

Ticktock Banneker's Clock

by Shana Keller and illustrated by David C. Gardner

This inspiring picture biography talks about the accomplishments of Benjamin Banneker (1731–1806), who was born a free man in Maryland during a time when many African Americans were enslaved. While he had the opportunity to attend school for a short time, Benjamin Banneker was mainly self-taught, and he was very curious about the world around him. After examining a pocket watch, Benjamin decides he wants to build his own striking clock.

BEFORE THE READ-ALoud

Have students consider the following question **as a class**:

If you wanted to reach a goal but did not have the resources you needed, would you give up that goal? Or would you think outside the box and determine another way to reach that goal?

Invite students to share their answers.

Then have students **turn and talk** with a partner:

Think of a time when you needed to use a skill you have to achieve a goal. What was that experience like? How did it make you feel?

Show the title and cover of the read-aloud book *Ticktock Banneker's Clock*.

In the biography we are about to read, the subject, Benjamin Banneker, sets a goal for himself to create his own clock. Benjamin motivates himself using his planning and organizational skills to achieve this goal.

Academic Vocabulary

familiar (p. 6) well-known

fascinated (p. 8) strongly interested

scale (p. 11) the size of a model or map compared to the size of the actual thing

carve (p. 18) cut a hard material to make into something new

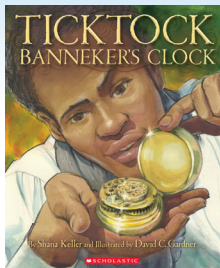
chimed (p. 31) made a ringing sound

DURING THE READ-ALoud

As you read aloud the whole book, you may wish to pause and discuss the following questions, either as a whole class or through turning and talking between partners. These questions will allow the class to explore the library's themes as well as comprehension strategies.

- pp. 4–9** Benjamin had taught himself to play several instruments and was curious about what the pocket watch looked like on the inside. What can we learn about Benjamin and his personality from these pages? **(Make Inferences)**
- pp. 10–13** Benjamin's project moves from the fall into the winter. What details in the text and illustrations help you visualize the seasons changing? What does this make you realize about Benjamin's process? **(Visualize)**
- pp. 14–19** Benjamin encounters a problem when he realizes that he cannot afford the supplies he needs. What is his solution to this problem? **(Problem and Solution)**
- pp. 20–27** Benjamin figures out a solution to his problem with the wood while doing his farm work. How does he come to a solution? As the season turns to winter, how does Benjamin's farm change? How does Benjamin's work in winter compare to his work in the fall? **(Problem and Solution, Compare and Contrast)**
- pp. 28–31** It took Benjamin nearly two years to complete his project, from the time he drew his diagrams to the time he set the striking clock on his mantle. The bell chimed on the hour for the next 40 years! Think of the amount of time and dedication that Benjamin Banneker put into his project. People were able to enjoy the clock for many years afterward. How can planning and being patient help you achieve a goal in the long run? **(Make Connections)**

Note: You may wish to read aloud the Author's Note on page 32 to provide more information on Benjamin Banneker's life and his accomplishments.



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AFTER THE READ-ALoud

After completing the read-aloud, allow time for class discussion. Sit in a circle or in another configuration that is comfortable and allows for class interaction.

Acting as a facilitator, invite children to have *accountable discussions*: remind them to use evidence from the text, their own inferences, personal connections, and other text connections in order to learn from one another.

- *The gentleman in Elkrige Landing who loaned his pocket watch to Benjamin Banneker believed in Benjamin's curiosity and knew he would enjoy studying the watch. What happens when we show others we believe in them and their goals? (Building Relationships)*
- *Benjamin taught himself how to play instruments as a form of entertainment. But on that summer day at the beginning of the book, Benjamin decides to study the pocket watch instead of playing his instrument. Why is it important to challenge yourself? (Making Decisions)*
- *Benjamin creates diagrams of the pocket-watch pieces to help him build his own striking clock. How can planning ahead help you reach a goal? (Managing Myself)*
- *Once Benjamin's striking clock was complete, neighbors from nearby and others from far away came to see his hard work. Why do you think people were interested in seeing Benjamin's clock? How does it feel to show your support to someone who has worked hard at something? (Respecting Others)*
- *As Benjamin first carves the pieces of wood, his "excitement turns to frustration." Benjamin stops carving until he figures out a solution to his problem. How can taking a step back when you're frustrated help you find a solution to a problem? (Understanding Myself)*

Activity Bank

Writing Activity

(with Graphic Organizer) Write a letter to Benjamin Banneker. Tell him what you found most interesting about his process and why. What have you learned from the story of Benjamin Banneker and his striking clock? **(Managing Myself)**

Draw a Diagram

(Technology) Have students work in pairs to design a diagram for a new clock, with a catch: They must build their clocks using materials they can find around the classroom. What special features would their clock have? What would it look like? Remind students that Benjamin Banneker created diagrams of the striking clock before he began to build it. Why is it responsible to have a plan in place before you begin building something new? Invite students to share their diagrams with the class and talk through the challenges they might face while building their clocks. **(Making Decisions)**

