

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Read the biography and answer the questions that follow.

Benjamin Banneker

by Johanna Johnston

1. Tick, tock. The clock worked. Ding! Ding! When the hands marked the hour it chimed. Benjamin Banneker had made the clock all by himself. "That is a wonderful clock," said a man who lived near the Banneker Farm. "I really think that it is the first chiming clock that anyone has ever made in America." How did you learn to make it?
2. What could young Benjamin Banneker say? He had not learned how to make it from anyone. He had figured it out for himself, looking at how clocks worked, thinking about what kinds of gears and wheels were needed. Then he had made the gears and wheels for himself. After that, he had fitted them together, first this way, then that way—over and over—until at last, they moved back and forth as they should. Tick, tock, tick, tock, DING!
3. "You are a remarkable young man," said the neighbor. "Have you gone to school at all?" Yes, Benjamin had been lucky . . . He had learned to read and write. But then he had read all the books in the school. He could not find any more books to read anywhere. He wanted to study. He wanted to learn more. But he couldn't. So he worked on his father's farm. But even though he had to work hard with his hands, he would not give up and stop using his mind. He figured out ways to improve the farm tools. He figured out ways to do many things better than they had been done before. Then he went to work on the clock and made it work! "A young man like you deserves help," said the neighbor. "What can I do to help you?"
4. "Could you lend me books to read?" asked Benjamin Banneker. The neighbor could lend him books and did. They were hard books about mathematics, surveying land and astronomy. Benjamin Banneker read them all and learned everything in them. He learned how to do the hardest problems. He learned about the stars and the heavens. He learned how to survey land. The neighbor was so impressed by what Benjamin Banneker learned that he talked to Thomas Jefferson, the man who had written the Declaration of Independence. The war was over by this time, Jefferson and George Washington along with many others were working to build a new nation, the United States. Thomas Jefferson thought of how the brilliant Benjamin Banneker could help. Then Jefferson asked Banneker to join the men who were surveying land for the new capital city of Washington, D.C. So, Benjamin Banneker traveled to Washington and helped to lay out and plan that city.
5. Today when we visit Washington, D.C., we can remember a boy who would not give up, who made a clock when he had no books to read, Benjamin Banneker.

1. When a neighbor saw the clock that Benjamin built, he called Benjamin "A remarkable young man." What does the word remarkable mean?
- A. amazing
 - B. helpful
 - C. talkative
 - D. thoughtful

2. After reading the passage, a student asks this question:

Who taught Benjamin how to build the clock?

Which paragraph answers this question?

- A. 1
 - B. 2
 - C. 3
 - D. 4
3. What is another good title for the passage?
- A. Learning About Clocks
 - B. What Makes a Good Neighbor
 - C. How the Nation's Capital was Built
 - D. The Man Who Helped Plan the Nation's Capital
4. Read this sentence from Paragraph 4.

Thomas Jefferson thought of how the brilliant Benjamin Banneker could help.

What does brilliant mean in this sentence?

- A. important
 - B. young
 - C. friendly
 - D. gifted
5. A good heading for paragraph 4 would be:
- A. Inventing a Clock
 - B. Making a Difference for our Country
 - C. Learning About Stars
 - D. Thomas Jefferson and George Washington

6. Which question can be answered by reading paragraph 4?
- A. Why did Benjamin need to work on his father's farm?
 - B. Where did Benjamin invent the clock?
 - C. How did Thomas Jefferson know that Benjamin could help him?
 - D. Did Benjamin enjoy working on the farm?

7. A student took these notes while reading article:

Benjamin Banneker's Successes
• Went to school and learned to read and write • Created a clock that chimes

Which detail should be added to the notes?

- A. When the hands marked the hour, the clock chimed.
 - B. Benjamin helped plan the layout of Washington, D.C.
 - C. He had figured out how to make the clock by himself.
 - D. Benjamin wanted more books to read.
8. Which of the following words is an antonym for the word *lucky* as it is used in paragraph 3?
- A. unfortunate
 - B. happy
 - C. rich
 - D. blessed