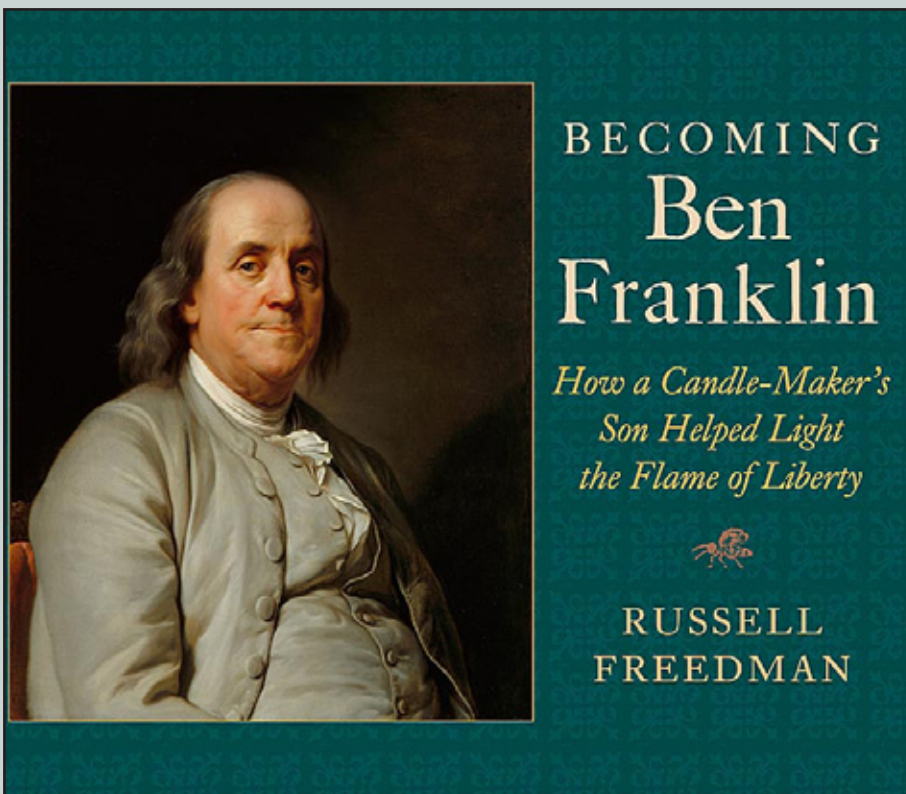


Holiday House Educator's Guide

Common
Core
Connections
Inside

Grades 5 up



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Timeline, source notes, picture credits, bibliography, and index included

“Two centuries after Franklin’s time, we remember him as a printer, editor, and publisher; a community organizer; a scientist and inventor; a statesman, humorist, and philosopher; and as an influential writer. His contributions to society include a library, a university, a fire company, a philosophical society, the lightning rod, the Franklin stove, and bifocal glasses. And he helped give birth to a new kind of nation, ruled not by a hereditary monarch but by ‘We, the People.’ ”

—RUSSELL FREEDMAN,

from *Becoming Ben Franklin*

Becoming Ben Franklin

How a Candle-Maker’s Son Helped Light the Flame of Liberty

Russell Freedman

About the Book

Newbery Medalist Russell Freedman’s riveting story of how a rebellious apprentice became an American icon is elegantly designed and illustrated with original documents, maps, drawings, paintings, and pictures.

Benjamin Franklin, the fifteenth of seventeen children, began his journey toward becoming one of the “most famous Americans” when, at the age of seventeen, he ran away from his home in Boston and landed in Philadelphia, where he promptly got a job working in a print shop. Though he had only two years of formal education, Franklin loved knowledge and dedicated his life to learning. He was an avid reader and became well known for his writing skills. He loved “everything British,” but lost favor with King George III of England. As relationships between England and the colonies became strained, Franklin declared himself a Patriot. He was a great diplomat and leader, and loved making discoveries, many of which are used today. He was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, as well as a number of important treaties. Franklin died in 1790 at the age of eighty-four, leaving behind an unmatched legacy of work.

Questions For Classroom Discussion 1 4-8.SL.1, 6.RI.2

- ★ Benjamin Franklin was the fifteenth of seventeen children. How did belonging to such a large family teach him to get along well with others? Debate how these early skills taught him the art of diplomacy. What was his greatest contribution as a diplomat?
- ★ Franklin only had two years of formal schooling before he became an apprentice in his father's candle and soap shop. Discuss why he was so restless working with his father. How was working for his brother, James, a printer, better suited to Franklin?
- ★ Though Franklin didn't have the opportunity to continue in school, he acquired an abundance of education. Discuss how he took personal responsibility for his learning. How did he continue studying until the end of his life? Explain how Franklin is a good role model for students today to continue a lifetime of learning.
- ★ Cite evidence that Ben Franklin had a good sense of humor, even as a young boy. How did his sense of humor serve him well throughout his life?
- ★ Discuss why James was so angry when he discovered that Ben was Silence Dogood, the writer of the humorous essays that poked fun at Boston society. At the same time, James used Ben's talent. Why did James need Ben? How was Ben better skilled than James?
- ★ Why did Franklin leave Boston? Trace his early years in Philadelphia. Discuss why Pennsylvania governor William Keith was so enamored of Franklin. How did the governor betray him? Discuss how Ben Franklin turned being stranded in London into an opportunity for personal growth.
- ★ Explain what Benjamin Franklin meant when he said that "knowledge was obtained rather by the use of the ear than of the tongue" (p. 14). How did he use this belief to win folks over to his point of view, regardless of the issue?
- ★ Freedman says that Franklin enjoyed "the thrill of discovery" (p. 18). Talk about Franklin's many discoveries. Of all his accomplishments, he was most proud of being a printer. How did his role as printer pave the way for other discoveries and opportunities?
- ★ "Well done is better than well said" is an adage in *Poor Richard's Almanac*. How was Franklin a man of actions and words?
- ★ Franklin recognized England as the "Mother Country," and he loved "everything British." When George III became king of England, Franklin thought he was a good leader. When did Franklin lose favor with the king? Why did Parliament declare him a "political outcast?"
- ★ Describe the events that led up to the American Revolution. Discuss the four documents, all signed by Benjamin Franklin, that established an independent America.
- ★ Franklin became a Patriot. How did this cause friction with his son, William?
- ★ What was the purpose of Franklin's trip to France? Why was he a hero to the French?
- ★ The final draft of the Declaration of Independence was approved on July 4, 1776. Explain the meaning of "While independence had been *declared*, it had not yet been *won*" (p. 55). At what point was it won?
- ★ The first three words of the U.S. Constitution are "We the People." Why are these appropriate words for a democracy? How have these words remained timeless? Discuss why it's important for all politicians to heed these words. What is our responsibility as citizens to practice these words?
- ★ Discuss all of Franklin's contributions to society. Which of these continue to contribute to today's society?

Curriculum Connections

Language Arts—Explain the following metaphor: “A union of the colonies would be a jewel in the British Empire’s crown.” (p. 29). Write a metaphor that describes Franklin’s outrage at the Penn family when they refused to pay their fair share of property taxes.

2 5-6.L.5, 4.RL.4

Discuss how Franklin honed his writing skills. Use books in the library or sites on the Internet to read about one of the major battles of the American Revolution. Use Franklin’s way of learning to write and write the narrative as a poem. At the end of a week, return to the poem and write it as a narrative. Allow students to work as partners and engage in peer editing. How does writing improve? How well is the content conveyed?

3 5-6.W.7, 5-6.W.3

Benjamin Franklin was interested in self-improvement and made a list of thirteen virtues that he thought desirable. Read about these virtues on the following website: <http://thirteenvirtues.com/>. Explain the meaning of each one. Which of Franklin’s virtues apply to life in the twenty-first century? What additional virtues should be added to apply to today’s students’ lives? Make a personal chart of virtues that you value and follow them for a week. How well did you do?

4 5-6.L.5

Use a dictionary to define “aphorism” and “maxim.” What is the primary difference? Franklin included aphorisms and maxims in *Poor Richard’s Almanac*. In small groups, read some of Franklin’s famous quotes on the following website: http://jpetrie.myweb.uga.edu/poor_richard.html. Then classify them either as an aphorism or a maxim.

5 5-6.L.5

Science—What is the science behind Franklin’s “armonica” (p. 35)? Divide the class into small groups and make a series of different musical tones using glasses filled with different amounts of water. Ask them to perform a musical number for the class.

6 6.RI.3, 6.SL.1, 6.SL.5

Social Studies—Study the map of the Burial-Ground at Christ Church in Philadelphia on the following website: www.christchurchphila.org/Historic-Christ-Church/Burial-Ground/Map/99/. Ask students to research one historical figure buried there and prepare a two-minute oral account of the person’s contribution to American history. Encourage them to include a little known fact that tourists may like to hear.

7 5-6.W.7, 6.RI.3, 5-6.SL.4, 6-8.RI.7

Benjamin Franklin was inducted into the following halls of fame: CIA Hall of Fame, International Swimming Hall of Fame, Pennsylvania Swimming Hall of Fame, Health Care Hall of Fame, Boston Latin School Hall of Fame, Electrostatics Hall of Fame, American Mensa Hall of Fame, World Chess Hall of Fame, United States Swim Schools Association Hall of Fame, Self-Publishing Hall of Fame, Hall of Fame for Great Americans, Insurance Hall of Fame, and Direct Marketing Hall of Fame. Divide the class into 14 small groups and ask them to use sites on the Internet to find out the criteria for induction into one of the halls of fame. When was Franklin inducted? Write a press release that might have appeared in a national newspaper when Franklin was inducted.

8 5-6.W.7, 5-6.W.2

Curriculum Connections *continued*

One of the big issues that caused conflict in the Pennsylvania Assembly was “equal taxation.” Why was William Penn opposed to such taxation? Research the beliefs regarding taxation between the two political parties in the United States today. How are these issues similar to the ones the Pennsylvania Assembly faced? Stage a debate that presents both sides of the issue.

9 6.RI.3, 6.RI.8, 6.SL.1, 6.SL.4, 6-8.RI.6

Franklin published the first political cartoon in his newspaper, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. Analyze the cartoon on page 28. Create a political cartoon that Franklin might have published when he became a Patriot.

10 5-6.W.9

Harvard and Yale awarded Franklin honorary degrees. What is an honorary degree? Think about why Franklin deserved these degrees. It is customary for the degree to be awarded at the schools’ commencement. Have students work as partners, one taking the role of the president of the university and the other as Franklin. Write and deliver remarks that convey why Franklin was honored. Honorees usually address the graduating class. Write and deliver remarks from Franklin.

11 5-6.W.1, 6-8.RI.2

Use sites on the Internet to find out the municipalities named for Franklin. How many of these places are located in the thirteen original colonies? As a class, plan a Founders’ Day program for one of these places that includes a tribute to Franklin: speeches, poetry, original one-act plays, music from the Revolutionary War era, and activities such as kite-flying contest.

12 5-6.W.7, 5-6.RL.10, 5-6.SL.2, 4.RL.7

The Common Core State Standards

Adaptability Note

The activities in this Educator's Guide can easily be adapted to conform to the listed Common Core Standards (www.corestandards.org) across all appropriate grades.

- 1** **4-8.SL.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade six topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
6.RI.2: Determine the central ideas or information or a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- 2** **5-6.L.5:** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
4.RL.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text.
- 3** **5-6.W.7:** Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
5-6.W.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- 4** **5** **5-6.L.5:** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- 6** **6.RI.3:** Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text.
6.SL.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade six topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
6.SL.5: Include multimedia component (sound) in presentations to clarify information.
- 7** **5-6.W.7:** Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
6.RI.3: Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or ideas is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text.
5-6.SL.4: Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes.
6-8.RI.7: Integrate visual information with other information in print and digital texts.
- 8** **5-6.W.7:** Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
5-6.W.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- 9** **6.RI.3:** Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or ideas is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text.
6.RI.8: Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
6.SL.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussion with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
6.SL.4: Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes.
6-8.RI.6: Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose.
- 10** **5-6.W.9:** Draw evidence from literary or information texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- 11** **5-6.W.1:** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
6-8.RI.2: Determine the central ideas or information or a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- 12** **5-6.W.7:** Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
5-6.RL.10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry.
5-6.SL.2: Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, orally.
4.RL.7: Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text.

Web Links

Christ Church in Philadelphia

www.christchurchphila.org/

This is the official website for the oldest church in Philadelphia and the site of Benjamin Franklin's grave.

Independence Hall Association of Philadelphia

www.ushistory.org/tour/philmaphil.html

This is a virtual tour of historic Philadelphia.

PBS

www.pbs.org/benfranklin/l3_inquiring_little.html

This PBS website provides a list and description of Benjamin Franklin's inventions.

The American Revolution

www.theamericanrevolution.org/

This site offers information regarding the American Revolution, including a special page for children.



Photo Credit: Evans Chan

About the Author

Russell Freedman is well known for his riveting biographies and masterful accounts of the history of the United States. One of the most honored writers for children, his many awards include the Newbery Medal, three Newbery Honors, the Robert F. Sibert Award, a Sibert Honor, the Orbis Pictus Award, the May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture Award, the National Humanities Medal, and the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award for a "substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children." Russell Freedman lives in New York City and travels the globe to gather material for his works.

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