



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN-THEMED SUB PLANS

President's Day Substitute Plans

Date: February

Academic Time: 220 minutes

See all printable activities at the end of this document.

Introduction (40 Minutes)

Start the conversation by asking students if they've ever heard of the term polymath. A polymath is a person who has a vast amount of knowledge in different fields or subjects. Benjamin Franklin was considered a polymath.

- Ask students if they can think of other people in history who may qualify as polymaths? Examples include :Leonardo da Vinci, Isaac Newton and others.
- Then, ask students, "Who in your life comes closest to being a polymath?" Allow students to share their thoughts and ideas.
- Next, ask students if they know why Benjamin Franklin was considered a polymath? Allow for responses. Tell them Franklin was a scientist, inventor, writer, diplomat, ambassador, and much more. He is one of the most important people in American history.
- Then, ask students if they know any of the things that Benjamin Franklin invented. Tell them that Franklin is credited with inventing the lightning rod, Franklin Stove, bifocal glasses, swim fins, and other useful things. For added depth on these, visit <https://mrnussbaum.com/benjamin-franklin-s-inventions>
- Finally, explain that Franklin is so important in American history, that his face is on the United States \$100 bill. Pass out the \$100 bill drawing page and allow students to color.

Language Arts Activity One:

Benjamin Franklin Fact or Fiction Reading Comprehension (*40 min*)

- Introduce the activity to students. Tell them the activity contains a reading passage and ten statements that students have to verify as either fact or fiction.
- Have students work independently.
- Give 15-20 minutes to read and finish questions
- Have students volunteer to read portions of the narrative aloud. Use your discretion to stop and discuss.
- Review statements.

Language Arts Activity Two:

Benjamin Franklin the Last Conversation (*30 min*)

- Explain to students that Benjamin Franklin had a son named William, who was appointed as the Royal Governor of New Jersey. When the Revolutionary War broke out, William's loyalty remained with England, while his father was an ardent Patriot. This caused major conflict in the family. The conflict was so severe, that for all intents and purposes, Benjamin disowned William. Following the war, William fled to England and lived the rest of his life there.
- Introduce activity to students. Tell them that they must use their knowledge of the differences between Patriots and Loyalists to craft a script that outlines the "final" conversation between William and Ben Franklin.
- Monitor students and allow them to share their scripts.

Art Activity One:

The Franklin Shield (*30 minutes*)

- **STUDENTS WILL NEED COLORING MATERIALS**
- Explain to students the concept of a family shield.
- Based on the previous discussions about the accomplishments of Benjamin Franklin, explain to students that they must design a Franklin family shield that must include at least four symbols that reflect those accomplishments. Remind students their shields should be colored.
- Allow students to share and describe the symbols they chose.

Art Activity Two:

Ben Franklin's Quarter (35 minutes)

- Ask if students know what America's national symbol is (Bald Eagle).
- Ask students if they have ever seen a Bald Eagle and to describe when and where.
- Tell students that these birds are fairly common today and can be found in habitats with large bodies of water.
- Explain to students that Bald Eagles are birds of prey that feed primarily on fish, but are also known to feed on dead animals, and to "steal" food from gulls and ospreys.
- For this reason, Benjamin Franklin objected to the adoption of the Bald Eagle as our national symbol, and instead lobbied for the Wild Turkey.
- Read the description of the activity to the students and allow them to work independently on creating a quarter with the wild turkey on the reverse side, rather than the eagle.
- Allow students to share their new quarters.

Closing Activity:

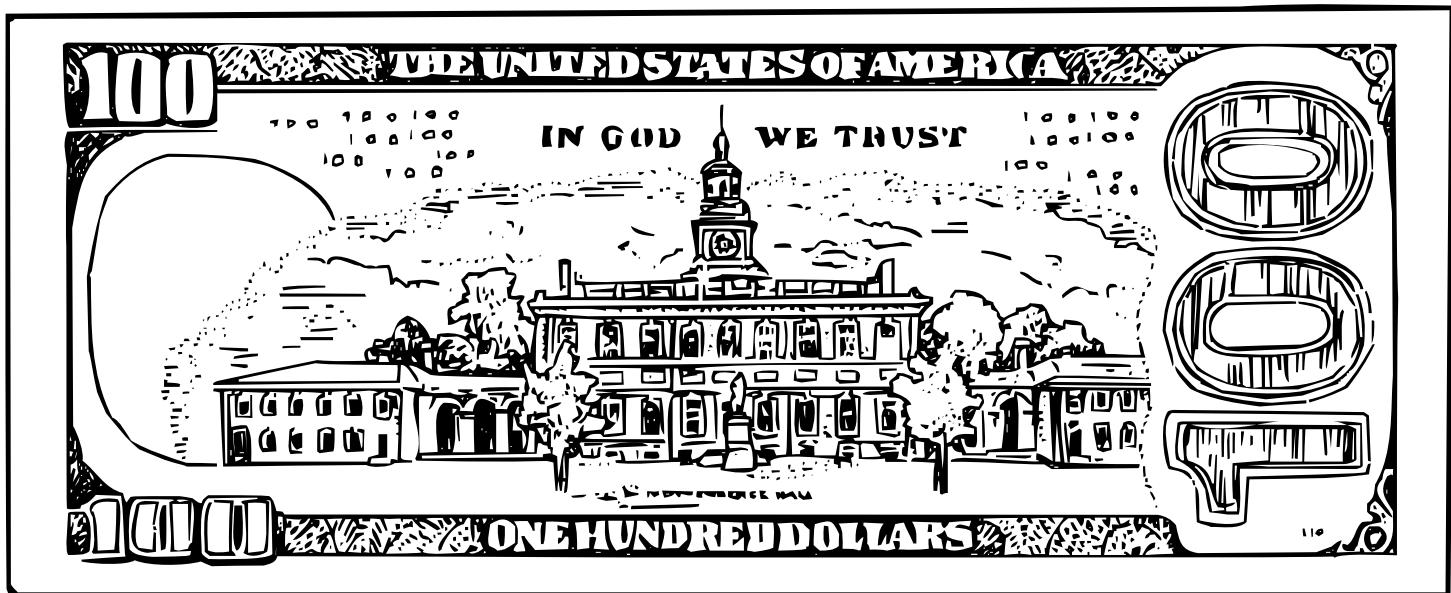
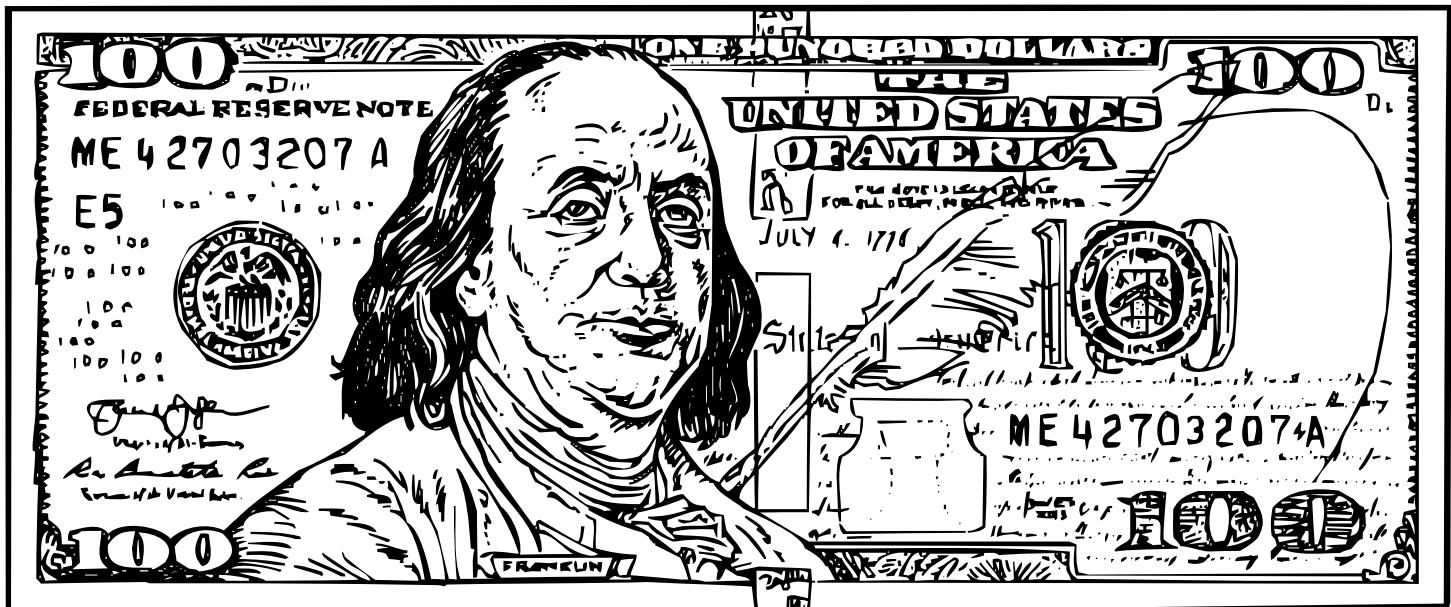
Join or Die (45 minutes)

- Explain to students that Benjamin Franklin was a prominent American well before the onset of the Revolutionary War. He was a publisher and diplomat, and had spent many years in England as a colonial ambassador.
- Show students the Join or Die image found on the activity document. Tell them the image is a powerful symbol both then and today.
- Ask students to describe what they think the snake symbol and Join, or Die phrase could represent.
- Then, read the description on the activity document that explains the symbolism of the image. Explain that contrary to popular belief, Franklin's image was not really about revolution, but more about unity with England.
- Transition into a conversation about modern symbols. Ask students to brainstorm symbols they associate with popular brands.
- Have students work independently on the activity and allow them to share the corporate logos or symbols they wrote about.

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Fact or Fiction?

Name: _____

Below is a biography on Benjamin Franklin. On the following page is a chart with ten statements. Indicate whether each statement is fact or fiction.

Benjamin Franklin was born on January 17, 1706, in Boston, Massachusetts. He was one of ten children born to Josiah Franklin, a soap maker, and his wife, Abiah Folger. Josiah wanted Benjamin to enter the clergy but could not afford to send him for schooling. Consequently, when Benjamin was 12, he apprenticed for his brother James who was a printer. Benjamin worked extremely hard at formatting the text and composing publications.

Silence Dogood

When Benjamin was 15, his brother printed the first editorial newspaper in Boston. Unlike other publications throughout Boston that simply reprinted events, James's newspaper, called *The New England Courant*, printed articles and editorial columns. Benjamin was very interested in his brother's newspaper and desperately wanted to help him write it. Unfortunately, he knew that James would not allow a fifteen-year-old boy to write articles. Benjamin thought of a plan. He would write under an anonymous pen name and slip the articles under the door at night. He chose the name Silence Dogood. Articles written by Silence Dogood became very popular. People throughout Boston wanted to know who she was. She spoke out about issues abroad and the poor treatment of women. Finally, after 16 letters, Benjamin confessed to James that he was Silence Dogood. James was very angry and jealous of the attention Benjamin received.

Off to London

Nevertheless, the paper continued. James's editorials became increasingly critical of the Puritan leadership within Boston, especially for their support of the smallpox inoculation (which the Franklins believed made people sicker). James was incarcerated for his criticism and Benjamin was left in charge of publication. When James was released from jail, he beat Benjamin, despite the fact that he had kept the publication afloat. In 1723, Benjamin ran away and eventually ended up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he met Deborah Read. While in Philadelphia, Benjamin lived with her family and soon found work as an apprentice printer. Franklin was an excellent printer and was sent by the governor of Pennsylvania to London to purchase font types and printing supplies. In exchange for his service, the governor promised to help Benjamin start his own printing business. In the meantime, Benjamin and Deborah had grown very close, and she had begun to suggest they should get married. Benjamin felt unprepared and left for England. Unfortunately, the governor lied, and Benjamin was forced to work in London for several months. Deborah married another man while he was gone (but the relationship was far from over).

The Pennsylvania Gazette and Poor Richard's Almanac

Upon his return to Philadelphia, Benjamin borrowed money and started his own printing business. He worked extremely hard and soon received government printing contracts. Benjamin's business became very successful and he became well-known throughout Philadelphia. In 1730, he married his sweetheart, Deborah Reed, whose husband had left her.

In 1729, Franklin bought the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and turned it into the most successful newspaper in the colonies. His newspaper contained the very first political cartoons. Benjamin continued to design and author creative and popular publications. In 1733, he printed his *Poor Richard's Almanac*. While most almanacs of the time contained weather reports and other predictions, *Poor Richard's Almanac* contained lively writing, interesting facts, and creative sayings—many which are still used today. “A penny saved is a penny earned” came from Franklin’s almanac.

Modernizing Philadelphia

While Benjamin was busy with his publications, he also found time for charity and public work. Franklin launched various campaigns designed to improve the quality of life for Philadelphia's residents. He helped in lighting and paving Philadelphia's streets, cleaning up its environment, and in starting America's first circulation library. He also started the American Philosophical Society as well as the Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia Union Fire Company, and the Philadelphia Contribution for Insurance Against Loss by Fire Company.

Making History in Science!

In the meantime, Benjamin was also conducting science experiments. He had already invented the Franklin stove, which was effective in keeping large houses warm in the winter, as well as bifocal glasses. He soon became interested in the concept of electricity. In 1752, Franklin devised a simple experiment to see if electricity could be harnessed from a storm. He succeeded and gained international fame.

The Statesman

Soon Benjamin turned to politics to satisfy his enormous craving to learn. He soon became the colonial representative for Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Georgia, and New Jersey in England. He stayed in England for 18 years, enjoying the life of a wealthy diplomat. Although he begged his wife to join him in England, she refused and eventually died while Benjamin was in England.

The Hutchinson Affair

In 1765, England passed the Stamp Act on the colonies, which forced Americans to pay taxes on any sort of printed document. America was outraged, and word soon spread across England about the rumblings in the colonies. Franklin helped persuade Parliament to repeal the act but grew sick of the corruption he saw among political officials in England. He began to formulate a plan for

united colonies. Franklin was soon embarrassed by members of Parliament for exposing the “Hutchinson Letters Affair” to the colonies. Thomas Hutchinson, the royal governor of Massachusetts, was a British official sent to Massachusetts to pretend to side with the colonists concerning their complaints against England. In reality, he was controlled by Parliament and had no intention of helping the colonists.

A Founding Father

Benjamin Franklin then came home to join the cause for independence. He was elected a member of the Continental Congress and helped Thomas Jefferson draft the Declaration of Independence. After he signed the Declaration of Independence, Franklin set sail for France as America’s ambassador. Franklin’s charm and persuasion were successful in convincing the French to sign the 1778 Treaty of Alliance, which asserted France’s intention to aid the colonies in their quest for independence and secure loans for military supplies. In 1783, Franklin attended the signing of the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Revolutionary War.

After returning from France, Franklin became a member of the Constitutional Convention and signed the Constitution in 1787. He died three years later on April 17, 1790. Twenty thousand people attended his funeral.

	FACT	FICTION
Silence Dogood was actually a young Benjamin Franklin.		
Benjamin’s brother ran the <i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i> , a popular newspaper.		
Poor Richard’s Almanac was similar to other almanacs of the time.		
Benjamin helped to improve the lives of Philadelphia’s citizens.		
Benjamin Franklin invented things like the Franklin Stove, bifocal glasses, and electricity.		
Benjamin served as the colonial representative of four different colonies.		
Benjamin lived in England for 18 years; while he was there, his wife Deborah died.		
Benjamin actually supported the British when they issued the 1765 Stamp Act.		
Benjamin Franklin earned praise and respect in England for exposing “the Hutchinson Letters Affairs.”		
Benjamin was involved in the drafting of the Declaration of Independence.		
Benjamin Franklin wrote the Constitution.		

Answers:

	FACT	FICTION
Silence Dogood was actually a young Benjamin Franklin.	X	
Benjamin's brother ran the <i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i> , a popular newspaper.		X
Poor Richard's Almanac was similar to other almanacs of the time.		X
Benjamin helped to improve the lives of Philadelphia's citizens.	X	
Benjamin Franklin invented things like the Franklin Stove, bifocal glasses, and electricity.		X
Benjamin served as the colonial representative of four different colonies.	X	
Benjamin lived in England for 18 years; while he was there, his wife Deborah died.	X	
Benjamin actually supported the British when they issued the 1765 Stamp Act.		X
Benjamin Franklin earned praise and respect in England for exposing "the Hutchinson Letters Affairs."		X
Benjamin was involved in the drafting of the Declaration of Independence.	X	
Benjamin Franklin wrote the Constitution.		X



Name _____

Loyalists/Patriots: Dialogue between father and son.

When William Franklin was 21 years old, he accompanied his father, Benjamin, on what would become one of the most famous experiments of all time – Franklin's discovery that lightning was electricity. By 1763, William had secured his position as Royal Governor of New Jersey – likely because his father lobbied the king. During the Revolutionary War, however, Benjamin pleaded with his son to take up the Patriot cause, but William refused and the relationship between father and son was ruined forever. In 1782, William left for England and never returned to America. He saw his father briefly one last time when Benjamin stopped in England on his way back from France.

What do you think their last conservation was like? Use your knowledge of the reasoning behind the Patriot and Loyalist causes to compose a politically charged “last dialogue” between the two Franklin's. Visit <http://www.mrnussbaum.com/amrevolution/loyalists.htm> to learn more.

(In England)

Benjamin (somberly): It has been a long time, son. Has our time apart given you new insight into the Patriot cause?

William:

Benjamin:

William:

Benjamin:

William:

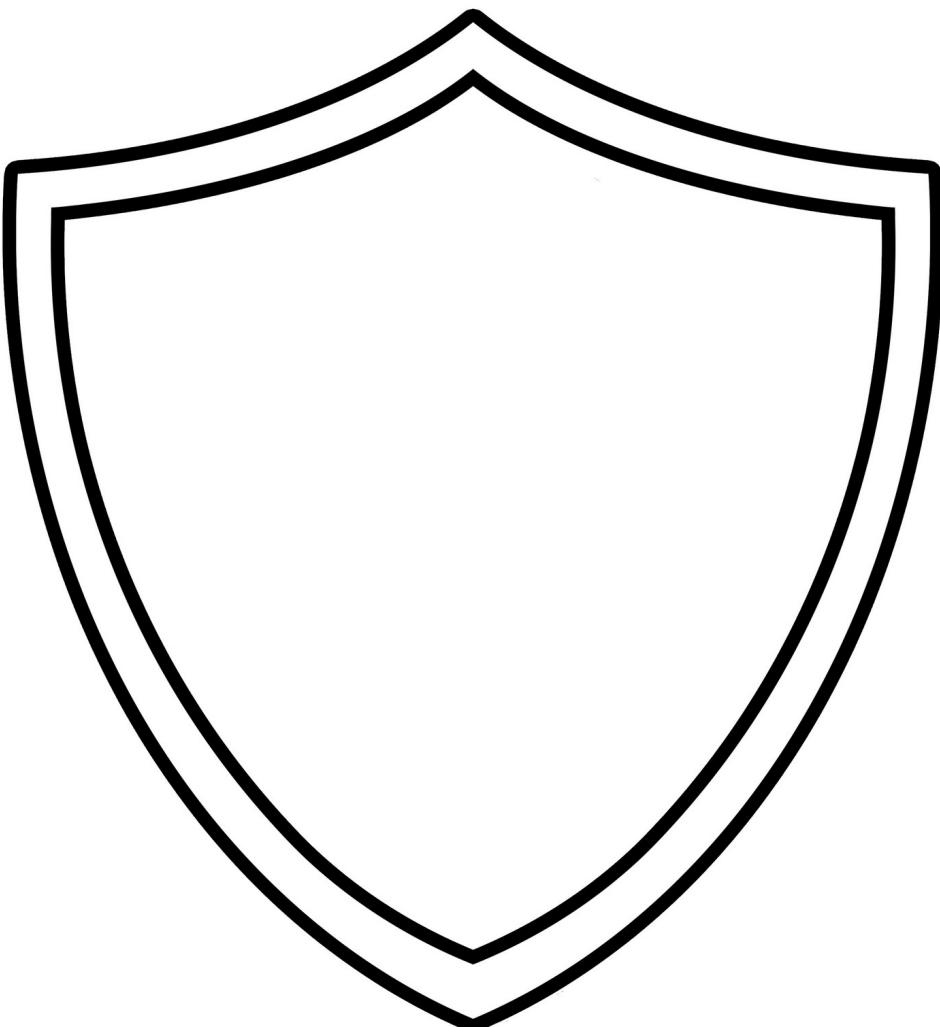
Benjamin:

William:

The Many Hats of Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin was unquestionably one of the most remarkable figures in American history. For starters, he discovered that lightning was electricity through his famous key experiment. He was also a prolific inventor, creating the Franklin Stove, bifocals, and the lightning rod among other things. He penned Poor Richard's Almanac, a famous publication which included predictions, jokes, and sayings such as "a penny saved is a penny earned." He helped the city of Philadelphia create its first library, fire insurance company, and hospital. He also founded the University of Pennsylvania in 1740. Finally, he was a founding father who spent many years in Europe championing the American cause, before coming back to America to help write the Declaration of Independence.

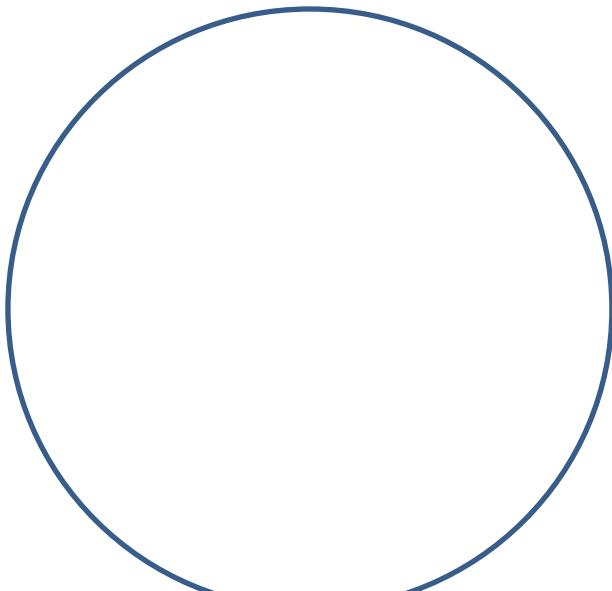
If you could create a shield or coat of arms that illustrated Benjamin Franklin's life and all of this accomplishments. What would it look like? Use lots of color.



If Benjamin Franklin Got His Way....

To Benjamin Franklin, the selection of the bald eagle was an insult to the new nation. According to Franklin, the eagle "is a bird of bad moral character; he does not get his living honestly. You may have seen him perched in some dead tree where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the labor of the fishing hawk and, when that diligent bird has at length taken a fish and is bearing it to his nest for his young ones, the bald eagle pursues him and takes the fish. With all this injustice, he is never in good case."

Franklin was much more enthusiastic about the wild turkey as America's national symbol. He called it a "bird of courage" that "would not hesitate to attack a grenadier of the British guards who should presume to invade his farm yard with a red coat on." Despite Franklin's protests, Congress made the bald eagle America's national symbol. Today, the bald eagle is one of the most ubiquitous symbols of America and appears on the back of the American quarter (among many other places). Pretend Benjamin Franklin got his way and the turkey became America's symbol. Design the "new" reverse side of the quarter considering the turkey as the national symbol.

Current Reverse Side of Quarter	New Reverse Side with Turkey
	

Symbols of the American Revolution and Today: Join, or Die and Corporate Logos



The above symbol remains one of the iconic images of the Revolutionary War. Originally made as a woodcut by Benjamin Franklin, it was intended to symbolize the need for unity among Britain's North American colonies toward the efforts in the French and Indian War. According to superstition at the time, a snake cut into pieces would become whole again if assembled before sunset.

Similarly, today's companies and corporations use symbols in their logos. Use the chart below to label and color three corporate logos that you are aware of and describe what you think each symbolizes.

	<p>The original "Golden Arches" logo was supposed to symbolize the architectural design of early McDonald's restaurants. Contrary to popular belief, it has nothing to do with French Fries or food.</p>