

# Benjamin Banneker

## Activities & Assignments

### Surveying:

Surveying, or land surveying, is the technique, profession, art, and science of determining the positions of points and the distances and angles between them. A land surveying professional is called a land surveyor. Land surveyors are often asked to mark the boundaries of a plot of land.

Benjamin Banneker was an accomplished surveyor in a time before GPS and other technological innovations made the task much easier and more precise. Not only this, but he was almost entirely self-taught.

Imagine you are a surveyor. Your task: “Survey” the area of a room (your classroom, your bedroom or your kitchen for example) and map it. Your tools: A two-foot long piece of string, masking tape, graph paper, and pencil.

Your map should include the following information:

1. The perimeter of the room in feet.
2. The area of the room in square feet.
3. A map key (or legend) that provides a scale and explains any symbols used.
4. Visual representations of furniture and other objects.

How well could you do with primitive surveying technology?

What sort of equipment would a professional surveyor use today?

### Night Sky Study:

Conduct a study of the night sky where you live. What phase is the moon currently in? Is it waxing or waning, full, or new? How can you find out this information, if you aren’t sure? Can you identify any objects in the night sky, such as constellations, or even planets? Have you ever seen a shooting star? Draw a picture of the night sky that you observed, marking any objects that you were able to identify. What tools or apps could you use to be able to learn more about astronomy and celestial objects?

### Activism:

Benjamin Banneker wrote a letter to Thomas Jefferson about the issue of slavery. Is there an issue in your community or school that you think could be improved? Who would you write to? Write a letter about an issue that is important to you. Think about what would make the person in charge more likely to listen to you (be polite, make logical arguments, offer solutions to the problem).