

DISCOVER AMERICA

Course 24 - Teacher Guide



Franklin's Footsteps:
Exploring the Legacy of Ben
Franklin

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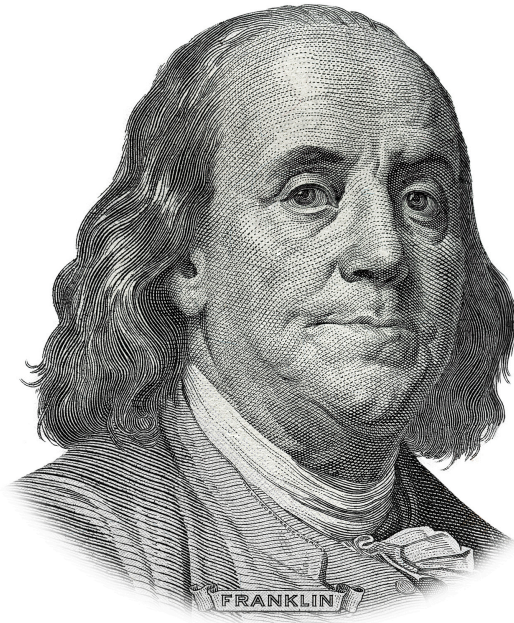
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Key Themes

- 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.
- Explain how Benjamin 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.



Benjamin Franklin - First Grade

Key Terms

- 01 **bifocals:** definition eyeglasses made by joining two different lenses within one frame.
- 02 **Committee of Five:** a group of five men appointed by the Second Continental Congress to draft the Declaration of Independence.
- 03 **diplomat:** a person whose job is to handle relations with the governments of other countries.
- 04 **Founding Fathers:** the special people who helped America become a country and made important decisions during the American Revolution.
- 05 **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 - First Grade

Introduction

TELL Students

Alright, class, buckle up because we are about to go on an extraordinary adventure on Benjamin Franklin's Time Machine! We are going to transform our classroom into a magical time-traveling contraption using some everyday items. *[Provide students with cardboard boxes, tubes, construction paper and other craft materials. Guide the class to use the materials to create a time machine by stapling the cardboard together to create a large box that everyone can enter. Decorate the time machine as a class.]* As we step inside our time machine, we are going to journey back to Philadelphia in the 1700s.

ASK Students

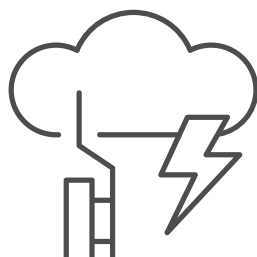
Who was Benjamin Franklin? What do you know about him?

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.



Benjamin Franklin - First Grade

Introduction

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.

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.]



Benjamin Franklin - First Grade

Introduction

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 - First Grade Lesson



TELL Students

Benjamin Franklin was a smart and curious man who helped America become a country. He was born in Boston in 1706 to Josiah and Abiah Franklin. Even though his family did not have much money for schooling, Ben loved to learn and read books on his own. 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.

ASK Students

Is Mrs. Silence Dogood a real person?

Benjamin Franklin - First Grade Lesson

TELL Students

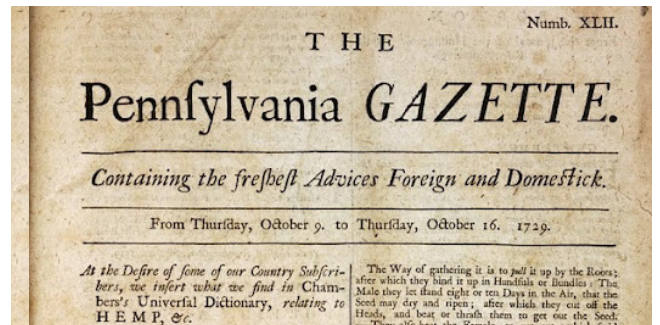
Ben's articles as Mrs. Dogood commented on life in the colonies and were popular with readers. When Ben revealed to his brother that he was "Mrs. Silence Dogood," James grew upset at having been tricked. Ben's position at the newspaper quickly ended and he went to Philadelphia. His stay in Philadelphia 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

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 American 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 - First Grade Lesson

TELL Students

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?

TELL Students

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 - First Grade

Lesson

ASK Students

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

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

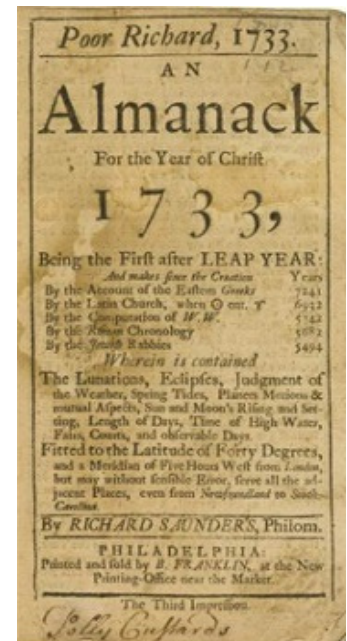
What do you think Benjamin Franklin liked to do when he was not working?

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.

ASK Students

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



Credit: Benjamin Franklin Historical Society.

Benjamin Franklin - First 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 - First Grade Lesson

WATCH

Learn More With Liberty: [Benjamin Franklin's Role in the Declaration of Independence](#)



Benjamin Franklin - First Grade

Benjamin Franklin's Invention Bag

Objective: Students will learn about Benjamin Franklin's inventions and contributions to science and society.

Materials Needed:

- A large bag or box
- Printed pictures or small replicas of Franklin's inventions (like bifocal glasses, the lightning rod, the Franklin stove, etc.)
- Blank paper and crayons/markers
- Fact cards about each invention (include a simple explanation and what problem it solved)



Activity Set Up:

1. Prepare the Invention Bag: Place the pictures or replicas of Franklin's inventions inside the bag or box.
2. Create Fact Cards: For each invention, write a simple and brief explanation on a card. Include what problem the invention solved.

Instructions:

1. Introduction: Start by reviewing what students have learned about Benjamin Franklin, focusing on how he loved to invent things to solve problems.
2. Drawing from the Invention Bag: Have each student come up one by one and draw an item from the bag.
3. Guess and Learn:
 - a. The student shows the item to the class and guesses what it might be used for.
 - b. Read the fact card related to that invention to the class. Discuss how the invention helped people.
4. Draw and Describe: Each student draws the invention they picked and writes or dictates a sentence about what it does. For students who cannot write yet, encourage them to express their thoughts while an adult scribes for them.
5. Sharing Time: Allow students to share their drawings and what they've learned about their specific invention with the class.

Benjamin Franklin - First Grade

Benjamin Franklin's Invention Bag

Discussion Questions:

- Which invention do you think is the most interesting, and why?
- Can you think of something you would like to invent?

Wrap Up:

Summarize the activity by highlighting how Benjamin Franklin's curiosity and creativity led to inventions that still impact us today. Encourage students to be curious and to think about how they can solve problems around them.

Benjamin Franklin - First Grade

Invent Like Franklin: Create a Solution!

Instructions: Ben Franklin loved to solve problems by making new things. One of his famous inventions is the bifocal glasses, which help people see things up close and far away without changing glasses. Draw your own invention that could help people today. Describe what it does.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick black border, intended for drawing an invention.

Benjamin Franklin - First 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>
<https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/becomingamer/ideas/text4/juntolibrary.pdf>
7. <https://www.fi.edu/en/benjamin-franklin/famous-quotes>
8. <https://www.ushistory.org/franklin/philadelphia/fire.htm>
9. <https://www.fi.edu/en/benjamin-franklin/kite-key-experiment>
10. <https://web.archive.org/web/20120205112444/>
11. <http://www.archives.upenn.edu/primdocs/upl/upl125.pdf>
12. <https://www.nypl.org/events/exhibitions/galleries/beginnings/item/3562>
13. <https://www.fi.edu/en/benjamin-franklin-faq>
14. <https://legacyclub.boston/benjamin-franklin>

Notes
