

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. He is famous for many reasons. He was a politician, a scientist, an inventor, an author, and a statesman. He was the youngest son in a family with 17 children.

Benjamin Franklin started out as an apprentice in his brother's print shop in Boston, and he created *The New-England Courant*, which was the first truly independent newspaper in the colonies. He wanted to write for the paper, but was not permitted to do so. Benjamin Franklin used a pseudonym to write for the paper. A pseudonym is a fictitious name used in place of a person's real name. He used the pseudonym of "Mrs. Silence Dogood," who was supposedly a middle-aged widow. His letters were published in the paper and became a topic of discussion around town. His brother did not know that Benjamin was actually writing the letters and was upset when he learned the truth. When he was only 17, Benjamin Franklin wound up running away to Philadelphia to seek a new start in life.

In 1733, Benjamin Franklin began publishing *Poor Richard's Almanac*. He wrote some of the material himself and also used material from other sources. He used the pseudonym Richard Saunders to publish this work, and he sold about 10,000 copies per year.

As an inventor, Ben Franklin accomplished many things. He invented the lightning rod, the glass harmonica, the Franklin stove, and bifocals. In 1743, he founded the American Philosophical Society, which was designed to help men discuss their theories and discoveries. Franklin himself was often found studying electricity and developing theories. He discovered the theory of electricity that still serves as the basis for our use of electric energy.

Benjamin Franklin was also responsible for creating the first lending library in 1731, which was called the Library Company of Philadelphia. He also hired the first American librarian, Louis Timothee, in 1732. The library books were originally kept in the homes of the first librarians. The collection was later moved to the second floor of the State House of Pennsylvania (which is now known as Independence Hall). In 1791, a new building was built to house the library.

Ben Franklin also created the Union Fire Company, which was one of the first fire companies in America. He was also very active in politics and was eventually elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1751. He later became the Postmaster General of North America. He also helped to obtain a charter for what was to become the first hospital in America. It was called Pennsylvania Hospital.

Ben Franklin was also chosen by the Pennsylvania Assembly as their delegate to the Second Continental Congress. He was appointed to be a member of the Committee of Five, which was the committee that drafted the Declaration of Independence. Benjamin Franklin is the only one of the Founding Fathers to have signed all four of the major documents involved in the founding of the United States: the Declaration of Independence, the Treaty of Paris, the Treaty of Alliance with France, and the United States Constitution.

Benjamin Franklin is a well-known historical figure. He contributed much to history and to the founding of the United States.

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## Benjamin Franklin Questions

### Multiple Choice:

1. Benjamin Franklin was all of the following EXCEPT:
  - a. politician
  - b. author
  - c. baker
  - d. printer
  
2. Benjamin Franklin invented all of the following EXCEPT:
  - a. bifocals
  - b. light bulb
  - c. lightning rod
  - d. glass harmonica
  
3. The first American librarian was:
  - a. Robert Lee
  - b. Mrs. Dogood
  - c. Louis Timothee
  - d. Ben Franklin

### Fill In:

4. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a fictitious name used in place of a person's real name.
  
5. In 1733, Benjamin Franklin began publishing \_\_\_\_\_. He wrote some of the material himself and also used material from other sources.
  
6. Ben Franklin created the \_\_\_\_\_, which was one of the first fire companies in America.
  
7. Ben Franklin was also chosen by the Pennsylvania Assembly as their delegate to the:  
\_\_\_\_\_.

### True or False:

- \_\_\_\_ 8. Benjamin Franklin was the Postmaster General of North America.
  
- \_\_\_\_ 9. Benjamin Franklin created *The New-England Courant*, which was the first truly independent newspaper in the colonies.

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