

DISCOVER AMERICA

Course 24 - Teacher Guide



Franklin's Footsteps: Exploring the Legacy of Ben Franklin

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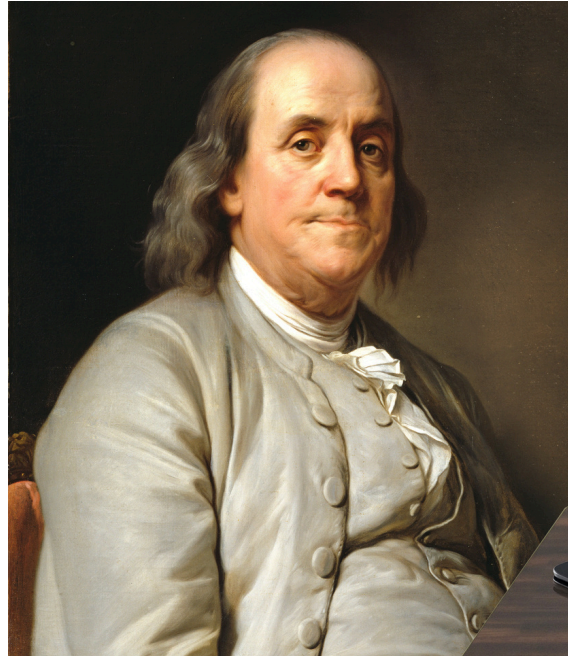
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Fourth Grade **Teacher Guide**



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.



Benjamin Franklin - Fourth 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 - Fourth 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?

*I was not king, yet I wore many crowns,
In a stormy field, I played with towns.
My glasses could look both near and far,
My key unlocked the stormy star.
I signed a pact that birthed a nation,
Penned witty words for generations.*

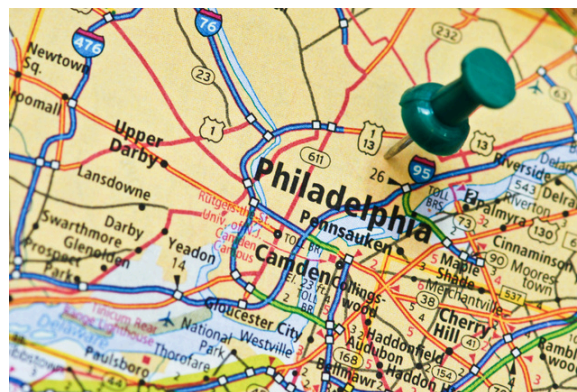
ASK Students

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

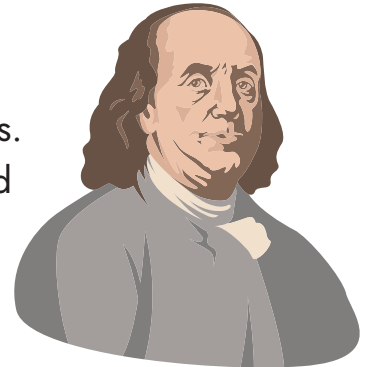
Who was Benjamin Franklin? What do you know about him?

Benjamin Franklin - Fourth 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 - Fourth 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 - Fourth 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 - Fourth 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.

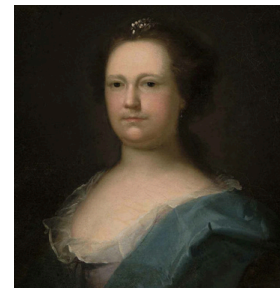
ASK Students

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 - Fourth 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.



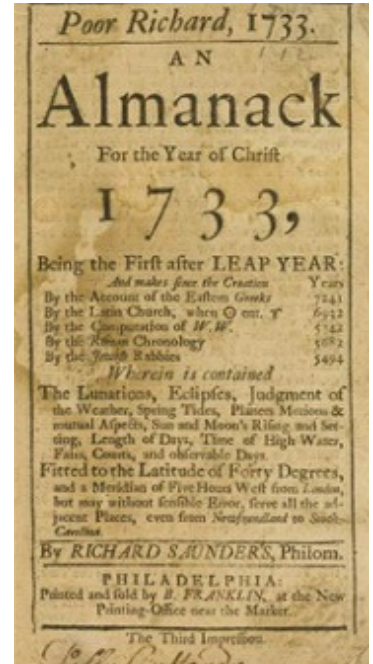
ASK Students

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

Benjamin Franklin - Fourth 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

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.

Benjamin Franklin - Fourth Grade Lesson

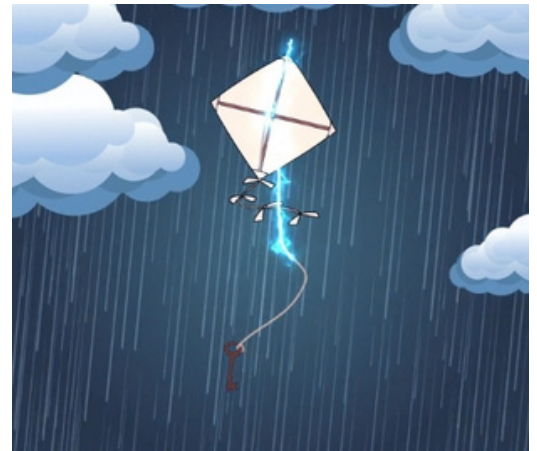
ASK Students

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

TELL Students

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

Benjamin Franklin - Fourth 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.



Benjamin Franklin - Fourth 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 - Fourth 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 - Fourth Grade

Exploring the Franklin Stove

Objective

To understand the design, function, and historical significance of the Franklin stove through a hands-on model building activity.

Materials Needed

- Cardboard boxes (one per group)
- Aluminum foil
- Scissors
- Tape
- Markers or paint
- Reference images of the Franklin stove
- Information cards with facts about the stove and its uses

Introduction

1. Discuss Benjamin Franklin: Briefly review Benjamin Franklin as a versatile inventor, focusing on his invention of the Franklin stove.
2. Explain the Problem: Describe the common heating issues of the 18th century, like inefficient open fireplaces that wasted heat and the dangers of indoor smoke.

Model Building

1. Group Formation: Divide students into small groups and provide each group with materials.
2. Building the Stove:
 - Show students reference images of the Franklin stove.
 - Guide them to use cardboard to create the body of the stove. They can use aluminum foil to simulate the metal parts which help in conducting heat.
 - Markers or paint can be used to decorate and add details to their models.

Benjamin Franklin - Fourth Grade

Exploring the Franklin Stove

(Continued)

Model Building (Continued)

3. Discuss Functionality: As they build, explain how the design helped improve heat efficiency and reduced smoke inside homes. Use simple science concepts to explain how metal absorbs and radiates heat more effectively than air.

Learning Stations

1. Station Setup: Create different stations around the classroom where students can engage with various aspects of the stove:
 - History Station: Cards with historical facts and impacts of the Franklin stove.
 - Science Station: Simple experiments to demonstrate heat conduction and radiation, using warm water in bottles to show how different materials (metal vs. plastic) conduct heat.
 - Design Station: Opportunities to modify their cardboard stoves to improve stability, aesthetics, or imaginary efficiency.

Reflection and Discussion

1. Discuss What They Learned: Have students share insights from the building process and what they learned at each station.
2. Real-world Application: Talk about how innovation in everyday items (like stoves) can improve life quality and efficiency.

Wrap-Up

1. Recap: Summarize the day's activities and revisit the importance of Benjamin Franklin's contributions.
2. Question Time: Allow students to ask questions or express what they found most interesting.

Extensions

- Home Connection: Students can discuss heating systems with their families and compare them with the Franklin stove's design and efficiency.
- Class Presentation: Students can use their models and what they've learned to create a presentation or a small skit about Benjamin Franklin and his invention.

Benjamin Franklin - Fourth Grade

Benjamin Franklin: A Man of Many Talents

Name: _____ Date: _____

Objective

Explore the diverse achievements and roles of Benjamin Franklin, understand his impact on history, and relate his work to modern concepts.

Instructions

- Read each section carefully.
- Answer the questions in the spaces provided.
- Discuss your answers with your neighbor or in small groups as instructed.

Introduction to Benjamin Franklin

Read: 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.

Question: What did Benjamin Franklin invent?

Benjamin Franklin's Role as a Diplomat and Founding Father

Read: 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.

Question: What have you learned about our Founding Fathers?

Benjamin Franklin - Fourth Grade

Benjamin Franklin: A Man of Many Talents

Question: Who are the Founding Fathers that you have learned about?

Benjamin Franklin's Early Life

Read: Benjamin Franklin was born on January 17, 1706, in Boston, Massachusetts. He was one of seventeen children and had only two years of formal schooling.

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

Challenges Overcome by Benjamin Franklin

Read: Benjamin Franklin faced many obstacles, including limited formal education and initially struggling to find work in Philadelphia.

Question: What are some obstacles that Ben had to overcome?

The Inventions and Contributions of Benjamin Franklin

Read: Benjamin Franklin invented the lightning rod and bifocals. He also contributed to the colonies through his diplomatic efforts in England.

Benjamin Franklin - Fourth Grade

Benjamin Franklin: A Man of Many Talents

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

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

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

Benjamin Franklin's Legacy

Read: Benjamin Franklin's dedication during the American Revolution and his scientific and diplomatic efforts significantly shaped America.

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

Benjamin Franklin - Fourth Grade

Benjamin Franklin: A Man of Many Talents

Reflection

Read: Benjamin Franklin passed away in 1790 but left a lasting legacy.

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

Question: What contributions do you hope to make to your community, school, or our country?

Benjamin Franklin- Fourth Grade

Student Text

Read the following passage to learn more about Benjamin Franklin.

Passage 1

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.

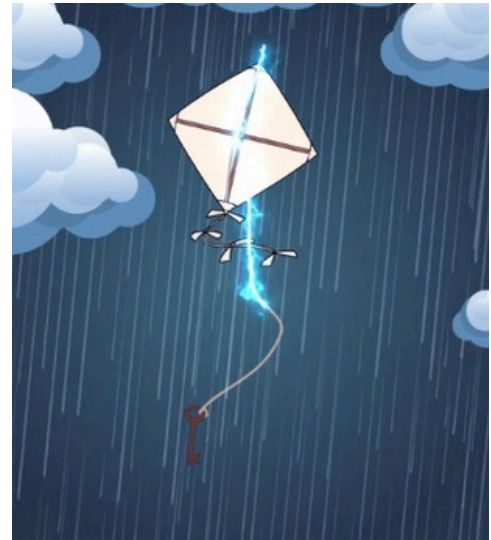
Benjamin Franklin- Fourth Grade

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>

