

Benjamin Franklin:



History Speaks



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Benjamin Franklin: History Speaks

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Suggested Lesson Plan

These materials may be used in a variety of ways. For maximum benefit, we suggest the following lesson plan:

- As a class, discuss the Preview Questions & Key Terms OR assign one of the Preview Questions as an opening journal activity, then discuss.
- Distribute copies of the Viewing Guide for students to use as a note-taking tool during the video.
- Play the video, pausing if needed to facilitate understanding and note-taking.
- Review and discuss answers to the Viewing Guide using Answer Key as a guide.
- Use Discussion Questions to spark class discussion or assign these questions as homework.
- As a class or in small groups, complete the *Who Chooses* Activity
- Replay the video as preparation for the Quiz.
- Administer and grade the Quiz using Answer Key as a guide.
- Optional: Assign one or more Enrichment Activities as homework.

If you got this guide from a DVD, please **check this video's product page** on izzit.org. There could be an updated Teacher's Guide with additional/revised material.

Benjamin Franklin: History Speaks

Preview Questions

1. What are some things you know about Benjamin Franklin?
2. What are some of the inventions Franklin is responsible for?
3. Franklin is known as a Framers of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence. What does being a *Framer* mean? What is the difference between a Founder and a Framers?
4. Franklin only received two years of formal education but was considered brilliant by many and received six honorary doctorates from universities in his lifetime. How do you think this could happen?

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Key Terms & Definitions

Abolish: formally put an end to (a system, practice, or institution).

Advocate: to support or speak in favor of something

Agenda: an underlying plan

Agrarian: relating to cultivated land or the cultivation of land

Apprentice: someone learning a trade from an experienced tradesman and agreeing to a period of low wages during the time they are learning.

Atrocities: an extremely wicked or cruel act, typically one involving physical violence or injury

Attrition: gradually losing strength

Composition: what something is made of – the makeup of an item

Congenial: pleasant

Cosmopolitan: including people from many countries

Creature comforts: material comforts like good food and lodging that add to one's sense of well-being

Deliberations: thoughtful, careful consideration about a matter

Disabused: persuade someone that they are incorrect about something

Divergent: varied, different

Divisive: causing disagreement among a group

Doctorate: the highest degree awarded by a graduate school

Dr. Newton: Isaac Newton, an English mathematician, scientist, and influential thinker, who lived from 1643-1727.

Estranged: separated from someone else, no longer close to them

Felon: person convicted of a felony crime

Fluent: able to express yourself easily in a particular language

Imbued: permeated, deeply infused

Impediments: obstacles

Indentured servant: a contract between two individuals, in which one person worked not for money but to repay an indenture, or loan, within a set time period

Independence Hall: historic civic building in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in which both the United States Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution were debated and adopted by America's Founders and Framers.

Intelligentsia: a group of highly educated people, often with cultural and political influence

Literate: able to read fluently

Loyalist: person who supported the British during the American Revolution

monarch: a king/queen or other noble ruler, who, by circumstance of birth into a royal family, rules for life or until they decide to step down from their throne.

Nefarious: wicked, evil, or criminal

Optimist: a person who is hopeful about the future or possibility of success

Pacifist: a person who believes that war and violence are unjustifiable

Peers: people of the same age or status as another

Pessimistic: tending to see the worst aspect of things or believe that the worst will happen

Populace: the people living in a specific area or country

Privateers: a private (not government), armed individual or ship that engaged in naval warfare, often paid by what they captured from other ships

Proviso: a condition attached to agreement

Quaker: a pacifist religious group

Ratify: approve

Rebel: to act in opposition of an established government or ruler

Republic: a form of government in which the citizens elect representatives who make decisions and govern

Revamping: updating something

Rigorous: challenging, demanding

Sincere: genuine, saying what one actually means with no dishonesty or pretense

Spat: a disagreement, often petty

Succession: the sequence of inheriting or taking over a position

Name: _____

Date: _____

Benjamin Franklin: History Speaks Viewing Guide

1. Well, I was given doctorates by six colleges for my work in electricity. Some called them _____, but I believe I earned them.
2. I certainly had studied Dr. _____ theories and all of these sorts of things, so I've always had, I've never felt that I'm the smartest person in the room...
3. When you signed the _____, did you have a sense that you were taking your life in your hands?
4. Actually, John Adams went to _____. I did go to some other places, but mostly I stayed in Paris.
5. Governor of New Jersey, a job I helped him get since I had had a few positions – the _____ of the North American Colonies and other things.
6. How long were you locked up in this room drafting the _____?
7. _____. That's something that removes odor?
8. And a fleeing felon when I left my indenture. I was not only an _____; I was indentured to my brother, a legal indenture, and I left four years early.
9. How long did it take to get a letter from Philadelphia to say, _____?
10. Oh yes, but as a former printer, I think these flyers are important, you know, someone's _____ depends upon those.
11. Well, the _____ function is private.
12. Well, our history is often described as The American _____. Is that how you viewed it?
13. But, as you said, Mason, George Mason, who would not sign for want of a Bill of _____, was from Virginia.
14. You know I proposed that judges be selected in the _____ system, as I called it, by lawyers...

15. People now say it's too hard to amend the Constitution, and they're often content to let the _____ Court effectively amend it by reinterpreting provisions.

16. _____ remained our largest city for a century.

17. Well, it became the most important issue of the next century and eventuated in a terrible _____ war.

18. Yes, he became president eventually and laid down the doctrine, the _____ Doctrine.

19. Well, imagine that _____ has a motor if you can even conceive of that.

20. And then sometime later his _____, John Quincy Adams.

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Viewing Guide Answer Key

1. Honorary
2. Newton's
3. Declaration of Independence
4. Holland
5. Postmaster
6. Constitution
7. Deodorant
8. Apprentice
9. Virginia
10. economy
11. insurance
12. Experiment
13. Rights
14. scotch
15. Supreme
16. Philadelphia
17. civil
18. Monroe
19. Balloon
20. son

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Discussion Questions

(These can be used for discussion after the film. Or use them as essay questions and have students respond in writing.)

1. As Franklin only received a formal education through 2nd grade, where and how did he become educated? How is Franklin's experience applicable to today?
2. What are some character traits you would say Franklin has?
3. Why was the issue of slavery tabled during the making of the Constitution? Do you think that decision was the right one? Why or why not?
4. Franklin said he feared for his life when he signed the Declaration of Independence. Why was that? What made it a "distant" fear?
5. What caused the Civil War?
6. When Franklin was in France, what was he attempting to do? Why did he have trouble speaking French?
7. Why do you think Franklin was reluctant to speak about his son being a loyalist? How did the Revolutionary War impact families such as Franklin's?
8. What two inventions did Judge Ginsburg mention that might have made the Constitutional Convention during the summer of 1787 more bearable? Why did he think those inventions would have helped?
9. What did Franklin mean when he told Judge Ginsburg that "someone's economy depends" on the flyers that Judge Ginsburg considered "junk mail"?
10. Why were public libraries important in Franklin's day? Why are they important

today?

11. Why did Franklin think the delegates from Massachusetts were so adamant that a Bill of Rights be included in the Constitution?
12. What part did Franklin play in the writing of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution?
13. Why do you think Franklin appeared to be so well-liked by people?

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Activity: Who Chooses? Who Benefits? Who Pays? What's Fair?

The four questions above can be a useful tool for evaluating any policy or system. Posing the questions is a great way to stimulate critical thinking. As a class, or in small groups, discuss the following:

(For each question, think broadly about all the possible people or groups of people who may be affected, and remember there may be non-monetary costs and benefits.)

1. Who decides what liberties and rights individuals should receive? Who interprets these liberties and rights?
2. Who benefits from the interpretation of liberties and rights? Who has been left out historically? Why?
3. What is the cost of protecting liberties and rights? Explain.
4. Should some groups have fewer liberties and rights than others? If so, how should it be decided which liberties and rights are unacceptable? Who should decide (Who chooses?) which liberties and rights are acceptable/not acceptable?

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Quiz

1. Franklin was integral in the discussion and refinement of the _____ that separated the colonies from England.
 - a. Constitution
 - b. Declaration of Rights and privileges
 - c. Declaration of Independence
 - d. Writ of Habeaus Corpus

2. Franklin felt he was too _____ to be President so did not run consider running for office.
 - a. smart
 - b. uneducated
 - c. shy
 - d. old

3. The issue of _____ was avoided as it might cause the collapse of the convention.
 - a. slavery
 - b. women's rights
 - c. voting laws
 - d. taxes

4. A Bill of _____ was later added to the Constitution at many delegates' request.
 - a. Sale
 - b. Change
 - c. Disclosure
 - d. Rights

5. Franklin was instrumental in starting the first _____ in Philadelphia.
 - a. dog pound
 - b. tax collection
 - c. power company
 - d. fire department

6. Franklin experimented with _____ and received 6 doctorate degrees from different colleges because of it.
- water
 - lightning
 - electricity
 - chemicals
7. The Great _____ helped settle a disagreement and the Constitution to become a reality.
- Agreement
 - Disclosure
 - Compromise
 - Joining
8. Franklin's first job was as a _____ indentured to his brother.
- writer
 - printer
 - silversmith
 - trader
9. Franklin served as editor on the making of the Declaration of Independence primarily written by _____.
- Thomas Payne
 - George Washington
 - Thomas Jefferson
 - John Adams
10. Franklin spent many years in _____ seeking support. A country that was necessary for the colonies to win the war against England.
- Holland
 - Portugal
 - Germany
 - France

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Quiz Answer Key

1. C
2. D
3. A
4. D
5. D
6. C
7. C
8. B
9. C
10. D

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Enrichment & Integration Activities

Research Projects: Work independently or in small groups. Choose one or more of the topics below to learn more about. Gather information from multiple sources to help answer the questions. Create a report that includes both written and visual elements such as pictures, charts, and graphs. Be sure to cite your sources. Share your findings with the class in a presentation.

A. Research the inventions of Benjamin Franklin. How have his inventions impacted the societies of the past as well as today?

write a report about his inventions and impacts

make a poster showing his inventions and when invented

compile a list of his inventions and then how they have changed/been improved over the years

B. The issue of slavery was avoided during the writing of the Constitution. Brainstorm what might have happened had the discussion continued during the convention. Write about an alternative history where this issue was not set aside. What would have happened? Would we be two (or more?) countries? Would this lead to war? How would African-Americans have been affected?

C. Students write a short response essay to the prompt "...with liberty and justice for all." What does this phrase mean to them? How has this changed over time? Ask students to switch papers with a neighbor to discuss the short essays. As students read each others' paper, they may ask the writer questions they have about it and share what new ideas his or her paper gave them.

D. Have students pretend that they are member of the congregation at the Constitutional Convention. Have them choose a state and write about what their state was concerned with and what would they input to the discussion. Research their chosen state and what was occurring there during this time period.

E. Have students write a letter as a colonist to a friend in England during the period the Constitution was being written. What would their life be like? What were the hopes and dreams of a citizen in this “young” America? What would they hope would come out of the Constitutional Convention?

F. Put yourself in the position of a free African-American living in Franklin’s times. Write a personal letter to Franklin expressing your concern about the institution of slavery. You may choose to include questions for Franklin’s response.

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Lesson Plan

Time to complete:	Will vary, depending on the desired duration
Materials/ Technology/ Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* The <i>Benjamin Franklin: History Speaks</i> video (can be streamed from izzit.org with no login required.)* Presentation Method (smartboard, projector, etc.)* Viewing Guide* Discussion Questions – one set for teacher only* Internet browser* Large piece of butcher paper for each group.
Standards:	Use our free and easy-to-use Standard Alignment tool to align this lesson with the standards in your school district.
Learning Objective(s):	<i>Students will articulate accomplishments of Benjamin Franklin. Students will be able to discuss the historical involvement of Benjamin Franklin as well as his many scientific discoveries and inventions.</i>
Topics:	Inventions, Founding of America, curiosity, scientific experimentation
Absorb:	<u>Watch:</u> <i>Benjamin Franklin: History Speaks</i> video streamed from izzit.org with no login required.
Overall guiding question(s):	How did Benjamin Franklin influence the early United States? What are some inventions by Franklin? How did Franklin influence our world standing as a new county?

**Lesson
Procedures:**

1. Watch video: ***Benjamin Franklin: History Speaks***
2. **ACTIVITY:**
 - a. Divide your class into small groups.
 - b. Provide students time to search about Benjamin Franklin. Groups could be divided to look at different aspects of his life (early years, influence on politics, inventions and science, world politics, life accomplishments).
 - c. Each group will answer the following questions
 - i. What documents and proceeding were Benjamin Franklin involved in?
 - ii. What inventions and discoveries were Franklin responsible for?
 - iii. What foreign countries did Franklin serve as a spokesperson for America and how did he influence world events?
 - iv. What positions within the government did he serve?
 - d. (Strategy is **Chalk Talk**). Give each group a large piece of butcher paper. Have the groups write their questions in the middle of the paper. Each group will create a concept web of the information they research answering their questions.
 - e. Once each group has completed their research and paper, give the class time to circulate and read each other's work. Provide markers at each table for students to write reflections or additional questions for each group to think about.

At the end of the activity, have a class discussion about the students' overall impression of what they learned. Ask the students to write a brief reflection on the activity.

**Summary &
Assessment:**

Assessment is based on the group work and the reflection of what students learned as a result of their experiences interacting with others.

Bring students back together to discuss their findings. Summary discussions may include the different perspectives the class members shared regarding the research around Benjamin Franklin.

Reflection:

Have students select a modern-day invention (ex: cell phone). Brainstorm the invention's effect on society. What would life be like without this invention? What other inventions did this one replace? How will this invention be changed in the future? How do new inventions change society both negatively and positively?

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