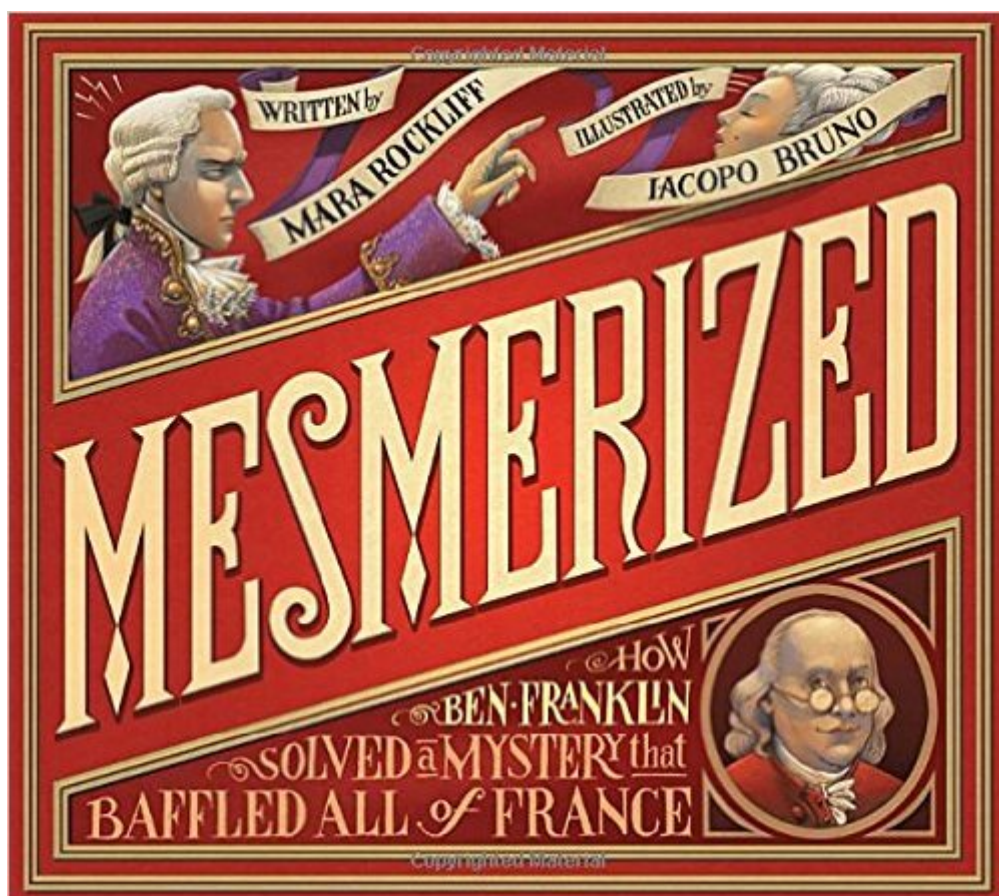


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# Mesmerized: How Ben Franklin Solved A Mystery That Baffled All Of France



## Synopsis

Discover how Benjamin Franklin's scientific method challenged a certain Dr. Mesmer's mysterious powers in a whimsical look at a true moment in history. The day Ben Franklin first set foot in Paris, France, he found the city all abuzz. Everyone was talking about something new—remarkable, thrilling, and strange. Something called . . . Science! But soon the straightforward American inventor Benjamin Franklin is upstaged by a compelling and enigmatic figure: Dr. Mesmer. In elaborately staged shows, Mesmer, wearing a fancy coat of purple silk and carrying an iron wand, convinces the people of Paris that he controls a magic force that can make water taste like a hundred different things, cure illness, and control thoughts! But Ben Franklin is not convinced. Will his practical approach of observing, hypothesizing, and testing get to the bottom of the mysterious Mesmer's tricks? A rip-roaring, lavishly illustrated peek into a fascinating moment in history shows the development and practice of the scientific method—and reveals the amazing power of the human mind.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (17 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #22,078 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #13 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Europe](#) #19 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > Colonial & Revolutionary](#) #28 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > Colonial](#)

Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

## Customer 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.

At first I didn't want to read this book. It was confusing because there are French words, and cursive writing, and the way the words are laid out on the pages was frustrating me. I'm glad I did read it, though, because I really liked it. I love science and this book is all about science. It is about a new invention or discovery of Dr. Mesmer, and how Ben Franklin discovered what the new invention really was. I didn't like the way Dr. Mesmer bragged about his invention. My favorite part of the book is when Ben Franklin makes his discovery. It is written very romantically, and the author had a lot of emotion and feeling when writing this book. I thought it was very interesting that people's minds can cure them. The drawings go really well with this story. I think this book would be great for anyone ages six and older who likes science and new inventions. This book is historical fiction. Review by Aubrey L. Age 7, Mensa Greater New York

*MESMERIZED* is a nonfiction children's book that tells the story of how Ben Franklin used the scientific method to help the King and Queen of France and prove the inaccuracies of a new "medicine." While in France seeking the aid of the French government in America's fight for independence against the British, the king and queen ask Franklin to investigate the medical treatments of Franz Mesmer. People with all kinds of ailments were coming to Mesmer for treatment and after a session with him, they were leaving feeling much better. Mesmer claimed to have discovered a new scientific force, but the medical doctors in the country think something else is at work. At the end of the book is a short synopsis of the actual historical record, including details that were left out of the children's story. There's a lot I really enjoyed about *MESMERIZED*. First of all is the story itself. The story of Franklin and Mesmer is an interesting bit of history that not many people are familiar. Secondly, the book does an excellent job of explaining and illustrating the scientific

method for children. Lastly, I also really enjoyed the illustrations. They illustrations are so detailed, bright, cheerful, and playful. They add a whole other level to the story. Overall, MESMERIZED is a great non-fiction children's book that teaches both history and science.

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.

As an introduction to non-fiction, this picture book captures the essence of many things. The illustrations are humorously droll. The artist uses reds, browns, and burnt sienna to give richness to the compartmentalized illustrations. The typesetting lends emphasis and French eloquence, *Merci beaucoup*. Young readers will learn.... That Ben Franklin was an American Statesman, an inventor, and a scientist. That a method of healing in France was debunked by Ben Franklin using the scientific method. The origin of the word MESMERIZED. Young readers will enjoy this delightfully informative and educational story as Ben Franklin goes about the eloquently fashionable French Court debunking with the scientific method. This foray into the realm of non-fiction will leave young readers asking for more. Desiring to learn more. Looking to their librarians, teachers, and parents for more opportunities to learn about words, history, science. **DISCLOSURE:** I was provided a complimentary copy by the publisher, Candlewick Press, to facilitate this review. Opinions are just mine. I was not compensated for this review.

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.

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