



TEACHER'S GUIDE

FRANKLIN LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Although Benjamin Franklin had very little formal education, he was a life-long learner whose awesome curiosity helped him to excel in a variety of subject areas. The lesson plans and activities in this guide encourage middle school and high school students to use their own curiosity to explore Franklin's world and achievements. Based on Franklin's many accomplishments in various fields, these lessons allow students to extend their understanding of the connections between Franklin's 18th century and our modern world.

This guide is designed to take advantage of the educational information in the three-part PBS series BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (PBS airdate November 19-20, 2002), directing teacher's to specific sections of the series relevant to the lesson plan. The lessons engage students with a media-rich environment that employs video, DVD, computers, and the Internet in addition to more traditional print resources. The lesson plans are flexible, allowing teachers to adapt the instruction to their particular needs. The activities are structured so that students can work individually or in cooperative groups.

PreK-12 teachers may videotape the series and use it in the classroom for one year. (For more information on teacher resources to accompany PBS programs and on PBS extended taping rights for educators, please visit the PBS TeacherSource Web site.)

ACTIVITY 1 IF POOR RICHARD HAD A COMPUTER

As a prolific writer and publisher, Franklin is probably best known for *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Using research tools on the Internet and in the library, students will explore the origins and history of almanacs and learn about standard features of historic, as well as current, almanacs. Students work in cooperative groups to share their knowledge and to create a web-based "e-zine" almanac.

ACTIVITY 2 CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

Benjamin Franklin's practicality combined with his strong sense of duty made him a model of good citizenship. For example, he founded the first public library and helped organize volunteer fire-fighting clubs and a public hospital in his hometown of Philadelphia. In this activity, students identify a need in their community and then plan a project to address the need. This activity will encourage students to work in groups and to volunteer time in their community.

ACTIVITY 3 NEW AND IMPROVED

Franklin has been called the "patron saint of advertising" because he used the media of his time—newspapers, broadsides, letters, pamphlets, and word-of-mouth—to sell products and ideas. Students explore some of the advertising methods used in colonial times and compare those techniques to modern advertising.

ACTIVITY 4 MEET MY ALTER-EGO

Like many of his contemporaries, Ben Franklin used pseudonyms for some of the letters and essays he published. Each of these *noms de plum* had a distinct personality and were written from a unique point of view. Students learn about Franklin's pseudonyms, create pseudonyms for themselves, and write letters or essays from the point of view of their invented persona.



TEACHER'S GUIDE

ACTIVITY 5 BEING BETTER

Throughout his life, Benjamin Franklin tried to find ways to improve himself intellectually, morally, and physically. Students research and learn about some of the self-improvement methods that Franklin designed or employed, and then create and follow their own self-improvement plan.

ACTIVITY 6 SUPERSTITION VS. SCIENCE

Franklin's scientific understanding was limited by the collective knowledge of the period, much of which was based on superstition, religion, and folk wisdom. Students study some of the common scientific theories of the colonial period, compare those ideas and theories to what we know today, and report their findings.

ACTIVITY 7 INVENTION CONVENTION

Many of Franklin's scientific inventions came out of his ability to see a need or problem and then come up with a solution. Sometimes he made improvements on other people's inventions. Students become inventors by identifying a problem or need, and inventing a solution.

ACTIVITY 8 HIT 'EM WITH A BROADSIDE

In the colonial period, "broadsides" provided inexpensive information and entertainment to the masses, like television, radio, and the Internet do today. Broadsides were a single sheet of paper that generally contained print on one side only. Students research the history of broadsides and create a broadside of their own, satirizing or commenting upon some local or current event.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Heath is a former high school teacher and college instructor who has been a curriculum developer for over seventeen years, creating educational materials for a broad range of subjects—language arts, science, social studies, health, and character education. He developed over ninety classroom science lessons and projects for a series of CD-ROMs based on the PBS family science show Newton's Apple. He is the author of the American Civics series, four books on the branches of government and the electoral system, published by Capstone Press. Heath has also created materials for many educational publishers including American Guidance Service, Globe-Fearon, Houghton-Mifflin, LeapFrog SchoolHouse, McGraw-Hill, Steck-Vaughn, and Young People's Press. In addition to the learning activities for BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, Heath researched and wrote much of the information found on the PBS website for the series.

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ACTIVITY 1 • If Poor Richard Had a Computer

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanack* is one of the best-known almanacs of all time. In addition to *Poor Richard's*, there were numerous almanacs published in the colonies and in Europe. Some almanacs actually sold better than Franklin's, but none of them contained the wit, humor, and sage advice freely given by Franklin's alter-ego Richard Saunders. Using research tools on the Internet and in the library, students will explore the origins and history of almanacs and learn about standard features of historic, as well as current, almanacs. Students will then work in cooperative groups to share their knowledge and to create their own almanacs.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Research information about the history of almanacs
- Explain the role and importance of almanacs in colonial America
- Describe the elements and features of almanacs
- Write, edit, design, and produce an electronic or traditional almanac

TIME REQUIRED

One class period to introduce the project; two class periods for final presentations. Approximately two weeks out-of-class for total project.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

- Television, VCR or DVD player, videotape or DVD of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
- Copies of current, modern-day almanacs (such as the *Farmer's Almanac*)
- Computers with Internet access (recommended)
- Computer printer (optional)
- Scanner (optional)

NATIONAL STANDARDS

CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

from the National Council for the Social Studies
Strand I: Culture) The learner can apply an understanding of culture as an integrated whole that explains the functions and interactions of language, literature, the arts, traditions, beliefs and values, and behavior patterns.

Strand II: Time, Continuity, & Change) The learner can investigate, interpret, and analyze multiple historical and contemporary viewpoints within and across cultures related to important events, recurring dilemmas, and persistent issues, while employing empathy, skepticism, and critical judgement.

Strand IV: Individual Development & Identity) The learner can work independently and cooperatively within groups and institutions to accomplish goals.

STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

from the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English

Standard 1) Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Standard 2) Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

Standard 4) Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

Standard 5) Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

Standard 6) Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

Standard 8) Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.



ACTIVITY 1 • If Poor Richard Had a Computer

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

(NOTE: IF INTERNET ACCESS IS LIMITED OR STUDENTS DO NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE, HAVE STUDENTS CREATE VIDEO, HYPERCARD, POWERPOINT™, OR TRADITIONAL PRINT ALMANACS.)

Introduce students to the concept of almanacs by asking how students get information about the seasons and weather. Students will probably talk about television, the Internet, and newspapers. Point out that in the colonial period, people didn't have sources like a cable channel devoted to the weather, nor did they have sophisticated equipment to track and predict the weather. During Benjamin Franklin's time, people used almanacs, which gave predictions about the weather, observations about the planting and growing seasons, and other practical or entertaining information.

Show Episode 1 of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN or the segment of the episode that deals with *Poor Richard's Almanack*. **VHS timecode: 01:34:40 - 01:37:00**

After watching the video, discuss how Franklin took the concept of the almanac and gave it his own special twist, including his famous sayings and humorous articles.

You might want students to read more about *Poor Richard's Almanack* in the "Wit and Wisdom" section of the BENJAMIN FRANKLIN website: (<http://www.pbs.org/benfranklin>).

Have students examine some modern-day almanacs. Ask students what they would include in an almanac. The list may include standard almanac features such as the weather, sunrise/sunset times, tidal information, advice on planting, and astrological charts. Students will probably come up with several other unique features. After listing their ideas on the board, tell students that they are going to work in groups to create an almanac, and that their almanac will be in the form of an "e-zine" (an Internet magazine), or, if you prefer, a traditional paper almanac, hypercard presentation, or some other form of media. Explain that the groups are to use the Internet and print reference materials to research the history of almanacs. The almanacs they produce should include a history of almanacs that explains the importance of almanacs in the colonial period, along with other features that were standard to traditional almanacs: weather predictions, astrology charts, sunrise/sunset information, and advice on personal and business matters. Students may also want to include humorous or "wise" sayings such as Franklin put in his almanacs.

Based on your class schedule, allow groups between one and two weeks to work on the project out of class. When the project is complete, have groups make presentations of their e-zines (or other forms of almanacs) to the class.

When organizing students into cooperative groups, try to include at

least one student in each group who is knowledgeable about the Internet and setting up home pages. Many schools and districts have Internet servers with space for student projects. Most commercial Internet providers also provide free space for subscribers to post personal home pages. However, you may wish to give students the flexibility of creating almanacs using another media such as video, Hypercard, or PowerPoint™. And, of course, students may be given the option to create a printed almanac.

ONLINE RESOURCES

There are also numerous websites where you can download or display images and content from the original *Poor Richard's Almanack*.

http://www.sage-advice.com/Benjamin_Franklin.htm
"Sage Advice" is a website dedicated to great thinkers and has the complete text of all issues of *Poor Richard's Almanack*.

<http://www.gettysburg.edu/~tshannon/his341/colonialamer.htm>
Gettysburg College maintains an extensive online collection of primary documents from the colonial period, including images of Franklin's almanac.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

Student projects should be evaluated for completeness of information (based on the features assigned), interesting content, and creativity in design. Individual students should be evaluated for:

- thoughtfully and accurately completing all individual and group assignments
- working cooperatively and efficiently within the group
- participating in the group presentation
- participating in class discussions
- cooperating with others while using the Internet

For self-evaluation, each member of the group should evaluate his or her contributions and performance, as well as the contributions and performance of other group members.

EXTENSIONS & ADAPTATIONS

- The almanac-zines can be used as an ongoing project that students update on a regular basis. For example, students could add articles or features that pertain to the topics being studied in class.
- Students may want to include interactive elements to their e-zines, such as an advice column where Internet users can ask or respond to questions posed by the e-zine writers or by visitors to the site.





ACTIVITY 2 • Calling All Volunteers

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Benjamin Franklin's practicality combined with his strong sense of duty made him a model of good citizenship. For example, he founded the first public library and helped organize volunteer fire-fighting clubs and a public hospital in his hometown of Philadelphia. In this activity, students identify a need in their community and then plan a project to address the need. This activity will encourage students to work in groups and to volunteer time in their community.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Define citizenship and identify individuals who embody the traits of a good citizen
- Identify a community issue, need, or problem and create a plan to address the problem
- Give a formal presentation of their plans to the class

TIME REQUIRED

The time for the activity is flexible. The activity could be completed in two class periods, or could be extended into a longer project.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

- Television, VCR or DVD player, videotape or DVD of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
- Computers with Internet access

NATIONAL STANDARDS

CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES
from the National Council for the Social Studies
Strand I: Culture) The learner can analyze and explain the ways groups, societies, and cultures address human needs and concerns.

Strand IV: Individual Development & Identity) The learner can work independently and cooperatively within groups and institutions to accomplish goals.

Strand X: Civic Ideals and Practices) The learner can construct a policy statement and an action plan to achieve one or more goals related to an issue of public concern.

Strand X: Civic Ideals and Practices) The learner can participate in activities to strengthen the "common good," based upon careful evaluation of possible options for citizen action.



ACTIVITY 2 • Calling All Volunteers

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

Begin by asking students to define the word "citizenship." Answers will vary but may include such things as obeying the law, not littering, being an informed voter in elections, joining the armed services, running for public office, and helping out in the community. Then ask students to give examples of people who are good citizens. Answers may vary, but should include well-known individuals from both the past and present. If Benjamin Franklin is not mentioned, point out that he personified good citizenship with many of the projects he worked on in his city, state, and country.

You may want students to log on to www.pbs.org/benfranklin and explore the "Citizen Ben" section to learn more about Franklin's civic involvement.

Show Episode 1 of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN or the segment that deals with Franklin's civic activities in Philadelphia. **VHS Timecode:** 01:37:50 - 01:42:25

After viewing the video, ask students ways in which they could be better citizens in their community—their school, their neighborhood, or

their town. List the responses on the board. Encourage the students to come up with practical ideas that they could actually do. These ideas could include individuals volunteering at a senior citizen center, a family shelter, or an after-school program for younger children. Group projects might include cleaning up a section of highway, planting a garden in a vacant lot, or organizing a clothing drive.

Tell students that they can work in groups or individually. Their assignment is to identify a need or problem in their community and then come up with a realistic plan to solve or improve the problem. The solution should involve volunteerism in some form. They should write up their problem and the plan for solving it in the form of a proposal, which they will present to the class.

Explain that they should try to make their plans as realistic as possible. Tell students that their plan should address the following questions:

- Is the problem we have identified a real problem that can be solved?
- Does our solution include a workable plan that students could actually do?

- Is the plan an individual endeavor or does it involve a group of volunteers?
- How will we recruit volunteers?
- How much will the plan cost, and how will we fund it?

Encourage students to use visual aids in their presentations. Explain that they will be evaluated on how completely their proposals address the questions.

ONLINE RESOURCES

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/newyork/laic/volunteer.html>

Learning Adventures in Citizenship on PBS.org provides a primer for kids and volunteerism.

<http://www.idealists.org/kt>

Action without Borders offers resources, ideas, and postings for kids and teens who want to get involved in volunteering.

<http://www.serviceleader.org/advice/>

Advice for Volunteers is a website devoted to finding the right volunteer opportunity and making the most of it.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

Student citizenship proposals should be evaluated for completeness of information (how well they address the assigned questions) and interesting content and design. Individual students should be evaluated for:

- thoughtfully and accurately completing all individual and group assignments
- working cooperatively and efficiently within the group
- participating in the group presentation
- participating in class discussions

For self-evaluation, each member of the group should evaluate his or her contributions and performance, as well as the contributions and performance of other group members.

EXTENSIONS & ADAPTATIONS

- Students may want to visit the PBS Kids Democracy Project and do the "How Does Government Affect Me?" activity, which describes services funded through local tax dollars and may help students identify areas where volunteerism is needed. <http://www.pbs.org/democracy/kids/mygovt/index.html>
- Students can choose one of the class proposals and then put that plan into action.
- Individuals and groups may be encouraged to put their plans into action.
- Students can identify nonprofit or charitable organizations in the community. They can choose an organization that interests them and do volunteer work for the organization.





ACTIVITY 3 • New and Improved

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Benjamin Franklin has been called the "patron saint of advertising" because he used the media of his time—newspapers, broadsides, letters, pamphlets, and word-of-mouth—to sell products and ideas. In this activity, students will study the history of advertising, how it developed, and how it has changed. They will explore some of the advertising methods used in colonial times and compare those techniques to modern advertising. Students will give presentations summarizing their research and findings.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Explain some of the common techniques used in advertisements
- Research the history of advertising
- Explore the development of advertising over the years
- Make a formal presentation about the topic of advertising

TIME REQUIRED

One class period to introduce the project; two class periods for final presentations. Approximately two weeks out-of-class for total project.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

- Television, VCR or DVD player, videotape or DVD of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
- Computers with internet access (optional, but recommended)
- Video camera and/or tape recorder (optional)

NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
from the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English

Standard 1) Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world.

Standard 3) Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features.

Standard 6) Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

Standard 7) Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

Standard 8) Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

from the National Council for the Social Studies
Strand I: Culture) The learner can construct reasoned judgments about specific cultural responses to persistent human issues.

Strand II: Time, Continuity, and Change) The learner can systematically employ processes of critical historical inquiry to reconstruct and reinterpret the past, such as using a variety of sources and checking their credibility, validating and weighting evidence for claims, and searching for causality.



ACTIVITY 3 • New and Improved

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

Begin the activity by asking students what television commercials they like the best. Encourage students to explain what they like about the commercials. Ask if students have ever purchased a product or told someone else to purchase one that they have learned about through an ad on the radio or on TV.

Show Episode 1 of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN or the segment that shows Franklin creating a public image of himself. **VHS Timecode: 01:29:45 - 01:31:05**

Discuss with students some of the things that Benjamin Franklin did that have earned him the title of "Patron Saint of Advertising." For example, he published a pamphlet or brochure to sell a fireplace he designed; he wrote editorials in the newspapers he published to encourage colonists to separate from Great Britain; he wrote letters to the editor using pseudonyms to promote his idea of volunteer fire-fighting clubs; etc.

You may want students to log on to www.pbs.org/benfranklin and explore the advertising information in the "Wit and Wisdom" section of the website before continuing.

Tell students that they are going to study advertising. They are going to do some research about the history of advertising and look at some of the techniques that advertisers use to reach their target audiences. Explain that students will be writing a report and/or doing a presentation to the class about their findings. (For this assignment, you may want to have the students work in cooperative groups.)

Note: Before making the assignment, you may want to discuss some of the advertising techniques used today.

Direct students to research the topic of advertising on the Internet or at the library. Explain that they should explore the history of advertising, how advertising has changed over the years, and the techniques of advertising, both historical and current.

After students have done some basic background research, have them choose something in the area of advertising that interests them and do some more in-depth research about it. After they have researched their topic, they should make a presentation to the class.

There are a broad range of advertising topics to choose from, both historical and modern. Possible topics include:

- analyzing different television commercials for the advertising techniques that are used
- analyze how commercials appeal to different audiences—men, women, teenagers, adults, etc.
- report on the history of commercial jingles (music) or slogans
- trace the use of humor in advertising
- analyze how the same product is marketed in different media, such as radio, television, magazine ads, billboards, etc.
- report on the use of art or photography in advertising
- compare and contrast political advertising and commercial advertising
- analyze how advertisers, businesses, or governments use advertising techniques to sway public opinion

You may want to provide a more limited range of topics for this assignment depending on how this activity fits into your current curriculum. For example, you may want the focus of students' research to be more historical or to concentrate on advertising techniques and how they have been applied to political propaganda.

ONLINE RESOURCES

You can find a brief summary of advertising techniques and history on the Internet at websites such as:

www.entrenet.com/~groedmed/namedu/adtech.htm

This website from the Canadian National Aviation Museum, produced in cooperation with the Ottawa-Carleton Learning Foundation, has a good list of advertising techniques and definitions.

<http://www.adbusters.org/home/>
Adbusters showcases altered ads in order to bring the advertiser's intent to the foreground. A good site for showing students a contrasting point of view.

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/eaal>
Emergence of Advertising in America: 1850-1920 Contains over 9,000 images with database information, relating to the early history of advertising in the United States.

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~commstud/adclass/berger.html>
A Primer on Analyzing Television Commercials: Provides good questions to ask regarding advertising.





ACTIVITY 3 • New and Improved

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

Student work should be evaluated on the specific assignment about advertising that was given to them. Generally, student presentations should be evaluated for accuracy of information, creativity in presentation, and completeness of content.

Individual students should be evaluated for:

- thoughtfully and accurately completing all individual and group assignments
- working cooperatively and efficiently within the group
- participating in the group presentation
- participating in class discussions

For self-evaluation, each member of the group should evaluate his or her contributions and performance, as well as the contributions and performance of other group members.

EXTENSIONS & ADAPTATIONS

- Students can create videotaped ads or infomercials to present their findings.
- Students can apply some of the techniques they have learned and create a newspaper ad, radio spot, or television commercial that promotes a product or idea.
- Students can compose a commercial musical jingle for a product, service, or idea.
- Students can study a number of television commercials and analyze the advertising techniques used.
- You may want students to visit the PBS “Don’t Buy It” site to find tips on becoming media-savvy: <http://www.pbskids.org/dontbuyit/>
- There are additional teaching ideas on this topic located on PBS Teacher Source at http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/arts_lit/middle_media.shtm



ACTIVITY 4 • What's in a Name?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Like many of his contemporaries, Ben Franklin used pseudonyms for some of the letters and essays he published. Each of these *noms de plum* had a distinct personality and were written from a unique point of view. Students learn about Franklin's pseudonyms, create pseudonyms for themselves, and write letters or essays from the point of view of their invented persona.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Explore some of Ben Franklin's pseudonyms and why he used them
- Create a pseudonym of their own and write from that point of view
- Choose a current issue and write a letter to the editor from their pseudonym

TIME REQUIRED

One or two class periods.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

- Computers with internet access (highly recommended)
- You may want to print some of Franklin's letters and articles written under pseudonyms.

An extensive collection can be found on the Internet at:

<http://www.historycarper.com/resources/twobf1/contents.htm>

NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

from the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English

Standard 1) Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Standard 2) Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

Standard 4) Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

Standard 5) Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

Standard 6) Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

Standard 9) Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

Standard 12) Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

from the National Council for the Social Studies

Strand IV: Individual Development and Identity) The learner can work independently and cooperatively within groups and institutions to accomplish goals.

Strand V: Individuals, Groups and Institutions) The learner can identify and analyze examples of tensions between expressions of individuality and efforts used to promote social conformity by groups and institutions.

Strand X: Civic Ideals and Practices) The learner can practice forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideas of citizens in a democratic republic.

Strand X: Civic Ideals and Practices) The learner can analyze and evaluate the influence of various forms of citizen action on public policy.



ACTIVITY 4 • What's in a Name?

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

Begin by asking students who wrote the books about Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. Students will probably know that Mark Twain was the author. Tell them that they are wrong: Mark Twain didn't write those books. They were really written by Samuel Clemens under the pseudonym or *nom de plum* of Mark Twain. Tell students that many writers throughout history have used pseudonyms. Explain that Ben Franklin used them extensively for a variety of purposes.

Have students log on to the BENJAMIN FRANKLIN website (www.pbs.org/benfranklin) and read the "Name that Ben" section in the Citizen Ben portion of the site.

You may want to share some of Franklin's writings with students to show how he used pseudonyms and created entire personalities (See Online Resources).

After students have learned about Franklin's pseudonyms, lead a discussion about how peo-

ple might use this technique today. For example, some columnists such as Miss Manners or Dear Abby use pseudonyms. The discussions might also include looking at the legal issues of slander and libel and why writers of letters to the editor today must identify themselves correctly (See Online Resources for background information).

Direct students to choose an historical issue or situation and research it, then write a letter to the editor, a newspaper article, or a short essay about the issue under a pseudonym. Tell students that they should create a persona with a unique character or "biography," like one of Franklin's, and write from that point of view. They should try to create a character that would be affected by the issue. An interesting variation on this assignment would be to have students work in pairs and write "point-counterpoint" articles or editorials, looking at different sides of the same issue. Encourage students to use humor, satire, and other devices to get their point across in an entertaining way.

You may want to have students stage "point-counterpoint" talk show, where both sides present their points and debate the two sides of the issue. Have the students take on the persona of their pseudonyms.

ONLINE RESOURCES

<http://www.historycarper.com/resources/twobf1/contents.htm>

The History Carper website contains an extensive collection of Franklin's writings. To explore some of his works written under pseudonyms, look for the Silence Dogood and Busy Body letters.

<http://www.cyberlibel.com/libel.html>

What is Libel and Other Questions addresses frequently asked questions about libel.

<http://www.factmonster.com/ce6/society/A0829656.html>

Fact Monster contains an in-depth definition of libel and slander.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

Evaluate students on how clearly, persuasively, and interestingly they communicate their ideas about the issue or topic. Students should use humor, satire, or other literary devices. Students should write from the point of view of their created pseudonym. Students should also be evaluated for their contributions to class discussions. Students' work may also be assessed for proper spelling, grammar, and mechanics.

EXTENSIONS & ADAPTATIONS

- Students can research and report on the use of pseudonyms throughout history in literature, in the arts, and in other areas.
- Students can choose an important school, local, or national issue, then draft, edit, and revise a persuasive letter to the editor (under the students' actual names).
- Students can research one of Franklin's pseudonyms and write a letter or essay from the point of view of Martha Shortface, Silence Dogood, or Richard Saunders, for example.



ACTIVITY 5 • Being Better

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Throughout his life, Benjamin Franklin tried to find ways to improve himself intellectually, morally, and physically. Students will research and learn about some of the methods that Franklin designed or employed. Then they will identify something that they would like to improve about themselves and create and follow a personal self-improvement plan. After a week or so, students will evaluate how well their plan worked and write a short report about their experience. This activity is not part of the "core" curriculum, but may be used in a health, language arts, or social studies class.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Research some of the things Benjamin Franklin did to improve himself
- Establish a self-improvement plan and follow it for at least one week
- Write a report that assesses the effectiveness of the self-improvement program

TIME REQUIRED

Approximately one class period to introduce the activity and one week out-of-class to complete it.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

- Television, VCR or DVD player, videotape or DVD of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
- Computers with Internet access (optional)

NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARDS FOR HEALTH EDUCATION

from AAHPED (a national health and physical education association)

Standard 3) Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks. Performance indicators include identifying responsible and harmful behaviors, developing health-enhancing strategies, and managing stress.

Standard 6) Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting and decision-making skills to enhance health. Performance indicators focus on setting reasonable and attainable goals and developing positive decision-making skills.

CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

from the National Council for the Social Studies Strand IV: Individual Development and Identity) The learner can work independently and cooperatively within groups and institutions to accomplish goals.

SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARDS

from the National Research Council

Standard F) Students should develop understanding of personal and community health.



ACTIVITY 5 • Being Better

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

Ask students to think about different things that people generally try to improve about themselves. Students' answers will vary greatly, but may include such ideas as: weight loss/gain, grades, personal appearance, relationships, etc. Explain that the class is going to explore the concept of self-improvement.

Show Episode 1 of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN or the segment that deals with Franklin's self-improvement program. **VHS Timecode: 01:27:00 - 01:29:50**

Emphasize how Benjamin Franklin was a very practical person. When he was a young man, he believed that by living a virtuous life he could advance in his career and make better contacts in the business world. He set up

and followed a program for himself that centered on thirteen different virtues.

Direct them to go to www.pbs.org/benfranklin and read the "Self-improvement" section in Wit and Wisdom to learn more about how Franklin tried to improve himself.

Tell students that they are going to set up a program like Franklin's for themselves. Explain that they can choose anything in their lives that they would like to improve. It might involve personal behavior or habits. It could involve something having to do with school. It might be doing better at a sport. Encourage students to choose small, rather than large, things to improve. Tell them they are going for improvement, not perfection.

After students have decided what they want to improve, they are to create a plan that will help them achieve their goal. **Review and approve each student's plan for safety and appropriateness before students are allowed to proceed.** They will follow that plan for one week, and then write a report evaluating their success (or failure). Explain that it is important to follow the plan. Tell them that it might be helpful to take notes about their experiences. The report should include information on why the student chose the particular thing to improve, what their plan was, how well they followed it, and how successful it was.

NOTE: Assure students that their work will be kept confidential, should they choose something personal to improve.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

Students should be evaluated on their report, not on how well their self-improvement program worked. Check that students have explained why they chose their particular improvement, how they devised their plan, and how well they followed the plan. Students should conclude with an assessment of how their experiment went. What was successful? What was particularly challenging? Etc.

EXTENSIONS & ADAPTATIONS

- Students may want to follow their program for a more extended period of time to see how well it works.
- Encourage students to take the Virtue Quiz at the Franklin website www.pbs.org/benfranklin/exp_virtue.html to see how they rate with some of Franklin's virtues.
- After students have completed this activity, you may wish to ask for volunteers to share their experiences with the class.



ACTIVITY 6 • Superstition vs. Science

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Benjamin Franklin was one of the greatest scientific minds of the 18th century, laying the foundation for much of our modern scientific understanding. Along with his well-known work with electricity, he also contributed to meteorology, oceanography, health, physical fitness, and physics. Yet, Franklin's scientific understanding was limited by the collective knowledge of the period, much of which was based on superstition, religion, and folk wisdom. Using the Internet and print resources, students will study some of the common scientific theories and beliefs of the colonial period, compare those ideas to what we know today, and present their findings.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Research information about the history of science, focusing on the 18th century
- Explain the background of 18th century scientific belief
- Compare 18th century scientific beliefs with current scientific understanding
- Write and present a report on their findings

TIME REQUIRED

Less than one class period to introduce the project; two class periods for final presentations (optional). Approximately one week out-of-class for student work on the project.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

- Television, VCR or DVD player, videotape or DVD of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
- Computers with Internet access (highly recommended)
- Access to reference materials on the history of science (required)

NATIONAL STANDARDS

SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARDS

from the National Research Council
Standard G) Students should develop understanding of science as a human endeavor; nature of scientific knowledge; historical perspectives

CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

from the National Council for the Social Studies
Strand II: Time, Continuity, and Change) The learner will systematically employ processes of critical historical inquiry to reconstruct and reinterpret the past, such as using a variety of sources and checking their credibility, validating and weighing evidence for claims, and searching for causality.

Strand VIII: Science, Technology, and Society: The learner can analyze how science and technology influence the core values, beliefs, and attitudes of society, and how core values, beliefs, and attitudes of society shape scientific and technological change

STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

from the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English
Standard 1) Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Standard 2) Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

Standard 5) Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

Standard 7) Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

Standard 8) Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.



ACTIVITY 6 • Superstition vs. Science

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

Begin by asking students to explain what lightning is. Depending on their knowledge, students will present a number of descriptions about lightning being a form of electricity. Play "devil's advocate" and tell students that lightning is caused by angry gods, especially lightning that causes property or personal damage. Follow this by asking students to explain what electricity is. Students will probably give definitions about electricity being a flow of electrons through a conductor. Again, take a contrary position and tell students that everyone knows that electricity is a fluid like water or oil and that it is caused by some sort of magical force in nature, similar to magnetic attraction.

Explain to students that not much more than 200 years ago, most people, including many scientists, held theories not unlike the ones you just expressed. Much of what we know today about the natural world has come as the result of inquiry and objective scientific investigation. In the 18th century, most "scientific" knowledge was based on superstition, religion, or conventional folk wisdom. Enlightenment thinkers such as Isaac Newton, Joseph Priestley, and Benjamin Franklin began to examine scientific phenomena with an objective and scientific approach. Their work, along with many other "natural philosophers" (what scientists were called in the 18th century), led to the modern scientific method and our current understanding of the world.

Show Episode 1 of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN or the portion where Franklin investigates electricity.
VHS timecode: 01:44:30 - 01:54:30

After watching, discuss some of the 18th century ideas of science that were shown in the video.

Tell students that their assignment is to do some research about scientific beliefs in the 18th century and to compare those beliefs to what we know now. Tell students that they should also examine any major discoveries that may have led to our current understanding. Challenge students to find some of the more peculiar or outlandish beliefs. Students may choose any area of science. For example, medical science of the 18th century held many beliefs that have been debunked by modern scientists, such as bleeding and purging patients to cure ills. Tell students that they may choose one specific scientific concept or two to three related concepts. Encourage them to include information about specific work by specific scientists such as Franklin or Newton.

When students have completed their research and written their reports, you may wish to have them present their findings to the class.

NOTE: This assignment is appropriate for both individual and group work. If you choose to have students work in groups, make sure each group is composed of a variety of students with different skills. In addition, you may wish to take advantage of the cross-curricular features of this activity and collaborate with other teachers in science, social studies, and/or language arts on the assignment.

ONLINE RESOURCES

You may want to refer students to the following websites to begin their research.

<http://newark.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/18th/science.html>

Rutgers University maintains this site with links to information about 18th century science topics.

<http://www.pbs.org/kqed/demonbarber/bloodletting/index.html>

This PBS website looks at medical practices such as bloodletting, the humors, and surgical techniques.

<http://www.ushistory.org/brandywine/special/art06.htm>

This URL is from ushistory.org and looks at some colonial medical practices.

Suggest that students use a search engine such as Google to find additional information on the Internet.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

Student reports should be evaluated for completeness of information, accurate scientific content, and logical presentation. Student work should be evaluated for:

- completely and accurately presenting information about the 18th century scientific belief(s)
- clearly and accurately explaining the current scientific understanding of the same concept(s)
- citing any important persons and/or discoveries that led to our current scientific understanding

If students work in groups, you may also wish to evaluate students for:

- completing all individual and group assignments
- working cooperatively and efficiently within the group
- participating in the group presentation
- cooperating with others while using the Internet

For self-evaluation, each member of the group should evaluate his or her contributions and performance, as well as the contributions and performance of other group members.

EXTENSIONS & ADAPTATIONS

- Have students log on to www.pbs.org/benfranklin and explore the "Inquiring Mind" section of the website.
- Students may want to explore some of the more outlandish beliefs in a specific area of science such as physics, chemistry, or medicine.
- Have students write a science fiction short story, based on current scientific theory, in which someone in the future looks at the "ridiculous" scientific theories of the 20th and 21st centuries.



ACTIVITY 7 • Invention Convention

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Benjamin Franklin was one of the most prolific inventors to ever live. He created many inventions that are still used today. Much of the genius of Franklin's inventions came out of his ability to see a need or problem and then come up with a solution. Sometimes he made improvements on other people's inventions, other times he came up with something entirely unique. In this lesson, students learn the process that inventors follow by identifying a problem or need, investigating ways of addressing the problem, and inventing a solution. Students do not have to actually build their inventions, but can write descriptions and draw diagrams to show how the inventions work.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Research information about some of Benjamin Franklin's inventions
- Identify a problem or need that could benefit from some type of invention
- Investigate ways to address the problem or need
- Design an invention to address the problem or need
- Formally present their investigation

TIME REQUIRED

One class period to introduce the project; two class periods for final presentations. Approximately two weeks out-of-class for total project.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

- Television, VCR or DVD player, videotape or DVD of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
- Computers with Internet access (recommended)
- Computers with illustration or CAD software (optional)

NATIONAL STANDARDS

SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARDS

from the National Research Council
Standard A) Students should develop abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry; understandings about scientific inquiry

Standard E) Students should develop abilities of technological design; understandings about science and technology.

STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

from the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English
Standard 7) Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

Standard 8) Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.



ACTIVITY 7 • Invention Convention

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

Note: Cooperative groups are recommended for this activity. However, the activity may also be performed by individual students.

Begin by asking students about what they consider the most important invention or their favorite invention. Student answers will vary. Have students explain why they chose their particular invention and then ask them what life would be like without that invention.

Have students go to www.pbs.org/benfranklin and read "It's the Little Things" in the Inquiring Mind section of the website.

You may want to talk about some of Franklin's inventions that are listed there.

Franklin was a very practical person, and all of his inventions were created to make life better in one way or another. Explain that most inventions are created to solve a problem or to fill a need—"necessity is the mother of invention." (FYI, Ben Franklin didn't coin that phrase.)

Tell students that their assignment is to identify a problem or need and then to come up with an invention that fixes or improves the situation. Explain that students do not actually have to build their invention, but they need to describe what it looks like, how it works, and how it would address the identified problem or need. Students should draw diagrams or illustrations if necessary. Tell students that their inventions should be as practical as possible.

When students have had time to do the assignment, they should

make a formal presentation of their invention. The presentation should identify the need or problem, explain the process that students went through to come up with a solution, and describe how their invention works.

ONLINE RESOURCES

http://www.pbs.org/teacher_source/science.html
TeacherSource - Science and Technology is a detailed list of PBS links that deal with inventions and inventors. You can select information based on grade level & topic area.

www.invent.org
National Inventors Hall of Fame is a website that profiles important inventors and how their inventions have affected our lives.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

Student inventions should be evaluated for addressing a real need or problem, for creativity in design, and for practicality. Student presentations should be evaluated for clarity and interest of content. Individual students should be evaluated for:

- thoughtfully and accurately completing all individual and group assignments
- working cooperatively and efficiently within the group
- participating in the group presentation
- participating in class discussions
- cooperating with others while using the Internet

For self-evaluation, each member of the group should evaluate his or her contributions and performance, as well as the contributions and performance of other group members.

EXTENSIONS & ADAPTATIONS

- Show Episode 2 of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN or the segment that deals with Franklin's invention of the glass armonica. **VHS timecode: 02:23:05 - 02:24:40**
- Have students research and report on the patent process for new inventions. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office website, which can be found at <http://www.uspto.gov>, has pages geared specifically towards K-12 students. These pages contain interesting and fun information about intellectual property and are located at www.uspto.gov/kids.
- Have students research inventions, especially "crazy" or impractical inventions that have been patented, and then report their findings to the class.
- Invite a local inventor to class to talk about his or her invention(s). The United Inventor's Association has a webpage at www.uiausa.com/InventorOrg.htm that lists inventor organizations, searchable by state. You may want to contact one of these groups and ask if they know of an inventor willing to speak with your class. In addition, many companies and professional associations have speakers' bureaus or provide a list of people who are willing to speak with school and community groups. Contact local branches of engineering, software development, chemical, or electronic professional groups.





ACTIVITY 8 • Hit 'em with a Broadside

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Benjamin Franklin was one of the foremost printers and publishers in the American colonies. He printed and published everything from paper money to newspapers, from almanacs to "broadsides." Broadsides were a single sheet of paper that generally had printing only on one side. In the colonial period, broadsides provided inexpensive information and entertainment to the masses, like television, radio, and the Internet do today. In this activity, students will research the history of broadsides and create a broadside of their own, satirizing or commenting upon some local or current event.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Research information about the history of broadsides
- Explain the role and importance of broadsides in the 18th century
- Describe the content of a variety of broadsides
- Write, edit, design, and produce a modern broadside

TIME REQUIRED

One class period to introduce the project and two class periods for creating broadsides. Note: Work may also be done out-of-class.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

- Television, VCR or DVD player, videotape or DVD of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
- Computers with Internet access (highly recommended)
- Computer printer (optional)
- Scanner (optional)

NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

from the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English

Standard 1) Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Standard 2) Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

Standard 4) Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

Standard 5) Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

Standard 6) Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

Standard 7) Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

Standard 8) Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Standard 12) Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

Strand II: Time, Continuity, and Change) The learner can systematically employ processes of critical historical inquiry to reconstruct and reinterpret the past, such as using a variety of sources and checking their credibility, validating and weighting evidence for claims, and searching for causality.

Strand X: Civic Ideals and Practices) The learner can practice forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic society.

Strand X: Civic Ideals and Practices) The learner can analyze and evaluate the influence of various forms of citizen action on public policy



ACTIVITY 8 • Hit 'em with a Broadside

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

Ask students about their favorite mass media—which do they prefer: television, movies, radio, the Internet, etc.? After a brief discussion, ask students what they would do for mass media if there were no electricity. How would they get information out to the "masses?" Students may come up with a variety of suggestions, which you can use as a springboard to a discussion about broadsides.

Explain that broadsides were a common form of printed material in the 17th, 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries. Broadsides were commonly printed on one side of a large sheet of paper.

Broadsides were inexpensive to produce and were an early form of mass media, long before newspapers, radio, TV or the Internet. What was actually printed on the broadsides varied greatly—from posters for meetings, plays, and events to ballads, political commentary, and satirical essays. Many broadsides contained the lyrics of popular songs of the day.

Tell students they are going to do some research about the history of broadsides, and then create their own. Direct students to the Internet to read about and view some historical broadsides (See Online Resources).

After students have had time to do Internet or library research, ask students to share what they've found out. From the discussion, generate a list of common characteristics of broadsides. Tell students to try to include as many of these characteristics in the broadsides they create.

You may wish to have students present their finished broadsides to the class, explaining why they chose the particular topic, how they went about designing their broadside, etc.

Note: You may want to limit or specify the type of content students include on their broadsides to relate in some way to other curriculum units you are doing. You may also wish to specify the size of the broadside and if students are allowed to use computers to generate their work. This assignment may be done individually or in cooperative groups.

ONLINE RESOURCES

<http://www.contemplator.com/history/broadside.html>

This commercial site contains a history of broadsides and a number of links to other Internet sites with information on broadsides.

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/rbpehtml/pehome.html>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/bdsds/bdsdhome.html>

These two websites about broadsides are maintained by the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

<http://www.swem.wm.edu/SpColl/RBMss/Broadsides/broadsid.html>

The Swem Library at the College of William and Mary has an Internet site that provides images of historic broadsides.

Encourage students to use a search engine such as Google to find additional information about broadsides.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

Student broadsides should be assessed against the list of broadside characteristics generated by the class. You should also evaluate the design and content of the students' work. If students work in groups, individuals should also be evaluated for:

- thoughtfully and accurately completing all individual and group assignments
- working cooperatively and efficiently within the group
- participating in class discussions
- cooperating with others while using the Internet

For self-evaluation, each member of the group should evaluate his or her contributions and performance, as well as the contributions and performance of other group members.

EXTENSIONS & ADAPTATIONS

- Watch Episode 1 of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN and discuss Franklin's work as a printer and publisher **VHS timecode: 01:14:20 - 01:20:00.**
- Have students log on to www.pbs.org/benfranklin and explore the "Wit and Wisdom" section of the website.
- Create a classroom or hallway display of student broadsides.
- Have groups create a video or audio "broadside," which translates the content of a student broadside into a more contemporary media form.

