

Happy Birthday, Ben Franklin!

Grades
3-5

by | Diane Findlay

Webquest

Introduction

Welcome, Section Heads! As you know, our mission at the Great American Hall of Fame is to inspire citizens to use their talents to improve the lives of all Americans. We do this by honoring and teaching people about Americans from the past or present who have contributed to society in important, lasting ways.

We've called you together to help us make an important, but difficult, decision regarding our newest Museum honoree. Here's the situation:

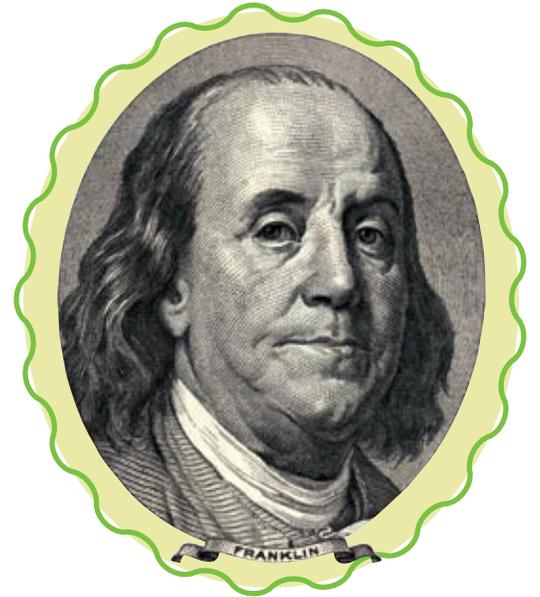
In honor of Benjamin Franklin's birthday, we plan to add this Colonial celebrity to our Museum of exceptional national figures. We all agree that Franklin was an outstanding American, but there's a problem. Museum policy states that an honoree may be entered in one, and only one, of its Sections. Franklin was interested in many things and made important contributions to many different parts of American life. So where does he fit best? What were his most important achievements? You, as Heads of the Museum's Sections, will work together to answer this question. In addition, as part of your professional training, you will use this process to think about your own talents, and how you might use them to achieve great things for the betterment of society.

Task

Your group will include five people, each taking the role of Head of one of these Great American Hall of Fame Sections:

- Statesmen/Community Leaders
- Scientists/Inventors
- Philosophers/Humorists
- Musicians
- Entrepreneurs/Business Leaders

After reviewing a summary of Franklin's life and achievements, each of you will research Franklin's accomplishments that relate to your Section of the Museum. You will analyze his work and evaluate its impact on American life. You will make your case for including Franklin



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in your Section. After hearing from each Section Head, you will work together to decide which Section gets to claim Franklin. You will present your work to the Museum Director (your teacher) in the form of an illustrated timeline of Franklin's life and achievements, and explain your reasons for placing him in the Section you've chosen. After your presentation, you will each write a speech you hope to make someday, accepting inclusion in the Museum for your own contributions to society during your lifetime. Your speech will describe how you have used your talents for the common good.

To review, you will:

1. Take a general look at Franklin's life and achievements.
2. Analyze and evaluate Franklin's contributions that relate to your Section.
3. Make your case for including Franklin in your section.
4. Decide as a group where Franklin fits best.
5. Prepare your poster and presentation to the Museum Director.
6. Write and submit your personal acceptance speech.

Process

1. Gather in your group and assign roles: Heads of the Great American Hall of Fame's Sections of Statesmen/Government Leaders, Scientists/Inventors, Philosophers/Humorists, Musicians, and Entrepreneurs/Business Leaders.
2. Collect your Section Head worksheet for taking notes as you go. Review it carefully so you know what to keep in mind as you visit each Web site.
3. Watch together Parts I and II of this fifteen-minute biographical movie about Franklin: www.earlyamerica.com/benI.htm.
4. Skip to pages 4–8 to locate your role and follow the steps to research Franklin's work. Respond to the prompts and take notes on your worksheet. Read the text between links carefully, so you know exactly what information you're looking for on each site. Remember, not all Web Sites you'll visit are written for kids. You might need a dictionary. Print your completed Section Head page when you're done.
5. Use your online research results and worksheet notes to prepare your argument for including Franklin in your Section of the Museum. Focus on how much he contributed to the subject area, how much his work affected or improved American life in his time, and how its impact is still felt today.
6. Gather as a group and present your arguments.
7. Discuss the presentations, evaluate the importance of Franklin's work in each subject area, decide which Section is the best fit for his greatest accomplishments, and prepare your presentation.
8. Use information and images from your online searches to create an illustrated timeline poster summarizing Franklin's life and achievements. You'll find samples at www.pbs.org/benfranklin (click on "timeline"), <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/benfranklin/timeline.html>, <http://library.thinkquest.org/22254/chronology.htm>.

9. Present your poster and report and explain your decision to the Museum Director (your teacher or class).
10. Write your personal acceptance speech on being inducted into the Great American Hall of Fame for achievements during your lifetime. Consider your individual talents and interests, and how you, like Franklin, could use them to contribute to society. Then dream big about what you might accomplish! Name the Section of the Museum that chose you, and specifically what you have done to earn your place there. If your talents or interests don't lie in the Museum Sections already identified, consider one of these additional Sections instead:
 - Entertainers
 - Athletes/Leaders in Sports
 - Social Leaders/Reformers
 - Visual Artists
11. Proceed to the Conclusion of this webquest on page 10.
12. Turn in Section research printouts, worksheets, and personal speeches.



1

Statesmen/Community Leaders Section Head



- What improvements to community life did Franklin introduce as a leading citizen of Philadelphia? www.pbs.org/benfranklin/12_citizen.html, www.pbs.org/benfranklin/exp_town.html
- How did Franklin's feelings about America separating from England change over time? www.ushistory.org/franklin/info/index.htm (Read sections "The Political Scene" and "A New Nation")
- How did Franklin help support the Revolutionary war? <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/benfranklin/index.html> (Click on "Statesman"), <http://inventors.about.com/od/fstartinventions/a/Franklin.htm> (Read section titled "Statesman").
- What different jobs and titles did Franklin hold in service to American government and American citizens? www.benfranklin300.com/etc_timeline_3.htm (Check out these decades: 1730s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s-90s).
- Where did Franklin travel as official or unofficial ambassador of America? www.pbs.org/benfranklin/12_world.html, www.pbs.org/benfranklin/exp_worldly.html
- Franklin was the only individual to sign all four major documents that established the USA as an independent nation. What were they? <http://www.thinkquest.org/library/>, key in Web Site name (just the words "Benjamin Franklin") and click on the "Statesman" box.
- How did Franklin help resolve the conflict over how the legislative branch should be structured? www.pbs.org/benfranklin/13_citizen_founding.html (See section titled "The Constitution")
- Print your completed Section Head research pages.

Now return to the main Webquest on page 2 and continue your task with step #5.

2

Scientists/Inventors Section Head



- Franklin is known today for his study of electricity. Describe the famous experiment which proved that lightning is electricity, and tell what important safety device Franklin invented as a result.
www.imahero.com/herohistory/ben_herohistory.htm#Kite
- What other areas of science interested Franklin? www.pbs.org/benfranklin (Click on “Inquiring Mind” then “Weather Wise”), www.fi.edu/franklin/scientst/scientst.html.
- Make a list of Franklin’s inventions www.pbs.org/benfranklin (Click on “Inquiring Mind” then “It’s the Little Things”)
- What major award did Franklin win for his scientific experiments? www.pbs.org/benfranklin (Click on “World of Influence” then “Celebrity”)
- To what important European organization was Franklin elected because of his contributions to scientific knowledge? www.pbs.org/benfranklin/13_world_celebrity.html.
- Did Franklin get rich from his inventions? Why or why not?
http://www.imahero.com/herohistory/ben_herohistory.htm#Inventor (See “Patents”)
<http://www.thinkquest.org/library/>, search by Site title: “Amazing Inventors and Inventions,” click on “Topics,” “Household Items,” “Franklin”
- Print your completed Section Head research pages.

Now return to the main Webquest on page 2 and continue your task with step #5.

3

Philosophers/Humorists Section Head



- What group did Franklin form to encourage discussion of philosophy and civic responsibility? www.pbs.org/benfranklin (Click on “Wit and Wisdom,” then “Self-Improvement”)
- List the parts of Franklin’s personal program for developing moral perfection: The four resolutions and the thirteen virtues. www.pbs.org/benfranklin (Click on “Wit and Wisdom,” then “Self-Improvement”), www.school-for-champions.com/character/franklin_virtues.htm
- Read through Franklin’s wise and witty sayings, called “Franklinisms.” Choose three that you think are good advice and rewrite them in your own words. www.fi.edu/franklin/printer/abc.html
- What message was Franklin trying to send with his famous political cartoon picturing a snake in pieces, the first ever published in America? <http://www.fi.edu/franklin/printer/images/join-die.jpg>, www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/firsts/cartoon
- Read a few stories about Franklin’s sense of humor. <http://www.thinkquest.org/library/>, search by Site title: Benjamin Franklin, the American Renaissance Man (The site is actually titled “Enlightened American: Benjamin Franklin” when you get there). Click on “English Version,” then “Wit and Humor”. Choose one story and be prepared to retell it to the rest of your group of Section Heads.
- What pen names did Franklin use when publishing his clever ideas about different subjects? www.pbs.org/benfranklin (Click on “Wit and Wisdom,” then “Name That Ben”)
- Why do you think Poor Richard’s Almanac was so popular? www.pbs.org/benfranklin (Click on “Wit and Wisdom,” then “Franklin Funnies”)
- Print your completed Section Head research pages.

Now return to the main Webquest on page 2 and continue your task with step #5.

4

Musicians Section Head



- What instruments did Franklin play? www.gigmasters.com/armonica/benfranklin.html
- Franklin studied music as a _____, and practiced it as an _____.
www.gigmasters.com/armonica/benfranklin.html
- What aspects of music did Franklin study and understand? www.gigmasters.com/armonica/benfranklin.html,
www.answers.com/topic/benjamin-franklin?cat=technology (Check out the “Music Encyclopedia” section)
- What musical instrument did Franklin invent? Describe it and how it was played.
www.fi.edu/franklin/musician/musician.html, www.fi.edu/franklin/musician/video/armonica.mov,
www.pbs.org/benfranklin/l3_inquiring_glass.html
- Franklin played and invented musical instruments. He also _____ music.
www.pbs.org/benfranklin/l3_inquiring_glass.html
- What famous composers of his day were inspired to write music for Franklin’s invention? Listen to the composition you’ll find at the second site. www.fi.edu/franklin/musician/musician.html www.pbs.org/benfranklin/l3_inquiring_glass.html
- Print your completed Section Head research pages.

Now return to the main Webquest on page 2 and continue your task with step #5.

5

Entrepreneurs/Business Leaders Section Head



- What did Franklin think was the way to get rich? www.fi.edu/franklin/economst/economst.html
- How did Franklin use his printing business to serve the community and improve people's lives? www.fi.edu/franklin/printer/printer.html, <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/benfranklin/printer.html>
- How successful was Franklin as a printer? <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/benfranklin/printer.html>
- At what age did Franklin own his own print shop? At what age was Franklin able to retire from business to pursue other interests? www.pbs.org/benfranklin/exp_worldly_philly.html, www.benfranklin300.org/etc_article_entrepreneur.htm.
- Besides printing, in what other business ventures was Franklin involved? www.pbs.org/benfranklin/13_wit_master.html, www.pbs.org/benfranklin/13_world_agriculture.html, www.ushistory.org/franklin/info, read "Escape to Philadelphia"
- Did Franklin get rich from his inventions? Why or why not? http://www.imahero.com/herohistory/ben_herohistory.htm#Inventor (See "Patents") <http://www.thinkquest.org/library/>, search by Site title, "Amazing Inventors and Inventions," click on "Topics," "Household Items," "Franklin")
- How else did Franklin contribute to our knowledge and ideas about business and the economy? www.fi.edu/franklin/economst/economst.html, www.pbs.org/benfranklin/13_world_agriculture.html, www.pbs.org/benfranklin/13_citizen_insurance.html, www.benfranklin300.org/etc_article_entrepreneur.htm
- Print your completed Section Head research pages.

Now return to the main Webquest on page 2 and continue your task with step #5.

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Section Head Worksheet

Make notes and complete this worksheet as you do your online research. Use the back if you need more space.

My Section at the Great American Hall of Fame: _____

Franklin's achievements that relate to my Section:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

More _____

My summary of Franklin's contributions to this aspect of American life:

Franklin's three most important contributions to this aspect of American life:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How Franklin's work in this area improved American life in his time:

How we still benefit from Franklin's work in this area today:

Why my Section is the best fit for Franklin's contributions to society:

Conclusion

Congratulations, Section Heads! You've managed to help the Great American Hall of Fame make a most difficult decision, and perhaps gained insights into your own potential to contribute to society in the process. A job well done! We hope, in years to come, to hear each of you deliver your acceptance speech as you achieve the honor of induction into the Hall of Fame yourselves!

If this webquest made you eager to learn more about brilliant, rascally Ben Franklin, check out these resources:

- *Amazing Ben Franklin Inventions You Can Build Yourself* by Carmella Van vleet. Nomad Press, 2007. 4–6.
- *The Amazing Life of Benjamin Franklin* by James Cross Giblin, illustrated by Michael Dooling. Scholastic Paperbacks, 2006. 3–5.
- *Benjamin Franklin* by Ingri D'Aulaire and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire. Beautiful Feet Books, 1998. 2–5.
- *Ben Franklin's Almanac: Being a True Account of the Good Gentleman's Life* by Candace Fleming. Atheneum/Anne Schwartz Books, 2003. 5+.
- *Biography: Benjamin Franklin Citizen of the World*. A&E Home Video, 2006 (DVD Video). 4+.
- *A Dangerous Engine: Benjamin Franklin from Scientist to Diplomat* by Joan Dash. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005. 5+.
- *How Ben Franklin Stole the Lightning* by Rosalyn Schanzer. HarperCollins, 2002. 1–5.
- *Who Was Ben Franklin?* by Dennis Brindell Fradin. Penguin Young Readers Group, 2002. 3–5.

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Evaluation

Your performance on this webquest will be evaluated based on your online research and worksheet, group participation, and presentation including timeline and written acceptance speech. A maximum of 50 points is possible, including six discretionary points for overall outstanding effort.

Online Research and Worksheet Rubric

	Incomplete 1	Acceptable 2	Good 3	Excellent 4
Following directions	Needed much help beyond written directions	Needed some help beyond written directions	Needed little help beyond written directions	Needed no help beyond written directions
Online research	Section printout incomplete, shows little effort	Section printout complete, shows acceptable effort	Section printout complete, shows good effort and interest	Section printout complete, shows excellent effort and interest
Webquest worksheets	Work was not neat or complete, notes were not appropriate to prompts	Work was fairly neat and complete, notes were mostly appropriate to prompts	Work was neat, complete, and notes were appropriate to prompts	Work was neat, complete, and notes were appropriate and thoughtful

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Evaluation

Group Participation and Presentation Rubric

	Incomplete 1	Acceptable 2	Good 3	Excellent 4
Following directions	Group needed much help beyond written directions	Group needed some help beyond written directions	Group needed little help beyond written directions	Group needed no help beyond written directions
Individual participation in group	Little participation in discussion, no obvious contribution to timeline or presentation	Some participation in discussion, some obvious contribution to timeline and presentation	Good participation in discussion, obvious contribution to timeline and presentation	Excellent participation in discussion, obvious, meaningful timeline and presentation
Group dynamics	Group was dominated by one or two members, no obvious effort to include everyone	Group was led by one or two members, some effort to include everyone	Group was led mainly by one or two members, but everyone was encouraged to contribute	Group was facilitated by different members, everyone's contribution was valued
Timeline	Little information, unattractive appearance, lacking events from some areas examined	Adequate information, acceptable appearance, events from most areas examined	Good information, attractive appearance, events from all areas examined	Much detailed information, very attractive appearance, events from all areas examined
Presentation	Decision was dictated by one or two members, based on poorly explained or unclear reasoning	Some, but not all, members participated in deciding; based on adequately explained, fairly logical reasoning	Most members participated in deciding; based on fairly well-explained, logical reasoning	Decision was reached by consensus, based on clearly explained, logical reasoning

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Evaluation

Written Acceptance Speech Rubric

	Incomplete 1	Acceptable 2	Good 3	Excellent 4
Written speech: Form	Work was not neat, many errors in spelling, grammar, paragraph format	Work was fairly neat, some errors in spelling, grammar, paragraph format	Work was neat, few errors in spelling, grammar, paragraph format	Work was neat, almost no errors in spelling, grammar, paragraph format
Written speech: Content	Work shows little thought, appreciation, ability to project into future	Work shows some thought, appreciation, ability to project into future	Work shows considerable thought, appreciation, ability to project into future	Work shows extensive thought, appreciation, ability to project into future
Imagination and personal appropriateness	Work shows little imagination, seems unrelated to personal talents or interests	Work shows some imagination, seems somewhat related to personal talents or interests	Work shows good imagination, seems related to personal talents or interests	Work shows outstanding imagination, seems closely related to personal talents or interests