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Study Guide

for

**The
Autobiography of
Benjamin Franklin**

by Benjamin Franklin



 **Glencoe
McGraw-Hill**

New York, New York Columbus, Ohio Woodland Hills, California Peoria, Illinois

Meet Benjamin Franklin



If you would not be forgotten, as soon as you are dead and rotten, either write things worth reading, or do things worth the writing.

—Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanack*, 1738

Benjamin Franklin was a true Renaissance man. He was a diplomat, philosopher, inventor, scientist, and businessman. He wrote letters, articles, pamphlets, scientific papers, and an autobiography.

Despite his later prominence, Franklin had humble beginnings. Franklin's father, Josiah, had seventeen children from two marriages. Benjamin was the fifteenth child, born in 1706, and the youngest son. Josiah was a candlemaker and soapmaker in Boston, and he had to struggle to support his large family.

At first, Josiah Franklin planned to have Benjamin become a minister. But, after considering the expense of educating his son and the poor financial prospects in that profession, he decided that Benjamin should learn a trade instead.

Because Benjamin showed an interest in reading and writing, Josiah apprenticed him to another of his sons, James, a printer. Franklin identified himself with this trade to his last days, even though he retired from his own printing house when he was only forty-two years old.

Benjamin thought that his older brother James was too hard on him, and they often fought. When his apprenticeship ended, Franklin went to Philadelphia. This city, far more than his birthplace of Boston, became Franklin's home. In Philadelphia he established his own business and raised his family.

After Franklin retired from business in 1748, he embarked on a new career as a civil servant. He served in the Pennsylvania Assembly and became deputy postmaster-general. Sent to England as a representative of the Assembly, he spent five years there. During that time, he made the acquaintance of statesmen and scientists alike. Years later, he returned to England and found himself caught up in the growing tension between the thirteen colonies and the British government. Franklin's loyalties were divided. He felt affinities to the colonies and to King George II of England. When he could tolerate the British government's policies toward the American colonies no longer, he sailed back to the colonies. By the time his ship arrived, the first battles of the American Revolution had already been fought.

Franklin was chosen to serve on the Second Continental Congress, which, acting as the government for the colonies, declared independence from Britain and appointed George Washington as commander in chief of the American army. Franklin was one of five men selected to draft the Declaration of Independence, the formal document proclaiming freedom from British rule.

During the war, Franklin secured from France financial assistance for the colonies. He also helped formulate the peace treaty between the colonies and Great Britain. He was present at Versailles in 1783 when that treaty—the Treaty of Paris—was signed. He then returned to Philadelphia in 1785 to continue his public service. He was a delegate to the 1787 convention at which the U.S. Constitution was drafted. Three years later, in 1790, he died.

Franklin's long list of diplomatic and political accomplishments is impressive. However, he also contributed to the well-being of the colonists on an everyday level. His inventions include a stove that burned better than most, bifocals, and the lightning rod.

Introducing the Novel

[T] here are some books that never lose their appeal. . . . They are as vivid and interesting today as they ever were, and they will continue to be so until humanity itself has changed. . . . Benjamin Franklin's autobiography is one of these. It is the first American success story.

—from the introduction of a 1941 edition of the autobiography, published by Walter J. Black, New York

Benjamin Franklin was a prolific writer. In his many pamphlets, he wrote about everything from paper currency to the “proper” relationship between a king and his colonies. He wrote scholarly articles about electricity and other scientific topics, and his almanac was full of practical advice on all manner of topics. He also wrote hundreds of newspaper articles on social and political subjects.

Only in his autobiography did Franklin write about himself. Although it does not provide a chronological account of his life, it does shed light on the actions that Franklin took to rise from poverty to prominence. Written over a span of eighteen years, the autobiography is generally divided into four parts. The first part of the manuscript was written in 1771 in Twyford, a village about fifty miles outside of London. Franklin composed it for the benefit of his son, William, who was governor of New Jersey at the time.

Part Two, the shorter section, was written almost thirteen years later when Franklin was living in France as a representative for the United States. Franklin devotes this part to his plan for self-improvement—moral perfection, as he calls it. The virtues he sets out for himself are ones that he believes anyone can attain with strong will and determination. Even as a young man, he decided that, by industry and frugality, he would win the respect of colleagues as well as influential persons in his community. Given Franklin's reputation, which has endured to this day, it is safe to say that his plan worked.

The final sections were written in Philadelphia in 1788 and during the winter of 1789. These were Franklin's last years. Although he was very ill, he managed to dictate the words to his grandson,

recording events in his life up to 1758, the point at which Franklin began the most public part of his career. Upon his death, Philadelphia gave him a funeral befitting the man who had, as French economist Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot put it, “snatched the lightning from the skies and the sceptre from tyrants.”

In his autobiography, Franklin mentions many men—both English and American—who helped him, interested him, or challenged him with their views or their wit. On many occasions, he established friendships with men who “had read a little” and whose conversation was therefore interesting to him. Franklin was always drawn to people who wanted to improve themselves, just as he did. He notes that his rise from humble beginnings might serve as an example to others:

Having emerged from the poverty and obscurity in which I was born and bred to a state of affluence and some degree of reputation in the world, . . . [others may find my methods] suitable to their own situations and therefore fit to be imitated.

THE TIME AND PLACE

One distinguishing feature of Franklin's Pennsylvania was that it was a *proprietary* colony. Proprietary colonies were formed from large tracts of land in America given to individuals by the kings of England. The individuals could supervise and develop these colonies. William Penn's father served King Charles I of England for many years. Even after the king's execution, Admiral Penn continued to support the monarchy. During the English civil war (1642–1649), the Admiral went unpaid for his services. Upon his death, the government owed him a significant sum. His son, William, petitioned the new king, Charles II, to pay the sum by granting him land in North America. On March 4, 1681, Charles II's government approved Penn's petition.

Penn was given the responsibility of enlarging the empire, furthering its wealth, and civilizing the New World “by gentle and just manners.” Penn had “free, full and absolute power” to make laws for the colony. Of course, the laws had to conform with

England's laws, and the king's council had the right to veto any that didn't meet its approval.

The residents of Pennsylvania, recruited by Penn, were a mix of Germans, Scots-Irish, Swedes, Moravians from what is now known as the Czech Republic, and English Quakers. Though the colony was founded on the Quaker principle of religious tolerance, the various sects kept somewhat to themselves. Differences, such as the Quakers' refusal to

participate in or contribute to warfare, set some groups apart from others.

Pennsylvania was growing rapidly during Franklin's lifetime. In the first decade of the eighteenth century, when Franklin was born, the population of the colony was approximately 15,000. By the time the Revolution began, there were 300,000 Pennsylvanians. Philadelphia was the largest colonial city during the Revolution.

Did You Know?

Franklin was not only a philosopher, writer, businessman, and politician, he was also a scientist and inventor. Most people are familiar with his famous lightning experiment, but Franklin also dabbled in meteorology, music, medicine, optics, and oceanography.

Franklin was practical. If he needed a tool to help him perform a task more efficiently, he created it. As a young boy he fashioned swim fins out of two pieces of wood and wore them on his hands to propel himself through the water. Later he invented a long-handled tool to retrieve books from high shelves.

As he aged, Franklin came up with a way to improve his vision. Franklin needed one pair of glasses to read and another to see things at a distance. He grew tired of constantly switching glasses, so he decided to turn two pairs of glasses into one. He cut half a lens from each pair and combined the two pieces to create the first bifocals.

Franklin also was interested in meteorology. He was one of the first people to conclude that storms usually move west to east. This knowledge helped him and others to make weather forecasts.

In addition, Franklin was behind the first official chart of the Gulf Stream. When he served as deputy postmaster general, Franklin noticed that American ships, carrying mail from England, crossed the Atlantic more quickly than English ships. Curious about why American ships were faster, Franklin conferred with American whaler Timothy Folger. The sea captain explained that British ships sailed against the Gulf Stream, whereas American ships sailed alongside and then crossed through it. Ships traveling with the stream naturally sailed more quickly than ships traveling against it.

Franklin had Folger chart the Gulf Stream and then had the map engraved and sent to England. The English ignored the map, however, believing their renowned sea

Before You Read

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

First Half of Part One to “At my first Admission into this Printing House . . .”

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Networking can be defined as exchanging information or services among individuals for the purpose of furthering an interest or a career. How do people use networking in today’s society?

Web It

What do you think of when you hear people talk about personal networking? In what context do they use the phrase? How do they benefit from networking? Create a web diagram with the word *networking* in the center. Write your related thoughts and ideas about networking to complete the diagram.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how Benjamin Franklin uses networking in colonial society.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

In the 1600s in England, a group of people who called themselves “Friends of the Truth” chose to worship in their own way, even though worshiping outside the official religion of England was against the law. George Fox, the leader of the Friends, was a rousing speaker. His followers were said to tremble, or quake, when listening to him. For this reason, some people called Fox’s followers Quakers.

Quakers believed that all people were equal. For that reason, they refused to remove their hats as a sign of respect for anyone—even for royalty. They also refused to go to war or to take oaths in courts of law. Their word, they said, was good enough.

William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, was a Quaker. Guided by his Quaker beliefs, Penn established free speech, freedom of worship, and a system of trial by jury in his new colony. Such freedoms were rare in the seventeenth century.

Paper Money

The English colonies struggled for decades because coins and paper money were in short supply. The king would not allow the colonists to coin or print their own money. By English law, only English currency could be used for transactions that involved money. To make up for the shortage of currency, some colonies printed their own paper money expressly for the purpose of paying taxes. In actual practice, the currency circulated for other uses as well. The colonists used mortgages on real estate, gold, and silver plate to secure, or guarantee, the paper money. The money was available to anyone who could offer that kind of security in addition to paying 5 percent interest.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

accost [ə kɑːst] v. to approach and speak to

affable [əfəˈbəl] adj. pleasant and at ease

approbation [əprəˈbæʃən] n. approval; recommendation

felicity [fiˈlɪsɪtɪ] n. state of being happy; something that causes happiness

fractious [frækʃəs] adj. unruly; quarrelsome

frugality [frʊˈɡælɪtɪ] n. efficient use of resources

impropriety [ɪmˈprəʊprɪˈtɪ] n. unacceptable act or remark

inducements [ɪnˈdʊːsmənts] n. considerations that lead to action

providence [prəʊˈvɪdəns] n. divine guidance

Responding

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

First Half of Part One to "At my first Admission into this Printing House . . ."

Personal Response

What qualities of Benjamin Franklin do you admire? Why do you admire them?

Which of Franklin's qualities would you like to have?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. What were Franklin's interests as a young boy? How did these interests fit in with his father's plans for him? Why didn't his father carry out his original plan for Franklin?

2. What causes Franklin to leave his brother's printing shop? What does he hope to gain by going to Philadelphia?

3. Why does Franklin go to England? Why does he find himself in difficult straits when he arrives?

Responding

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

First Half of Part One to "At my first Admission into this Printing House . . ."

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. Does Franklin use a formal or informal tone in his autobiography? Do you think his tone is appropriate to his purpose for writing? Why or why not?

5. Do you think you would have liked Benjamin Franklin when he was a teenager? Explain why or why not.

Literature and Writing

Book Jacket

Franklin's autobiography has been called one of the greatest in literature. Based on the first half of Part One, write text for a book jacket that will entice modern-day readers. You may want to "tease" your audience with little-known facts about Franklin's life or aspects of his character.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

Franklin describes what his early interests were and how he pursued them. For some of these interests, such as reading and writing, he studied and practiced on his own. He also liked to acquaint himself with other people of similar interests. In fact, he did quite a bit of "networking." In your group, locate passages in which Franklin mentions becoming acquainted with someone for the purpose of pursuing an interest or furthering his career.

Now review the web diagram you made in the **Focus Activity** on page 12. Compare your own ideas about networking with Franklin's. Share your group's conclusions with others in your class.

Science Connection

Franklin helped create the first official chart of the Gulf Stream. Using an encyclopedia, a book about oceanography, or the Internet, find out what natural forces create this powerful current and how it affects the weather and transatlantic travel by ship. Present your findings in an oral report to your class. Be sure to include visual aids, such as a map of the Gulf Stream.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin Second Half of Part One

FOCUS ACTIVITY

What do you do when you want to give someone a good impression of your character?

List It

How do you show someone that you are willing to work hard? Have you ever acted in a certain way to show someone that you are trustworthy? List what you do to demonstrate you are trustworthy and industrious.

Setting a Purpose

Read to see how Franklin develops a reputation for being hardworking and trustworthy.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

Printers in colonial America were hampered not only by the scarcity of metal type but also by a shortage of paper. Papermakers had a hard time getting the raw supplies. Rags, in particular, were hard to come by. The frugal colonists used fabric from worn-out clothing to patch or to make smaller pieces of clothing. When rags were available, papermakers soaked them in water and let them rot. Then the rags were beaten with wooden hammers. This caused the fabric fibers to break apart. The loose fibers, called stock, would later be pressed into sheets.

Printer's Type

It seems remarkable to us now that a colonial printer had to make a seven-week voyage across the ocean to purchase the equipment necessary to start a printing shop. Because there were no metal foundries in the colonies, the metal type as well as the printing presses had to come from Europe.

Besides the press, a printer's type was the most important component in the printing house. A type face consisted of individual pieces of metal type. Each piece was a single letter, a number, or a symbol, such as a period, comma, or ampersand. The type was kept in a divided wooden tray called a case. Capital letters were kept in the upper case. Below that, in the lower case, were the small letters. The terms "uppercase" and "lowercase" are still used today to distinguish capital letters and small letters. The pieces of type were not in alphabetical order; they were organized according to frequency of use. To create a line of words to be printed, a worker, called a compositor, placed each piece of type in order on a composing stick. The compositor worked from a handwritten copy of the text to be printed. He then transferred each line of type to a flat tray called a galley. A galley contained all of the type for one printed page. A proof was then made from the galley. The compositor checked this first printed page for errors and made corrections. From this method of checking for errors comes the process of proofreading, which writers and editors still do today.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

factotum [fæk tō 'təm] *n.* person with many different activities or responsibilities

pacific [pə sɪf'ɪk] *adj.* peaceful

pleurisy [plʊr'ə sē] *n.* inflammation of the chest cavity lining

sagacious [sə ɡə'shəs] *adj.* wise

sanguine [səŋg'ɡwɪn] *adj.* confident; optimistic

sensible [sɛn'sə bəl] *adj.* aware

traduce [trə dʊ's '] *v.* to expose to shame; to malign

Active Reading

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin Second Half of Part One

Franklin has a reason for relating each story or event in this part of his autobiography. He often states what he learns or how he gains from an experience. Record the significance of each event in the table. Consider what Franklin's reasons might be for relating a certain incident.

Event or Incident	Significance or Reason for Relating
1. working at Watts's printing house	relates the benefits of his water-only diet; tells how he gets along with coworkers
2. lodging in London	
3. skill in swimming	
4. working for Keimer	
5. statement of principles	
6. formation of the Junto	
7. business with Mr. Meredith	
8. marriage to Miss Read	

Responding

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin
Second Half of Part One

Personal Response

If you needed a partner for a research project, what would be the top two character traits you would look for? Use Franklin as your model. Explain your choices.

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Why does Franklin believe that he is stronger and able to work harder than his fellow workers at Watts's printing house? What does his behavior toward the other workers reveal about him as a person?

2. Once Franklin and Meredith form a partnership, what does Franklin begin producing in their printing house? To what does Franklin attribute this project's success?

3. What is the Junto club? Why does Franklin help to form it?

Responding

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin Second Half of Part One

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. What evidence does Franklin give that he is a practical man?

5. Do you think Franklin's ideas and way of doing things would be accepted by modern-day employers of young people? Explain.

Literature and Writing

Promotional Letter

Pretend that the Junto club has voted to extend membership to a newcomer in Philadelphia and that you have been asked to write a letter inviting the person to join. In your letter, explain the purpose and benefits of membership. You may also want to mention Franklin's reputation in the community, the advantages of membership, and the rules governing debates and other matters.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

With your group members, look for signs of emotion in this section of the autobiography. Also, look for instances when Franklin is matter-of-fact. Discuss how the tone Franklin uses to relate an incident or story affects readers.

Learning for Life

Franklin worked hard, even as a teenager, to pursue both his interests and his trade. He thinks about how he wants other people to think of him. As a result, he decides to act with "industry and frugality." Review the list you made in the **Focus Activity** on page 16. Then develop your own formula for industry and frugality. Create at least three rules of conduct to demonstrate to the people around you that you are hardworking and trustworthy.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

Part Two

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Think of a time when you tried to break a habit by replacing it with a better one. Were you successful?

Share Ideas

With two other classmates, talk about rules of personal conduct, or virtues. Consider these questions: What are virtues? Do people naturally have them, or must they be acquired? Are virtues old-fashioned? Do we need them to thrive in today's society?

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how Franklin defined his thirteen virtues and how he used them to guide his life.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

The act of pooling resources for the common good is an everyday occurrence in our society. Members of a community pay taxes to support schools and police and fire departments and to keep streets and sidewalks in good repair. The concept was a new one in eighteenth-century Philadelphia. Franklin had the idea that collecting a little money from many people would allow those people to enjoy services that would otherwise be available only to a few wealthy people. He extended this idea to everything from a subscription library to street cleaning.

Poor Richard

In Part Two, Franklin talks about a book he had intended to write but never did, *The Art of Virtue*. We do not know why he did not carry out this plan, but we do know he was one of the most widely read writers in the colonies. Under the pen name Richard Saunders, he wrote twenty-six editions of *Poor Richard's Almanack*. In an era when almanacs were popular entertainment as well as a guide to weather and planting, *Poor Richard's* was a best-seller.

Franklin first published *Poor Richard's Almanack* in 1732. To appeal to his readers, Franklin created a character named Richard Saunders. The character was an uneducated but wise country dweller. He passed on his experience and wisdom to the readers through clever sayings and proverbs. "Poor Richard" offered advice about living simply and well, and about the value of hard work and thrift.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

altercation [ɒl'tər kə'shən] *n.* a noisy, angry argument

arduous [æ'r'jʊəs] *adj.* difficult

eradicate [i rəd'ə kæt'] *v.* to do away with

expeditiously [eks'pə dɪsh'əs lē] *adv.* efficiently and speedily

gratis [grat'is] *adj.* without charge; free

incorrigible [ɪn kɔr'ə jə bəl] *adj.* incapable of being corrected; uncontrollable

indefatigable [ɪn'di fət'ə gə bəl] *adj.* untiring

multifarious [mʌl'tə fə r'ē əs] *adj.* in great variety; diverse

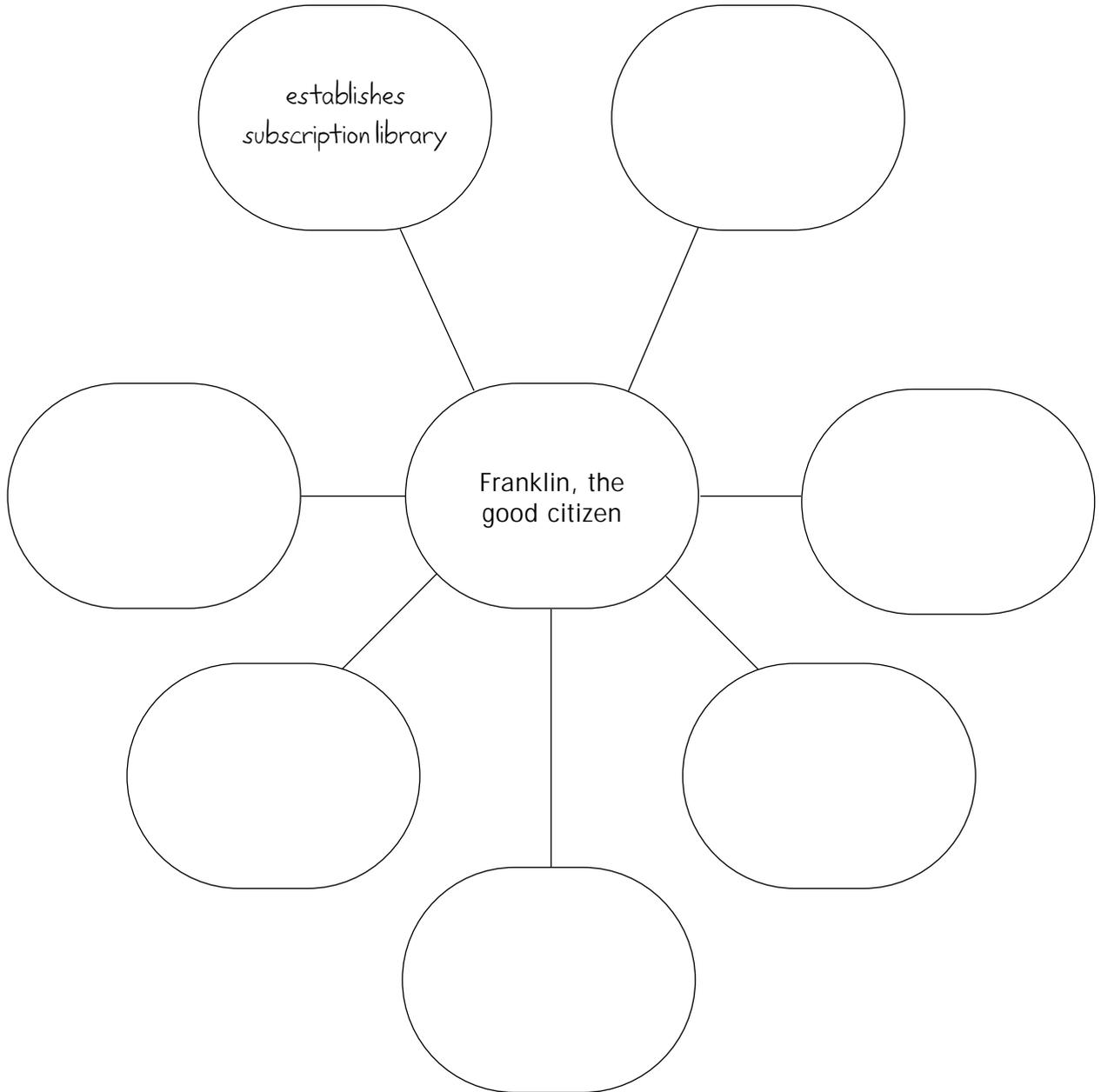
rectitude [rek'tə tʊd'ɪ] *n.* the state of being correct or proper

superfluities [sʊə'pər flʊə'tēz] *n.* excesses

Active Reading

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin Part Two

Franklin was careful to put forth a certain image. One aspect of that image involved being a good citizen. As you read, look for examples of Franklin's good citizenship. Record your findings in the web diagram.



Responding

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

Part Two

Personal Response

How did you feel about Franklin's plans to achieve "moral perfection"?

Do you think that his goal was realistic? Explain why or why not.

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. What did Franklin mean by the virtue of "order"? Why did he have the hardest time mastering that virtue?

2. Why did Franklin add a thirteenth virtue to his first list of twelve? How did this virtue improve his conversations?

3. Franklin attributes his success in life to the virtues he has practiced. To which virtues does he attribute the following—long life and good health? his wealth? the confidence of his countrymen?

Responding

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin Part Two

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. Why did Franklin feel he needed to achieve moral perfection?

5. What was Franklin's reason for concentrating on one virtue at a time? Briefly describe his "little book" and how he used it to focus his attention.

Literature and Writing

Critical Review

Franklin seems to regret that he did not write the book called *The Art of Virtue*. In his time, printers were often also the publishers and sellers of books. Assume that Franklin wrote the book after he retired and wants to interest another publisher in publishing and selling his book. As his modern-day book agent, write a paragraph explaining the author's intent in writing the book and the message he hopes to relay to readers. Refer to Franklin's statement about his design and doctrine, but write the book proposal in contemporary English.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

Review the list of thirteen virtues Franklin identifies in Part Two. In addition, recall the discussion you had about virtues in the **Focus Activity** on page 20. In your literature group, consider whether Franklin's virtues are still valid. Then come up with your own list of virtues.

Learning for Life

To help order his daily life and be productive, Franklin developed a schedule that he tried to follow every day. Look again at the schedule in Part Two. Create a twenty-four-hour schedule for yourself. Try to follow it for a week. Revise it if you found it too difficult to follow. Consider whether the schedule helped you accomplish more than if you had not had a schedule.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

First Half of Part Three "To Promote the Association necessary to form the Militia . . ."

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Recall a situation where you were required to solve a problem. How did you come up with a solution? Do you enjoy finding solutions to ordinary problems?

Discuss

Are the halls in your school congested? On rainy days, do the buses splash the students on the sidewalk? Meet with several other classmates to propose practical solutions to everyday problems such as these. Keep in mind that your solutions must be for the good of all.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how Franklin solves the problems that occur in his community.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

The success of Franklin's newspaper, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, was at first in doubt. Franklin's competitor, Bradford, was the postmaster-general. Bradford would not allow his mail carriers to deliver other printers' newspapers. Franklin had to persuade mail carriers to deliver his *Gazette*. Upon being appointed deputy postmaster-general, Franklin became responsible for all postal service in the northern colonies. With his usual practicality, Franklin regularized deliveries by setting a schedule. He established three deliveries a week between Philadelphia and New York. In 1755 he started a regular weekly run to Boston. Under Franklin's guidance, the delivery of mail became something people could count on.

Philadelphia

The city of Philadelphia was named, located, and planned before any settlers ever arrived. One of William Penn's first acts, after receiving his charter for Pennsylvania, was to advertise that he would establish a town on the Delaware River. Penn's design for his city was different from the design of any city in seventeenth-century Europe. He planned on having friendly relations with surrounding Native American groups, so the city was not fortified—it had no walls or ditches around it. He created a grid-iron pattern of streets and set aside choice lots for the people who initially purchased land in the colony. Penn wanted a countrylike city, with each home surrounded by gardens.

In actuality, however, the streets of Philadelphia were either very dusty or very muddy, depending on the season. Hogs and goats ran free, serving as the primary—and usually the only—means of disposing of the household garbage dumped in the streets. By the time Franklin was able to persuade residents to take action in the mid-1700s, the city certainly was in need of cleaning.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

celerity [sə lər'ə tē] *n.* rapidity

comptroller [kən trō'lər] *n.* public official who oversees government accounts and spending

dissensions [di sən'shəns] *n.* disagreements; quarrels

precipitation [pri sip'ə t̃ə'shən] *n.* haste

remonstrate [ri mon'strāt] *v.* to speak or plead in protest

rendezvous [rān'də voo'] *n.* meeting at an appointed place and time

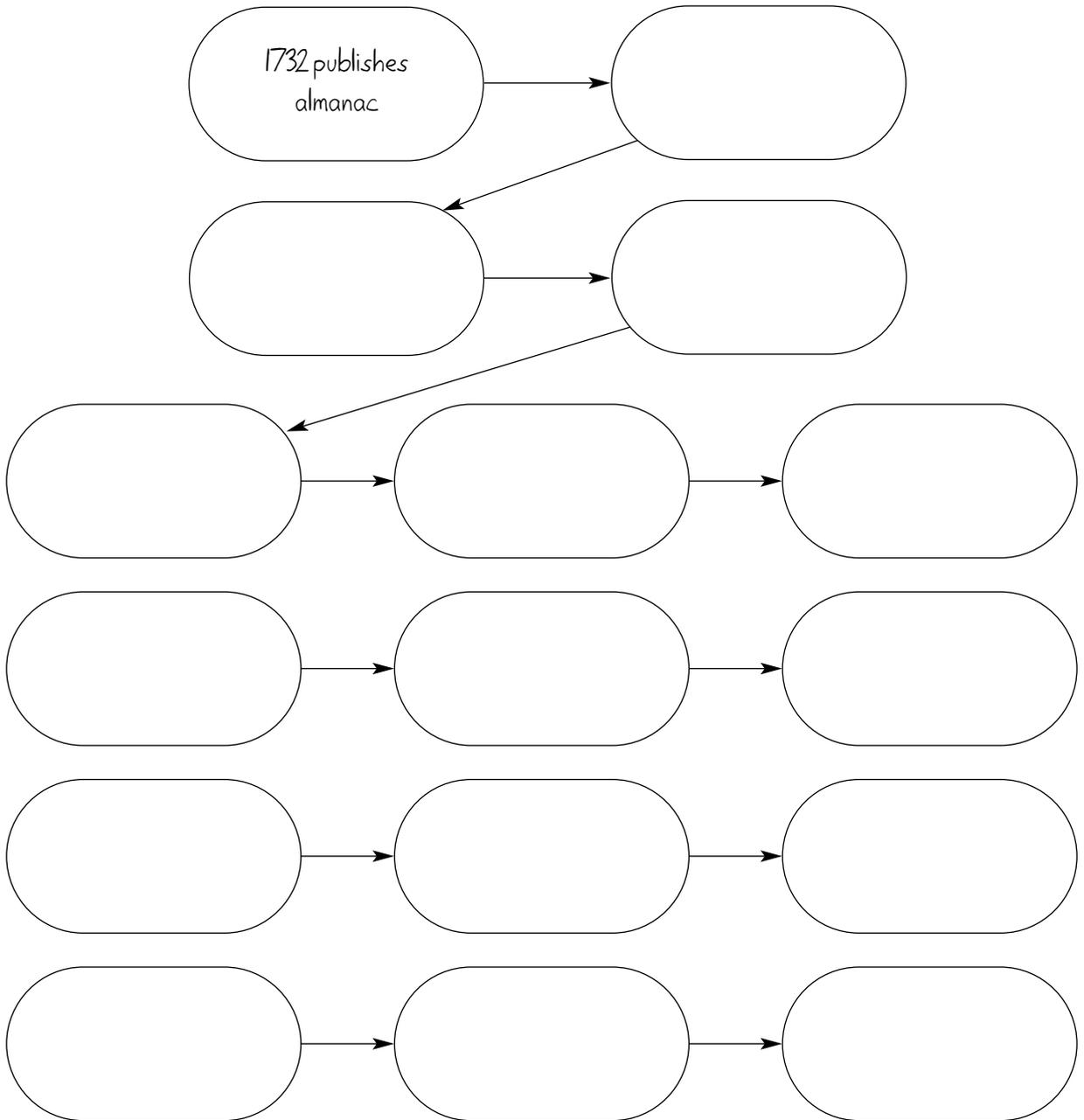
reprobate [rep'rə bāt] *v.* to judge as unworthy

Active Reading

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

First Half of Part Three "To Promote the Association necessary to form the Militia . . ."

In his autobiography, Franklin does not always write events in the order in which they occurred. Record events in this segment for which Franklin provides dates. Place them in the order in which Franklin relates them. Then number the circles in the diagram to indicate the order in which the events occurred.



Responding

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

First Half of Part Three "To Promote the Association necessary to form the Militia . . ."

Personal Response

Do you think Franklin spread himself too thin? Do you think, with greater focus, he could have been an even stronger, more inspiring individual? Explain your thinking.

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Why was Franklin's stove better than other methods used for warming rooms? Why did Franklin refuse the opportunity to patent the stove and, therefore, make money from its production?

2. What did Franklin intend to do after he retired from the printing business? What, in fact, did he end up doing, and why did this flatter him?

3. What was the main message in Franklin's advertisement for wagons for the British army? Why did Franklin agree to help General Braddock acquire the wagons?

Responding

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

First Half of Part Three "To Promote the Association necessary to form the Militia . . ."

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. Franklin goes into great detail about his military dealings with the British. Why would he choose to do so in his autobiography?

5. What, do you think, is Franklin's real attitude toward the war with the French?

Literature and Writing

Persuasive Writing

When Franklin wanted to introduce an idea to the general public, he wrote newspaper articles or pamphlets. Once people got used to the idea, then he would raise funds to support it. He found this an effective means of persuading people, rather than asking for donations from the start. Think of a cause or project for which you would like to raise money. Write a short pamphlet to circulate among potential financial donors. Use persuasive language to convince your readers of the worthwhile nature of the project. Don't mention money or financial concerns in the pamphlet.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

In your group, identify the problems or inconveniences for which Franklin proposes solutions. Then reconsider the solutions you developed in the **Focus Activity** on page 24. Try to apply Franklin's style of practicality to your problem solving. Does this change the solutions you came up with? If so, how?

Performing

Franklin helps General Braddock by writing an advertisement for wagons. Franklin anticipates the Pennsylvania farmers' objections in the advertisement. Suppose Franklin had asked the farmers for help by making a public announcement. Imagine a public gathering in the streets of Lancaster. Transform Franklin's advertisement into a series of questions and answers. Recruit classmates to participate in this "crowd scene" and provide questions for them to call out. You, as Franklin, should answer their questions calmly and reassuringly.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin Second Half of Part Three and All of Part Four

FOCUS ACTIVITY

When was the last time you had to wait for a scheduled appointment? Describe your feelings during your wait.

Journal

How do you feel when your telephone call is put on hold? Does sitting in a waiting room for an hour make you angry, or are you a person who takes delays in stride? Write about how you deal with delays.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out what kinds of lengthy delays Franklin had to deal with and how he handled them.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

While Franklin was in London in the early 1760s, he attended a concert at which a man played musical glasses. Franklin was much taken with the music. A fair musician himself, he could play the harp, guitar, and violin. His musical interests, combined with his scientific curiosity, led him to create his own instrument using glass. The instrument consisted of thirty-seven glass bowls of graduated sizes. They were mounted on a metal rod through a hole in the center of each bowl. The rod was attached to a wheel, which was attached to a foot pedal. Franklin pedaled to spin the bowls. To play, Franklin wet his fingers and touched them to the edges of the spinning bowls. The sound they made was sweet and clear. He called his instrument an *armonica*. Two famous composers, Mozart and Beethoven, heard the instrument and composed music especially for Franklin's glass armonica.

Static Electricity

Franklin's greatest scientific work was in the field of static electricity—electricity that is still, or immobile. In both America and Europe, public displays involving static electricity were a form of entertainment. People believed that the electricity was an invisible liquid, which was normally stationary but could be made to “jump” from one point to another. Scientists had developed machines that produced static electricity and then made large sparks, much to the surprise and delight of audiences.

Franklin, through his own experiments, improved a method of storing static electricity. He also came up with the terms *positive* and *negative* to describe the two states of electricity—having too much “electrical fluid” or too little. Franklin's most famous experiment was his kite experiment. He suspected that lightning bolts were actually huge sparks of electricity. To gather electricity from the sky during a storm, Franklin attached a metal rod to his kite. If a bolt of lightning had actually hit the rod, Franklin would almost surely have been killed. Fortunately, the rod attracted only the electricity in the air, and the charge traveled down the wet kite string. At the end of the string was the famous key. It dangled near a type of jar used to store static electricity. Sparks jumped from the key to the jar, causing the jar to be charged with electricity. Franklin's hypothesis was proven correct.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

chagrin [ʃə ɡrɪn'] v. to vex or distress by disappointment or humiliation

espouse [əʃ ˈpəʊz'] v. to support a cause

intimate [ɪn'ɪtə mət] v. to suggest; to hint

lading [lɑ'dɪŋ] n. cargo or freight

rancor [rɑŋg'kər] n. bitter ill will

recompenses [rɛk'əm pɛns'əs] n. payment given in return for goods or services rendered

Active Reading

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

Second Half of Part Three and All of Part Four

In this segment, Franklin describes several accomplishments. Record the steps Franklin takes to solve problems or complete the tasks he is asked to do.

Defense of
northwest-
ern

raises and
assembles
troops

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Experi-
ments in
electricity

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Voyage from
North Ameri-
ca to England

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Responding

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin
Second Half of Part Three and All of Part Four

Personal Response

Can you imagine putting up with delays in communication and business such as the ones Franklin encountered? What is your response to Franklin's behavior in this situation?

Review the journal entry you made in the **Focus Activity** on page 28. Compare Franklin's response to delays with your own.

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. What kind of military responsibility does Franklin take on? While building the fort, what does Franklin conclude about the working habits of men?

2. What does Franklin do with the knowledge he acquires from his electrical experiments? From this action, what can you infer about Franklin's nature?

3. What was the proprietary estate? Why did Franklin favor taxing it at the same level as other estates?

Responding

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

Second Half of Part Three and All of Part Four

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. In this section, Franklin describes his public service. How is his behavior similar to or different from how he acted as a young businessperson?

5. What strikes you as Franklin's most impressive quality or characteristic? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Literature and Writing

Newspaper Story

In this section, Franklin tells about his military activity, the religious practices of the Moravians, his electrical experiments, his trip to London in 1757, and the issue of taxing the proprietary estate. Choose one of these topics and use Franklin's text as the basis for a colonial newspaper story. You may write the story as if it were the result of an interview with Franklin, or you may simply report the events in journalistic style. As you write, keep in mind that Franklin is a well-respected and prominent individual in colonial society.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

Franklin's retirement didn't turn out quite as he had imagined. He became more involved in city and colony affairs with each passing year. Franklin's diplomacy carried him through many situations and recommended him for handling many more. With your group members, find examples in the text of situations in which Franklin used diplomacy. Using these examples, can you identify any consistent techniques used by a diplomat?

Listening and Speaking

Franklin practiced the art of silence in order to become a better listener. While settling disputes in the Assembly or smoothing over misunderstandings with government officials, Franklin had to listen carefully so that he could respond appropriately. Working with a small group, discuss how you could become a better listener. Improve your listening skills by actively repeating the words (silently in your mind) as a student speaks. Then recall what you heard. Role play for the class a situation in which Franklin uses his skills as a good listener to resolve a conflict or difference of opinion.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Responding

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

Personal Response

Considering Franklin's many interests and talents, what would you like to ask him or learn from him? Explain your answer.

Writing About the Autobiography

Some people feel that Franklin is the greatest of all early Americans. Do you agree or disagree? Cite information from the autobiography to support your opinion.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Benjamin Franklin on Writing Well

Vanessa Dean Arnold

Before You Read

Focus Question

What steps might you take to improve your writing skills or increase your vocabulary?

Background

Although Josiah Franklin was unable or unwilling to pay for more than one year of formal schooling for Benjamin, he took an interest in the teenager's attempts to become a good writer. An avid reader, Benjamin Franklin set out to improve his skills by rewriting the words of other writers in the few papers and books available in the print shop. According to Vanessa Dean Arnold, a professor of communications, Franklin was so successful in his self-improvement program that business writers today can still learn from him.

Responding to the Reading

1. What did Benjamin Franklin believe were the "chief ends of communication?" Do you think these are still valid purposes for communications in today's technology-rich society?

2. Based on Franklin's advice, create your own list of three or four steps for increasing one's vocabulary and improving writing style.

3. As an addition to his twelve virtues, Franklin expanded on the "habits" of conversation mentioned by Arnold. How might Franklin's habits have helped him later in his diplomatic career? Explain.

4. How might you use Franklin's rules when answering an essay question on an American history test?

5. **Making Connections** Franklin's autobiography shows that he used his writing skills in many ways to further his business and his career in public affairs. List types of writing that might be necessary for these three activities: (1) inventor of the Franklin stove, (2) scientific experimenter, and (3) publisher and seller of books.

Business Correspondence

Using Benjamin Franklin's rules for persuasive letter writing, compose an answer to his brother-in-law's letter, urging the teenager to return to Boston. Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper.

from Report from Philadelphia: The Constitutional Convention of 1787

Bill Moyers

Before You Read

Focus Question

When you are sworn to secrecy about an event of interest to your friends, how do you prepare yourself to keep the secret? Are you more reserved in casual conversations? Do you think twice before you answer questions?

Background

During the summer of 1787, delegates from twelve of the newly formed states worked in secret to revise the Articles of Confederation. Even though the public was vitally interested in the direction the government might take, there were no daily news bulletins, reports in the newspapers, or leaks from participants. The delegates lived up to their pledge of secrecy until they unveiled their product—a brand new constitution. In these short segments, Bill Moyers, a modern-day journalist, imagines what daily news updates would have revealed to the residents of the states.

Responding to the Reading

1. According to Moyers, why do the delegates choose to keep their deliberations secret? All delegates abided by the secrecy rule, but it is possible that some did not initially favor it. From what you know about Benjamin Franklin, do you think he favored the rule? Why or why not?

2. Franklin argued against a salary for the chief executive, or president, of the United States. Briefly summarize Franklin's position. If you had been a delegate, would you have voted with or against Franklin? Why?

3. Why did some of the delegates, including Franklin, want all delegates to sign the Constitution, even if they didn't like all parts of it?

4. **Making Connections** In his autobiography, Franklin describes personal character traits and habits he developed that helped him succeed as a businessperson. Identify at least five traits that Moyer mentions in describing Franklin as an elder statesman at the convention of 1787.

Literature Groups

Play the role of delegates drafting the first constitution. Debate whether or not the chief executive of the United States should be paid a salary. Then examine from a modern-day perspective how much the salary actually influences men and women seeking the presidency.

Women's Work: Making Money

Linda Grant DePauw

Before You Read

Focus Question

Have you ever dreamed of running a business? What obstacles do you think you might encounter?

Background

Franklin's printing shop was one of America's early business success stories. It enabled him to retire comfortably before he reached middle age and pursue his scientific and public affairs interests. In his writings, he recognized the contributions of his wife Deborah in the daily operation of their printing business. Linda Grant DePauw's research shows that many other colonial women were active in businesses as members of a family group and as independent entrepreneurs.

Responding to the Reading

1. What were some of the ways colonial women entered into the management of money-making enterprises, such as plantations and publishing? How do these beginnings differ from the way women enter a business or a profession today?

2. DePauw writes that occupations varied by the region in which the working women lived. What were popular occupations for women in the southern colonies? in the New England colonies?

3. What woman was chosen by Congress to print the official copy of the Declaration of Independence? Like Franklin, she combined printing and newspaper publishing with what other occupation common to printers at the time? Why did publishers prize this public office?

4. Franklin quotes the English proverb "He that would thrive / Must ask his wife" when he writes about the growth and prosperity of his business. From Franklin's description of his habits of frugality and Deborah's work, how could you restate the proverb in everyday, nonsexist language? (Remember that Franklin rewrote many old proverbs in everyday colonial speech for his almanacs.)

5. **Making Connections** In his autobiography, Franklin tells us about setting up a former employee in business in Charleston, South Carolina. To whom did Franklin attribute the later success of that business? What recommendation does Franklin make to educators as a result of his experience with the South Carolina shop?

Learning for Life

Write a classified advertisement for an employee to replace Deborah Read Franklin at the print shop after she and Benjamin turned the shop over to their new partner.

Family Engineering

Speech for a High School Graduate

David Sedaris
Roger Rosenblatt

Before You Read

Focus Question

How do you respond to advice from people older than you? Do you sometimes think they don't understand your problems because they are older?

Background

Josiah Franklin took an active role in directing his youngest son's education and career choice. The two fathers in these essays exert a more indirect influence on their children. All three fathers share a desire to see their children prosper.

Responding to the Reading

1. Comparing Sedaris's and Franklin's descriptions of their fathers, which man would friends call on for personal advice or to settle a dispute? Which man was known for his help with mechanical problems?

2. What interests did Franklin share with Mr. Sedaris? In his relationship with his son William, do you think Franklin would have been more like Mr. Sedaris or his own father Josiah? Explain.

3. An often-repeated phrase from *Poor Richard's Almanack* is "Early to bed and early to rise / Makes a Man Healthy Wealthy and Wise." Roger Rosenblatt advises his son to "arise early," but his reasons are different from those expressed in Franklin's words. What do you think Rosenblatt wants his son to gain from getting up to see the sunrise?

4. **Making Connections** Who do you think bears more of a resemblance to Franklin, Sedaris or Rosenblatt? Explain your answer.

Journalism Connection

In his almanacs, Franklin gave advice to his readers in the colonies. Through the almanacs and his work at the Constitutional Convention, he continues to give advice to the nation. Compose a short answer to the following questions in the manner you think Franklin might have responded in his newspaper if he had printed an advice column.

18th August, 1754

Dear Richard,

The streets are so dusty that I can't open the door or windows in my shop. What can I do?

Philadelphia Shop Owner

22nd December, 1754

Dear Richard,

Our house fills with smoke and the heat from our fires has dried our skin. Do you know of a heating method that can relieve our discomfort during the winter months?

Homeowner

from *Poor Richard's Almanack*

Benjamin Franklin

Before You Read

Focus Question

People often give advice in the form of old sayings, such as “Look before you leap” or “An empty wagon makes the most noise.” What old sayings do you sometimes use?

Background

Each old saying in Franklin’s *Poor Richard’s Almanack* began with the phrase *Poor Richard says . . .* “Richard” was Richard Saunders, a fictional American everyman whom Franklin created as his mouthpiece.

Responding to the Reading

1. In your opinion, which of the sayings from *Poor Richard’s* gives the best advice? Rephrase the saying in your own words.

2. After reading the sayings, how would you describe Franklin’s attitude toward human nature? Support your answer with evidence from the sayings.

3. **Making Connections** Based on the *Autobiography*, would you say that Franklin “practiced what he preached”? Give an example of a time when Franklin followed (or failed to follow) the advice he gives in *Poor Richard’s*. What was the outcome?

Creative Writing

If you were to create a *Poor Richard’s Almanack* for today’s students, what advice would you give? Make a page for your almanac, listing old sayings in contemporary language. Add a few new sayings of your own.