmund S. Morgan: *Benjamin Franklin*
From the Inside Flap Famous as a scientist, statesman, philosopher, businessman, and civic leader, Benjamin Franklin was also one of the most powerful and controversial American writers of his time, and has been a subject of intense debate ever since: to Matthew Arnold, he exemplified "victorious good sense"; to D.H. Lawrence, he was "the first dummy American." Franklin's classic *Autobiography* is his last word on his greatest literary creation -- his own invented persona, the original incarnation of the American success story. For the first time, the authoritative editions of works by major American novelists, poets, scholars, and essayists collected in the hardcover volumes of *The Library of America* are being published singly in a series of handsome and durable paperback books. A distinguished author has contributed an introduction for each volume, which also includes a detailed chronology of the author's life and career, an essay on the choice of the text, and notes.