

DISCOVER AMERICA

Course 24 - Teacher Guide



Franklin's Footsteps:
Exploring the Legacy of Ben
Franklin

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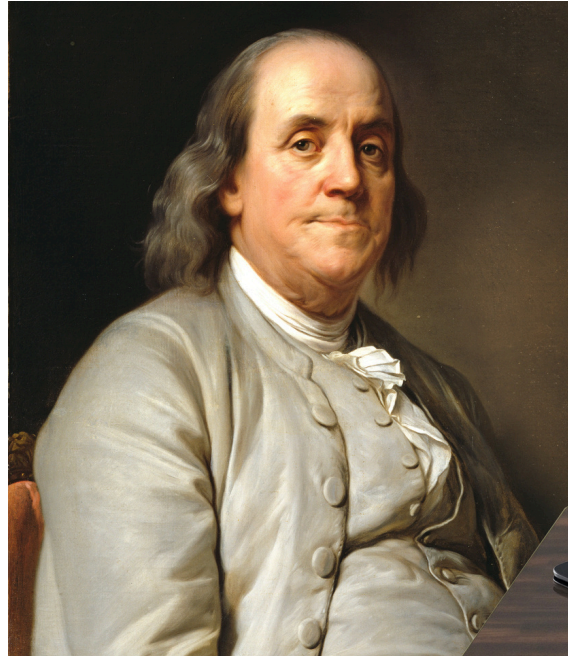
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Fourth Grade
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Key Themes

- Lifelong Learning
- Innovation and Experimentation
- Civic Responsibility
- Practical Wisdom
- Diplomacy and Negotiation

Core Values

- Community
- Liberty

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Identify Benjamin Franklin as a Founding Father and describe his inventions, scientific discoveries, and roles as a diplomat and writer.
- Discuss Benjamin Franklin's involvement in important historical events and documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.
- Discuss how Franklin's curiosity, intelligence, and public-mindedness influenced his life and work. Students will be encouraged to think about how these qualities can be applied in their own lives to solve problems and contribute to their communities.
- Explain the importance of civic responsibility and community service, encouraging them to consider ways they can actively participate in and contribute to their own communities.
- Analyze how Benjamin Franklin's contributions continue to influence our lives today.
- Recognize how historical figures can continue to influence and enrich our lives today.
- Explore and understand the meanings behind the sayings in "Poor Richard's Almanack" and how they apply to everyday life.



Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade

Key Terms

- 01 **bifocals:** definition eyeglasses made by joining two different lenses within one frame.
- 02 **chandler:** someone who makes (and sells) candles, soap, oils, and paints.
- 03 **Committee of Five:** a group of five men appointed by the Second Continental Congress to draft the Declaration of Independence.
- 04 **diplomat:** a person whose job is to handle relations with the governments of other countries.
- 05 **Founding Fathers:** the special people who helped America become a country and made important decisions during the American Revolution.
- 06 **lightning rod:** a metal rod set up on a building or a ship and connected with the Earth or water below to decrease the chances of damage from lightning.

Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade

Introduction

TELL Students

I am going to give you a riddle to solve. This riddle will introduce today's learning topic. Are you ready?

*In fields of fury, with kite in hand,
I tamed the lightning, made it land.
With quill and voice, I shaped the fate
Of a fledgling state, growing great.
My lenses twinned the views of age,
In almanacs, my words still sage.
Not monarch, but in halls I reigned,
On documents that freedom gained.*



ASK Students

Who am I?

TELL Students

That is right! Today, we are going to learn about Benjamin Franklin. We are going to journey back to Philadelphia in the 1700s to learn about the life and legacy of Benjamin Franklin.



ASK Students

Who was Benjamin Franklin? What do you know about him?

Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade

Introduction

TELL Students

That is right, Benjamin Franklin was not just any ordinary person. He was a man of many talents and accomplishments. He discovered electricity and invented the lightning rod and bifocals. A **lightning rod** is a metal rod set up on a building or a ship and connected with the Earth or water below to decrease the chances of damage from lightning.

Bifocals are eyeglasses made by joining two different lenses within one frame. One lens corrects distance vision, or nearsightedness, and the other corrects near vision, or farsightedness.



ASK Students

What did Benjamin Franklin invent?

TELL Students

Benjamin Franklin was also a skilled diplomat and a Founding Father of our country. A **diplomat** is a person whose job is to handle relations with the governments of other countries.



Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade

Introduction

ASK Students

What have you learned about our Founding Fathers?

TELL Students

The special people who helped America become a country and made important decisions during the American Revolution are called the **Founding Fathers**. Benjamin Franklin is important because he served our country in many ways. Please turn to your neighbor and discuss what you know about the Founding Fathers. [Give students three to five minutes to discuss.]

ASK Students

Who are the Founding Fathers that you have learned about?

TELL Students

Yes, that is correct! We have learned about George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Alexander Hamilton. Let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more about Benjamin Franklin.

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon [Ep. 24: Benjamin Franklin](#)



Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade Lesson

TELL Students

Benjamin Franklin was a smart and curious man who helped America become a country. He was born on January 17, 1706 in Boston, Massachusetts. His father, Josiah, had moved from England and worked as a chandler, making candles and soap. A **chandler** is someone who makes (and sells) candles, soap, oils, and paints. His mother, Abiah took care of their home and raised the children. Ben was one of seventeen children!



ASK Students

What do you think life was like for Benjamin Franklin growing up with 16 brothers and sisters?

TELL Students

Ben's family did not have a lot of money, especially with so many kids at home. Josiah decided that he could only afford to send Ben to school for two years. So, Ben went to school until he was 10 years old, and that was all the formal education he got in his life. But Ben was very curious and loved to learn, so he began reading everything he could find to teach himself more about the world. At age 12, he started working for his brother James, who ran a newspaper. Ben wanted to write for the newspaper but his brother thought he was too young. So Ben began sending in articles under the name "Mrs. Silence Dogood." James and the rest of the newspaper staff believed the articles from "Mrs. Silence Dogood" were very good. They published the articles in the newspaper.

Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade Lesson

ASK Students

Is Mrs. Silence Dogood a real person?



TELL Students

Ben's editorials as Mrs. Dogood commented on life in the colonies and were popular with readers. When Ben revealed to his brother that he was "Mrs. Silence Dogood," James grew upset at having been tricked. Ben's position at the newspaper quickly ended and he went to Philadelphia. His stay in Philadelphia did not last long, but it had a lasting impact on his life. After multiple unsuccessful attempts at finding work in Philadelphia as a printer, Ben decided to set out for London.

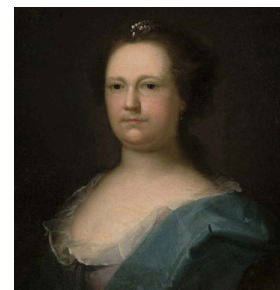
ASK Students

What are some obstacles that Ben had to overcome?

TELL Students

Please read the following passage to discover more about Benjamin Franklin. (Student Text print-out included at end of lesson guide).

Before Benjamin Franklin left for England, he aimed to gather tools and experience for a new print shop in Philadelphia. During this time, he met Deborah Read, a young woman from Philadelphia. They quickly fell for each other and Ben proposed marriage. However, Deborah's mother rejected his proposal because Ben was about to leave for England and he didn't have much money, which made his future uncertain. Despite this, Ben and Deborah secretly planned to marry later, once Ben was financially stable. After arriving in London, Ben's situation changed, and he wrote to Deborah to end their relationship, explaining that he no longer planned to return.



Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade Lesson

Reading passage continued below.

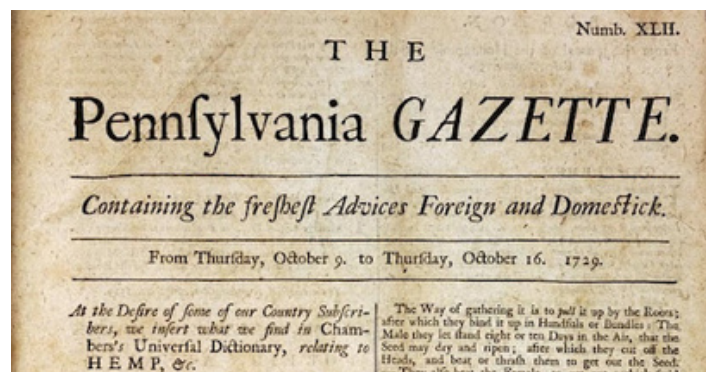
This decision came after the wealthy supporter who financed his trip stopped providing funds unexpectedly. By the age of 20, Ben had gathered enough resources to leave London and make his way back to Philadelphia.

ASK Students

Why did Deborah Read's mother reject Benjamin Franklin?

TELL Students

By age 20, Ben decided to leave London and returned to Philadelphia. He purchased *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, an unsuccessful Philadelphia newspaper. The *Gazette* quickly turned into one of the most popular publications in the colonies with Ben's hard work and leadership. Working as the successful *Gazette's* printer, Ben gained an understanding of the issues on the minds of colonists.



ASK Students

How did Ben learn about the issues that were important to the colonists?

Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade Lesson

TELL Students

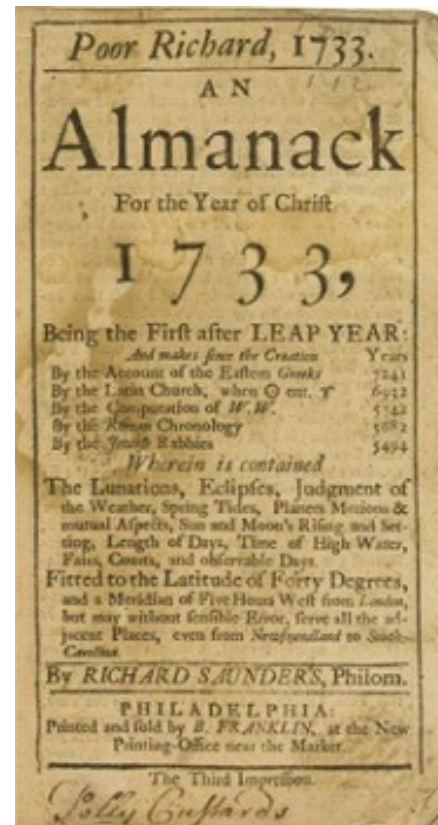
Please read the passage below to learn more about Benjamin Franklin, his family, and his impact. (A Student Text print-out is included at the end of the lesson guide).

While Benjamin Franklin was overseas, Deborah followed her mother's advice and married a tradesman named John Rogers. However, she soon discovered that John had another wife in England, a fact he had hidden from her. After learning this, Deborah left John. When Benjamin returned to Philadelphia, he and Deborah reunited. They later had two children: a boy named Francis and a girl named Sarah. Tragically, Francis passed away from smallpox, leaving his parents heartbroken. Sarah was born into a family still mourning the loss of her brother.

In the 1730s, Benjamin Franklin became well-known. In 1732, he created the first Poor Richard's Almanack. This book came out every year and had information about the weather, stars, and math. It also had many clever sayings, like "He that lies down with dogs, shall rise up with fleas." Benjamin wrote it using the name "Richard Saunders," and many people enjoyed reading it. Benjamin also helped start the Union Fire Company in 1736 because people in Philadelphia were worried about how to deal with fires. This group was one of the first teams of volunteer firefighters. The next year, Benjamin got the job of postmaster of Philadelphia, helping to take care of the mail.

ASK Students

Why do you think Benjamin Franklin wrote under other people's names?



Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade Lesson

TELL Students

Benjamin Franklin became very successful and began spending a lot of time in England. While he was there, the English government passed the Stamp Act, which placed a new tax on the colonies. This tax made people pay extra for things like newspapers and legal documents. Benjamin, like many colonists, was strongly against this tax. Even though he was far away in England, Benjamin wrote articles against the Stamp Act that were published back in the colonies in a newspaper called *The Pennsylvania Chronicle*. These articles were very popular with the people back home. Benjamin also stood up for the colonists by speaking to the English government. He explained why the Stamp Act was unfair and should be removed. His efforts paid off, and the government eventually canceled the tax.



ASK Students

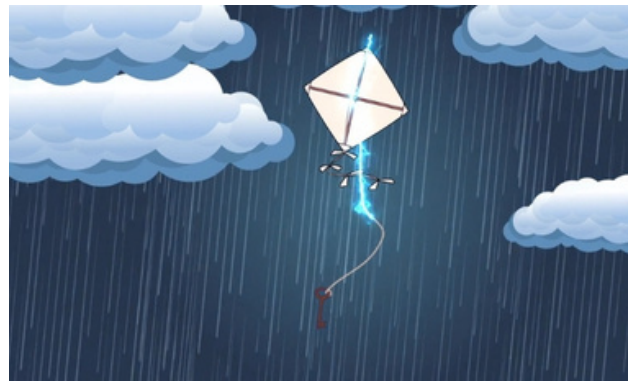
What did Benjamin Franklin do in England to help the colonies?

Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade Lesson

TELL Students

Please read the following passage to learn more about Benjamin Franklin's experiments. (A Student Text print-out is included at the end of the lesson guide).

Benjamin continued to work hard in England to support the interests of the colonies. His dedication made him a hero to many colonists, who admired him for standing up for their rights. He also continued to work on his inventions to find ways to solve problems for himself and others. In 1752, Ben conducted a test for which he is still remembered today: the kite experiment. Ben wanted to show that electricity and lightning were the same thing, so he flew a kite during a thunderstorm to test his idea.



The kite caught electrical energy from the storm, which helped prove Ben's idea. He also invented important things like lightning rods to keep buildings safe during storms and glasses with two different focuses to help people see better.

ASK Students

What are bifocals and who invented them? Who do they help?

Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade Lesson

TELL Students

Benjamin loved teaching and learning. In 1749, he helped start the Academy and College of Philadelphia. This school, which opened in 1751, later turned into the University of Pennsylvania. Benjamin also stopped working at *The Gazette* newspaper after he made a lot of money from it and from his famous *Poor Richard's Almanack*.

ASK Students

What do you think Benjamin Franklin liked to do when he was not working?

TELL Students

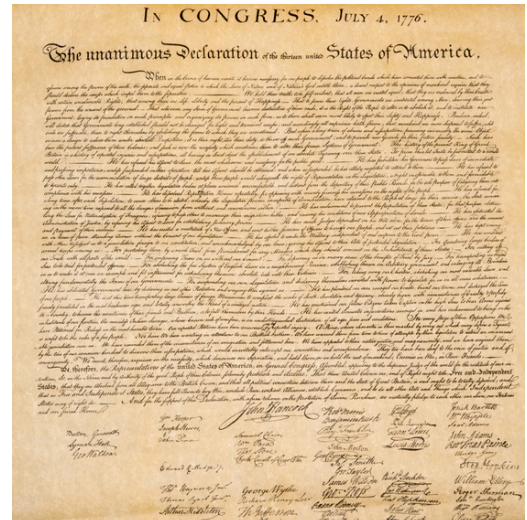
In 1775, with the colonies and England at war, Ben was chosen to represent his state in the Second Continental Congress. Ben was so respected that he was one of five men selected to author the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The **Committee of Five** was a group of five men appointed by the Second Continental Congress to draft the Declaration of Independence. Soon, the Continental Congress appointed Ben to be the first U.S. Minister to France. While still serving as Minister to France, he received the additional post of U.S. Minister to Sweden in 1782.



Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade Lesson

ASK Students

What is the Declaration of Independence? Why is it important?



TELL Students

At the end of the Revolutionary War, Benjamin Franklin signed the Treaty of Paris, which marked the end of the war. He returned to Pennsylvania in 1785 and was elected as the president of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, similar to a state governor. In this role, he played an important part in the Constitutional Convention of 1787, where the United States Constitution was formed.

ASK Students

What is the Constitution? Why is it important?



TELL Students

Ben is the only individual to sign the Declaration of Independence, the Treaty of Alliance with France in 1778, the Treaty of Paris, and the United States Constitution. So, what does all of this tell us about Benjamin Franklin? It tells us that he was very important in making our country what it is today. He helped America become independent, he made friends with other countries, and he helped create the rules that we still follow today. Benjamin Franklin was definitely a hero in American history!

ASK Students

What impact did Benjamin Franklin have on the freedoms we have today?

Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade Lesson

TELL Students

Benjamin Franklin contributed to the freedom we enjoy today in many ways. As a Founding Father, he played a key role in drafting the Declaration of Independence, which declared America's independence. He also served as a diplomat, helping to get important partnerships with countries like France during the American Revolutionary War. His scientific discoveries and inventions, such as the lightning rod and bifocals, also helped many people in the United States.

ASK Students

How did Benjamin Franklin help others? How does he inspire you?

TELL Students

In 1790, Benjamin Franklin passed away at the age of 84 in Philadelphia. Today, he is honored on the \$100 bill, and many towns and institutions are named after him. He is also featured on postage stamps.



Remembered for his humor and significant contributions to his country in various areas, Benjamin Franklin is often called "the only President of the United States who was never President of the United States." Without Ben Franklin, America would not be the nation that it is today. What are the contributions you hope to make to your community, to your school, or to our country?

Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade

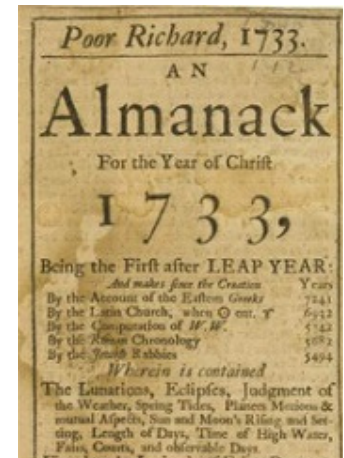
The Wisdom of Poor Richard

Objective

To explore and understand the meanings behind the sayings in *Poor Richard's Almanack* and how they apply to everyday life.

Materials Needed

- Copies of selected sayings from *Poor Richard's Almanack*
- Large poster board or construction paper
- Markers, colored pencils, and other art supplies
- Index cards
- A hat or bowl for drawing cards



Introduction

1. Brief Explanation: Review Benjamin Franklin and *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Explain that Franklin wrote this almanac under the pseudonym Richard Saunders and included many sayings that offered advice on money, health, and happiness.
2. Examples: Share a couple of sayings with the class, like "A penny saved is a penny earned" and "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

Group Activity

1. Divide into Groups: Split the students into small groups of 3-4.
2. Distribute Sayings: Give each group a different saying from the almanac written on an index card.
3. Research and Discuss: Allow students time to discuss what they think their saying means and how it could be applied today. Encourage them to think about situations at home, in school, or in their community where the advice might be relevant.

Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade

The Wisdom of Poor Richard

(Continued)

Artistic Expression

Create a Poster: Each group creates a poster illustrating their saying. They should include:

- The Saying: Written clearly at the top.
- Visual Representation: Drawings or symbols that represent the meaning of the saying.
- Modern Translation: A section where students rewrite the saying in their own words or as a modern piece of advice.

Presentation

- Share with Class: Each group presents their poster to the class. They should explain the original saying, their interpretation, and how it might apply to life today.
- Class Discussion: After each presentation, open the floor for a brief discussion or questions from the class.

Reflection

Reflective Writing: Have students write a short paragraph on which saying they found most useful or interesting and why. Encourage them to think about how they might use this advice in their own lives.

Wrap-Up

Recap: Summarize what the class has learned about the wisdom in Poor Richard's Almanack and how these sayings, though old, still hold value today.

Extension Activity

Daily Sayings Journal: Encourage students to keep a journal for one week where they write down any sayings they hear at home or school and discuss what they think these sayings mean.

Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade

A Founding Father's Journey

Name: _____ Date: _____

Objective

To learn about Benjamin Franklin's early life, his challenges, and his numerous contributions to science, politics, and society.

Part 1: Early Life

Read: Benjamin Franklin was born on January 17, 1706, in Boston, Massachusetts. His father, Josiah Franklin, was a chandler, which means he made candles and soap. His mother, Abiah Franklin, took care of their home and raised Benjamin and his 16 siblings.

Question 1: What do you think life was like for Benjamin Franklin growing up with 16 brothers and sisters?

Part 2: Education and Early Challenges

Read: Benjamin only attended school until he was 10 years old because his family couldn't afford more education. He was very curious and loved to learn, so he read every book he could find. At age 12, he started working at his brother James' newspaper but had to use the pseudonym "Mrs. Silence Dogood" to get his articles published.

Question 2: Is Mrs. Silence Dogood a real person? Why did Benjamin use this name?

Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade

A Founding Father's Journey

Question 3: What are some obstacles that Benjamin had to overcome in his youth?

Part 3: Journey to Independence

Read: After facing many challenges in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin moved to London to gain the tools and experience needed to open a new print shop back in Philadelphia. He also met Deborah Read during this time, who would later become his wife.

Question 4: Why did Deborah Read's mother reject Benjamin Franklin's marriage proposal initially?

Question 5: How did Benjamin Franklin's career in the newspaper business help him understand the issues that were important to the colonists?

Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade

A Founding Father's Journey

Part 4: Contributions to America

Read: Benjamin Franklin became well-known for his work as a printer, the creation of *Poor Richard's Almanack*, and his role as postmaster. He also played a significant role in the American Revolution and was a key figure in drafting important documents like the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

Question 6: What did Benjamin Franklin do in England to help the colonies?

Question 7: What are bifocals, and who do they help?

Part 5: Legacy

Read: Benjamin Franklin passed away in 1790 but left a lasting impact through his inventions, political contributions, and writings. He is remembered as a major figure in American history.

Question 8: What do you think Benjamin Franklin liked to do when he was not working?

Benjamin Franklin - Fifth Grade

A Founding Father's Journey

Question 9: What impact did Benjamin Franklin have on the freedoms we enjoy today?

Question 10: How did Benjamin Franklin help others? How does he inspire you?

Extension Activity

Draw a picture of one of Benjamin Franklin's inventions or write a short essay on how one of his contributions to America affects our lives today.

Benjamin Franklin- Fifth Grade

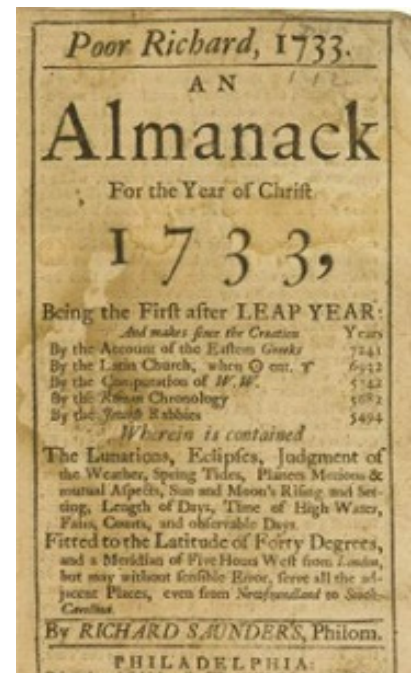
Student Text

Read the following passage to learn more about Benjamin Franklin.

Passage 1

While Benjamin Franklin was overseas, Deborah followed her mother's advice and married a tradesman named John Rogers. However, she soon discovered that John had another wife in England, a fact he had hidden from her. After learning this, Deborah left John. When Benjamin returned to Philadelphia, he and Deborah reunited. They later had two children: a boy named Francis and a girl named Sarah. Tragically, Francis passed away from smallpox, leaving his parents heartbroken. Sarah was born into a family still mourning the loss of her brother.

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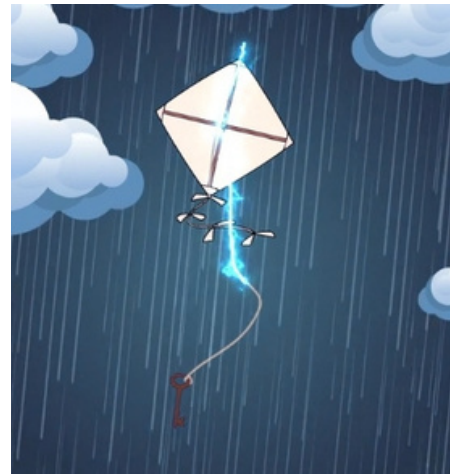
Benjamin Franklin- Fifth Grade

Student Text

Read the following passage to learn more about Benjamin Franklin.

Passage 2

Benjamin continued to work hard in England to support the interests of the colonies. His dedication made him a hero to many colonists, who admired him for standing up for their rights. He also continued to work on his inventions to find ways to solve problems for himself and others. In 1752, Ben conducted a test for which he is still remembered today: the kite experiment. Ben wanted to show that electricity and lightning were the same thing, so he flew a kite during a thunderstorm to test his idea.



The kite caught electrical energy from the storm, which helped prove Ben's idea. He also invented important things like lightning rods to keep buildings safe during storms and glasses with two different focuses to help people see better.

Benjamin Franklin - Fourth Grade

Resources

1. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography-benjamin-franklin/>
2. <https://books.google.com/books?id=qW4VAAAAYAAJ&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>
3. https://hsp.org/sites/default/files/legacy_files/migrated/bfandapprenticeship.pdf
4. https://www.masshist.org/online/silence_dogood/essay.php?entry_id=203
5. <https://archives.upenn.edu/exhibits/penn-people/biography/benjamin-franklin/>
6. <https://www.pbs.org/kenburns/benjamin-franklin/benjamin-franklin-and-family>
7. <https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/becomingamer/ideas/text4/juntolibrary.pdf>
8. <https://www.fi.edu/en/benjamin-franklin/famous-quotes>
9. <https://www.ushistory.org/franklin/philadelphia/fire.htm>
10. <https://www.fi.edu/en/benjamin-franklin/kite-key-experiment>
11. <https://web.archive.org/web/20120205112444/>
12. <http://www.archives.upenn.edu/primdocs/upl/upl125.pdf>
13. <https://www.nypl.org/events/exhibitions/galleries/beginnings/item/3562>
14. <https://www.fi.edu/en/benjamin-franklin-faq> <https://legacyclub.boston/benjamin-franklin>

