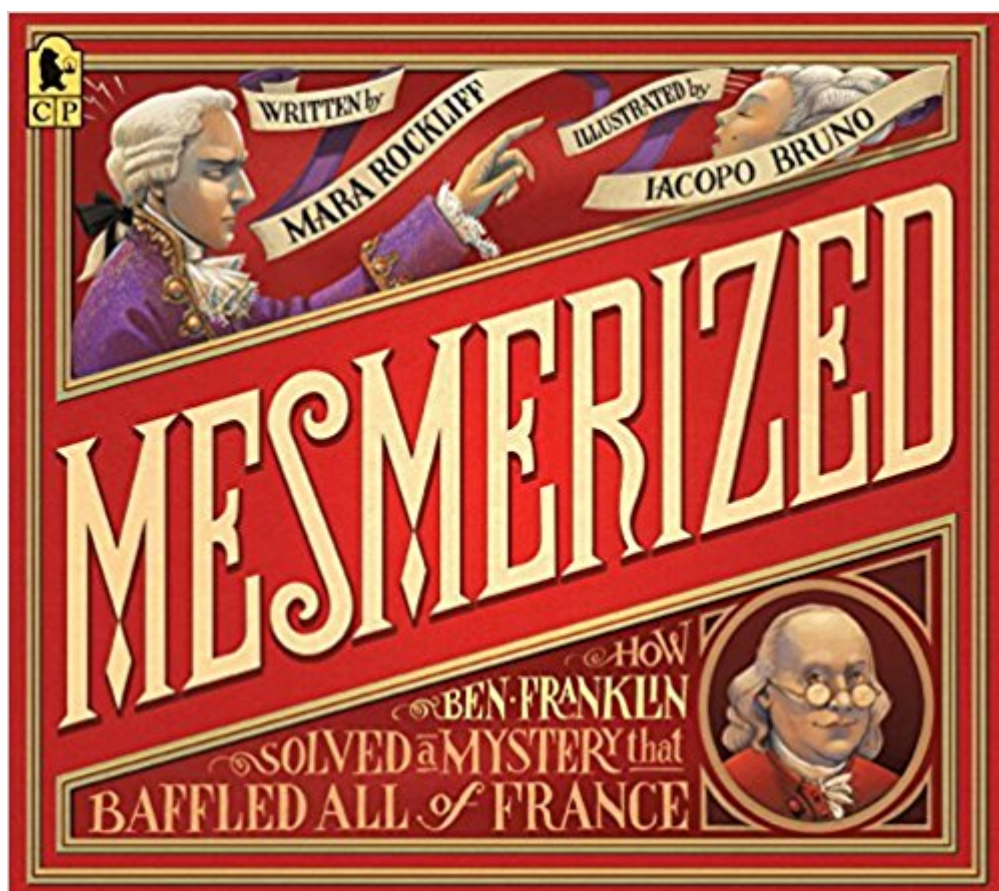


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# Mesmerized: How Ben Franklin Solved A Mystery That Baffled All Of France



## Synopsis

"Together, Rockliff and Bruno make the scientific method seem exciting, and kids interested in science and history will likely be, well, mesmerized." — Booklist (starred review) When American inventor Benjamin Franklin arrives in Paris, he is upstaged by a compelling and enigmatic figure: Dr. Mesmer. In elaborately staged shows, Mesmer has Parisians believing he can control a magic force that changes the taste of water, cures illness, and controls thoughts! Can Ben Franklin's approach of observing, hypothesizing, and testing get to the bottom of Mesmer's tricks? A rip-roaring, lavishly illustrated peek into a fascinating moment in history shows the development of the scientific method and reveals the amazing power of the human mind.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

## Customer Reviews

Gr 2-5 Benjamin Franklin could be described in so many different ways: inventor, printer, scientist, thinker, diplomat. From this book, the word skeptic should be added to this list. While in France raising funds for the American rebellion against the British, Franklin was enlisted by Louis XVI to investigate the claims made by a young Austrian doctor who had much of Europe enthralled with his ability to remedy a wide variety of illnesses simply by waving an iron wand around their person. Calling it "animal magnetism," Franz Mesmer was treating the European elite by bringing them into darkened rooms while spellbinding music played on a glass armonica, invented by none other than Franklin himself. Mesmer would charge a rather large sum of money and pronounce his

clients "cured." Doubtful of Mesmer's abilities, Franklin set about disproving the doctor's claims. Rockliff's lighthearted tone and lively writing style are enhanced by the use of different typefaces and print sizes, as well as a layout that will keep readers engaged throughout. Rockliff plays with words and rhythm, making this book an excellent choice for reading aloud. The artwork is infused with humor, and the individual's expressions throughout are a delight, from the look on the face of a swooning patient to Mesmer's own intense glare. There is much here to draw the eye and prod discussion. A lengthy author's note fills in the details of the story and provides information on the scientific method. Overall, a wonderful and fun-filled title that introduces yet another facet of a fascinating man.â "Jody Kopple, Shady Hill School, Cambridge, MA --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

A stylish and humorous exploration of the scientific method and the mysteries of the human mind.â "Publishers Weekly (starred review)On brilliantly illustrated pages full of rococo details and beautifully calligraphed text, Rockliff tells the story of how Benjamin Franklin debunked Dr. Mesmerâ 's magical cure-all. ... [Rockliff's] dramatic text is perfectly complemented by Brunoâ 's lush, full-color illustrations, stuffed with period detail and sweeping ribbons and curlicues. Each page is teeming with personality... Together, Rockliff and Bruno make the scientific method seem exciting, and kids interested in science and history will likely be, well, mesmerized.â "Booklist (starred review)Rockliffâ 's lighthearted tone and lively writing style are enhanced by the use of different typefaces and print sizes, as well as a layout that will keep readers engaged throughout. Rockliff plays with words and rhythm, making this book an excellent choice for reading aloud. The artwork is infused with humor, and the individualâ 's expressions throughout are a delight, from the look on the face of a swooning patient to Mesmerâ 's own intense glare. There is much here to draw the eye and prod discussion. ... Overall, a wonderful and fun-filled title that introduces yet another facet of a fascinating man.â "School Library Journal (starred review)Besides successfully explaining the scientific method, and what we've come to call the placebo effect, author and artist give children insight into human behavior--with a large dose of humor. For history buffs, science enthusiasts, and fans of a good story, this one hits all the marks.â "Shelf Awareness (starred review)This ingenious book celebrates â " and explains to children clearly â " the basic principles of the scientific method, while also doubling as a peek into the astounding life of Benjamin Franklin.â "The New York TimesRockliff's text is engaging and lively and pairs beautifully with Brunoâ 's dramatic and bold illustrations, which fully conduct the audienceâ 's attention. There is no way a reader will escape the truly mesmerizing and energetic design.â "The Horn BookBruno's

digitally colored pencil art lightly evokes period caricature and gently pokes fun at the ornate clothing and hair of French nobility. The tale is nicely pitched to emphasize the importance of a hypothesis, testing and verification, and several inset text boxes are used to explain these scientific tools. Rockliff points out that Franklin's blind-test technique is in use today for medical treatments, and both the placebo effect and hypnosis are studied today. Rockliff and Bruno's playful approach buoys solid science and history. "Kirkus" *Mesmerized* has so much page-turning suspense that it feels ripe for adaptation and box office success.... Although the book sounds heavy with facts and theories, the story zips along thanks to Mara Rockliff's lively, dramatic writing that holds even young readers in its thrall. Jacopo Bruno's illustrations are stylishly elaborate, shown from shifting perspectives. And the pages are cleverly laid out to accommodate short bursts of information. It's not typical picture book problem, but this story might be just too thrilling for bedtime. "The Boston Globe" Rockliff retells the episode with equal measures of gentle satire of aristocratic gullibility and tidy re- construction of the scientific method. "Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books" With several educational themes--electricity, hypnosis, the placebo effect, the scientific method, and a good dose of American and French history--this mesmerizing picture book will fascinate as it entertains. "Foreword Reviews" Rockliff writes with humor and flair. The illustrator captures well the time period, using playful fonts and elegant, detailed illustrations ... The spread introducing Dr. Mesmer is one of best you'll see this year "Kirkus Reviews

The kind of nonfiction being published for children these days seems to get better and better. This is a wonderfully fun book as well as being a perfect book for teaching the scientific method. History and science all in one book, *Mesmerized* presents the interesting story of Ben Franklin helping the king and queen of France to expose a fraud who was convincing many people to pay money to use 'a force' to 'help' people with illnesses or even just the curious experience this 'force'. Ben Franklin used the scientific method to show that there was no such force, just the power of people's mind and the power of expectation. Today we call this the placebo effect, something the author explains at the end of the book. I especially enjoyed the creative illustrations that beautifully complemented the text. It was fun to see some of the comparisons the author and illustrator made like Ben Franklin as an apple pie and Dr. Mesmer as a layered torte which the illustrator took from the text and illustrated. This book has a multitude of teaching possibilities, everything from history, science, and the power of words and pictures together. A definite winner of a book and I loved it.

If you've got elementary-aged children, I can't recommend this book enough. It's a history, critical

thinking, and science lesson all rolled into one. The illustrations are beautifully detailed and it gives details about the actual historical event. Most importantly, it teaches how powerful belief is (placebo effect) but that belief is not the same as fact. When I read this with my 8 year old son, he said "What a great book!" so it's informative AND enjoyable. Wish all kids could read this!

My almost 7 year old grandson was, in fact, mesmerized by this book. It prompted a host of thoughtful questions, leading to rich discussion after reading it through several times - in a row. He asked to take it home, and brought it into school to share with his class.

grandson happy

Wonderful book condition!

My elementary aged grandsons enjoyed reading this book. As a retired teacher, the play on words, the explanation of the scientific method, and the summary of Ben Franklin's life in France makes this a book for all ages. Even teaches French. Not just a picture book.

Fabulous. The author doesn't just talk about the specific incident of Mesmer in France, but uses it as a clever way to explain the placebo effect. I read this aloud to my daughter's third grade class. They were fascinated and asked great questions.

Got it. Thank you.

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