

Benjamin Franklin

1. Read the text and answer the questions



Benjamin Franklin was America's scientist, inventor, politician, philanthropist and business man. He is best known as the only Founding Father who signed all three documents that freed America from Britain. Franklin is credited with drafting *the Declaration of Independence* and *the American Constitution*. He also negotiated the Treaty of Paris which ended the Independence War against Britain.

Born in a middle class family, he was the 15th of 17 children and the youngest son. With only 2 years of formal education he rose to the

highest level of society. Unlike the other Founding Fathers, Franklin began as an artisan, with minimal formal education, and was the architect of his own fortune. He was a self-made man representing American social mobility through frugality and industriousness. According to historian Perry Miller, Benjamin Franklin has become the most "massively symbolic" figures in American history.

Public Servant

He strove to improve himself by cultivating personal virtues and taking on public projects for the benefit of society. One of his first public projects was to organize a block watch and raise money to pave and clean Philadelphia's roads. His projects gradually became more ambitious and included creating pensions and insurance companies and providing welfare for widows. He helped build the University of Pennsylvania to educate middle class children. He raised funds to build the nation's first hospital, Pennsylvania Hospital, for those who could not afford care and institutions for the mentally disabled. The nation's first lending library and the Union Fire Company were among his other contributions. This was long before governments began to provide services to their citizens.



THEY THAT CAN GIVE UP
ESSENTIAL LIBERTY TO OBTAIN
A LITTLE TEMPORARY SAFETY

Scientist

Benjamin Franklin was also a scientist. He proved by flying a kite that lightning was electricity and invented a rod to prevent it from hitting buildings. He invented bifocal glasses, charted the Gulf Stream, invented a clean burning stove and proposed theories on the contagiousness of the common cold. His approach was more practical than theoretical. His training as a craftsman made him more accomplished as an inventor.

Entrepreneur

Franklin was an ambitious entrepreneur, disciplined and industrious, working hard until late at night. He nurtured his appearance and reputation "I took care not only to be in reality industrious and frugal but to avoid all appearances of the contrary". He used the skills he had learned to open his own printing business. He acquired the Pennsylvania Gazette from his previous employer and created Poor Richard's Almanac.

Politician

As a politician he was the first one to propose the union of the colonies for common defense. He was accused as a royalist but when the time came he stood up for freedom becoming one of the Founding Fathers. Franklin negotiated the end of the war with England and was one of the signers of the Treaty of Paris. He was chosen to represent the Union as the first minister plenipotentiary to France, the equivalent of today's ambassador.

Benjamin Franklin's genius is centered on the use of his network of business and social connections. He leveraged this network to the benefit of his variety of interests from science and politics to business and

journalism. He was against slavery as an institution. For part of his life he held the usual prejudices against African Americans but he came to realize that they were "in every respect equal" to his own.

Benjamin Franklin died at age 84, on April 17, 1790. The cause of his death was empyema brought by attacks of pleurisy, which he had suffered earlier in his life. During his later years Franklin's health gradually deteriorated. He suffered from gout and had a large kidney stone which confined him to bed.



Match the words with their definitions.

1	Philanthropist	A	someone who does skilled work with their hands
2	Negotiate	B	power to influence people and get the results you want
3	Artisan	C	to have formal discussions with someone in order to reach an agreement with them
4	Frugal	D	careful when using money or food, or (of a meal) cheap or small in amount:
5	Welfare	E	(of a disease) able to be caught by touching someone with the disease or something the person has touched or worn, or (of a person) having this type of disease.
6	Contagious	F	physical and mental health and happiness, especially of a person.
7	Entrepreneur	G	usually a person who works hard
8	Industrious	H	to finish something successfully or to achieve something
9	Accomplish	I	a person or organization that employs people
10	Employer	J	an important official who works in a foreign country representing his or her own country there, and who is officially accepted in this position by that country
11	Ambassador	K	someone who starts their own business, especially when this involves seeing a new opportunity
12	Leverage	L	a person who helps the poor, especially by giving them money.
13	Slavery	M	to become worse
14	Prejudice	N	a person who supports a ruling king or queen or who believes that a king or queen should rule their country
15	Pleurisy	O	an unfair and unreasonable opinion or feeling, especially when formed without enough thought or knowledge
16	Deteriorate	P	either of a pair of small organs in the body that take away waste matter from the blood to produce urine
17	Royalist	Q	a way of considering or doing something.
18	Kidney	R	an agreement in which you pay a company money and they pay your costs if you have an accident, injury, etc.
19	Approach	S	a serious illness affecting the covering of the lungs, causing sharp pain when breathing
20	Insurance	T	the activity of legally owning other people who are forced to work for or obey you

3. Answer the questions.

1. What is Benjamin Franklin best known for?
2. What was his one of the first public projects?
3. What were his most prominent scientific achievements?
4. Which features made him a successful entrepreneur?
5. What were his achievements as a politician?