

Tick, Tock, the Banneker Clock: African American Inventors



Tick, Tock, the Banneker Clock: African American Inventors *Abigail Adams: Science, Medicine, Inventions and tech*



Skill: Middle School
Time Required: One or two class periods

Introduction:

Although Benjamin Franklin is widely noted for his Poor Richard's Almanac, African American scientist and inventor Benjamin Banneker also published a widely-read almanac from 1792 to 1806, during the time that John Adams was Vice President and then President. It is likely that Abigail read at least some of the almanacs. She also may very well have seen, or even owned, one of Banneker's wooden clocks.

Linkable Resources

[Timeline: Keyword--African American inventor](#)

Objectives:

After participating in this activity, students will know more about African American contributions to the world in the form of inventions and discoveries. They will also gain practice in biographical research and in writing compositions or letters.

Materials Required:

Access to the Internet. Books or other materials on African American inventors. List of African American inventors, with a bit about each (done ahead of time by the teacher, from the web sites listed below). Materials for making posters, if that option is taken.

Procedures:

1. From lists of African American inventors, each student should select one inventor for study. Research should include biographical information and information about the inventors inventions or discoveries.
2. Students can demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways:
 - by writing a biography of the inventor;
 - by writing a series of letters from the inventor to his or her family or to another famous person
 - by making a poster about the inventor

Extending the Lesson:

This lesson may be extended by having students make a timeline of African American inventors, or by setting up demonstration sites to display information about the inventors and their inventions in a Science Fair format.

Sources & Resources:

Websites:

- [Top Ten African American Inventors](#)

- [More African American Inventors](#)
- [African American Inventors](#)
- [Black Inventors A-Z](#)

Credits:

This lesson was developed by Averil McClelland, Kent State University.