

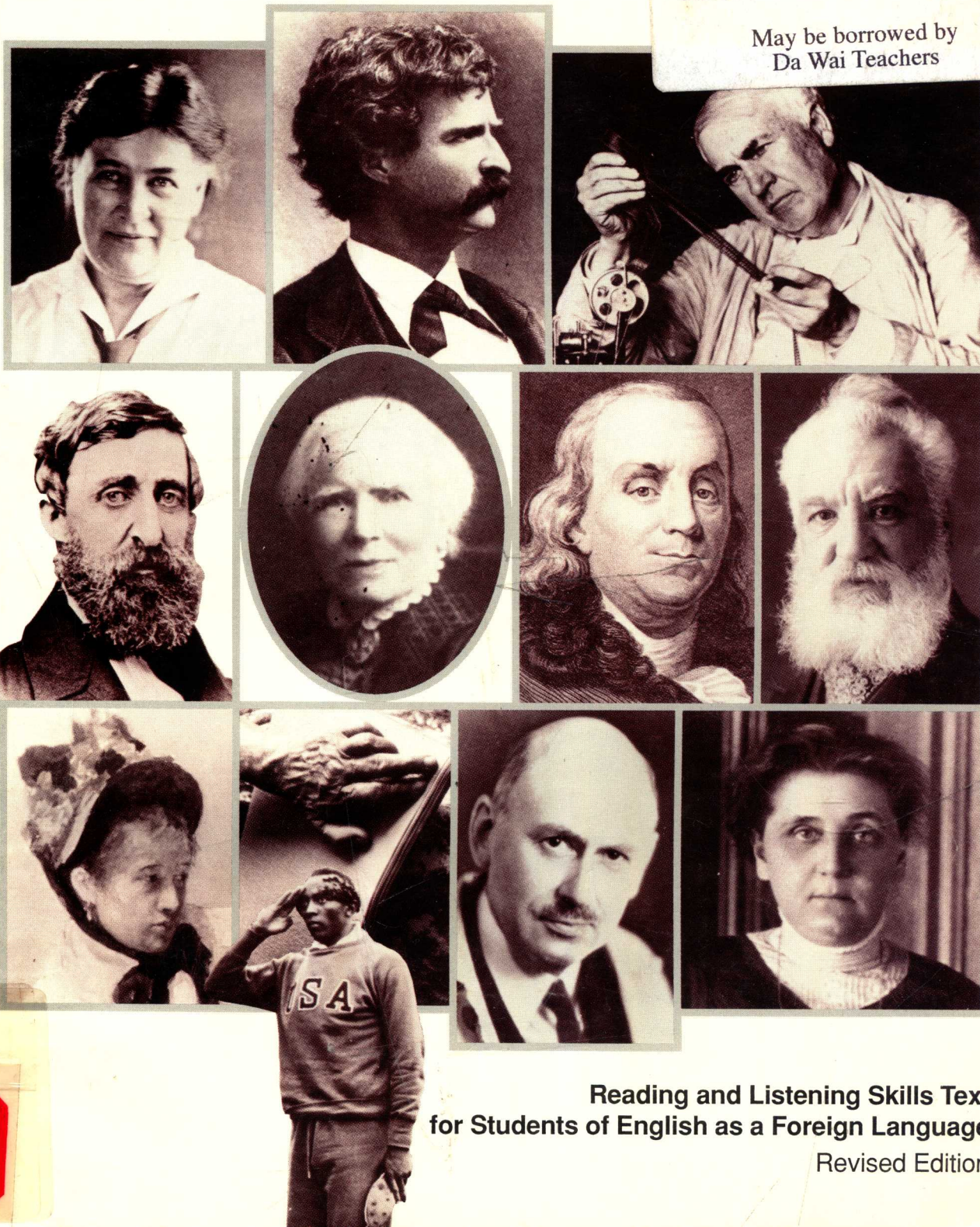
HIGH INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED LEVEL

TWELVE FAMOUS AMERICANS

Thomas Kral

U.S. Bureau of Cult. Affairs
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May be borrowed by
Da Wai Teachers



Reading and Listening Skills Text
for Students of English as a Foreign Language

Revised Edition



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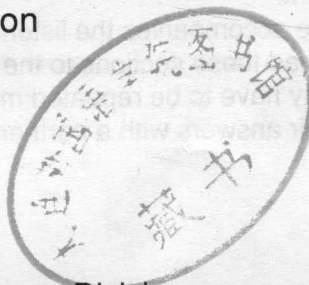
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High Intermediate/Advanced Level

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English Language Programs Division
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
United States Information Agency
Washington, D.C. 20547
1994

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Fox, Dixon Ryan, and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Eds.
Elizabeth Blackwell—Pioneer Woman Doctor
Copyright 1975 by Jean Lee Lather
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Publishing Company, Champaign, Illinois.

Owens, Jesse and Paul G. Neimark,
"An Open Letter to a Young Person with an Enemy"
Blackthink: My Life as Black Man and White Man.
Copyright © 1970 by Jesse Owens and Paul G. Neimark.

To the Teacher

Receptive Language Skills

Twelve Famous Americans is a collection of readings and listening comprehension passages which will give high intermediate and advanced level EFL students practice in the receptive skills.

There are at least four cognitive strategies which are common to the skills of reading and listening. First of all, before reading a text or listening to a talk, we formulate hypotheses about the information we are able to receive. This process of anticipation lays the groundwork, sets expectations, and poses questions for us to keep in mind as we read or listen. Anticipation is a continuing process whereby we modify early hypotheses or expectations on the basis of the new information we receive as we read or listen to extended statements. Second, as words pass before our eyes or flow into our ears, we assign meaning by chunking the words, storing them as meaningful units and phrases in our short-term memory. From these chunks of meaning, or memory markers, we get the gist of the message. Gisting is the process of capturing the central idea of a text or oral statement. To gist effectively, readers or listeners focus on what they understand; they pass over unknown or unintelligible vocabulary items and concentrate instead upon identifying the main idea and following its course of development. Lastly, contextualization allows us to transfer into our permanent store of knowledge those ideas gleaned from reading or listening. Through contextualization, we make a personalized response to the information we have read or heard. We personalize that information, putting it into our own frame of reference.

Teaching Suggestions

The strategies of anticipation, chunking, gisting, and contextualization are employed in this book. Students should not worry about individual vocabulary items which they do not know. They should concentrate upon general comprehension and performing the specific tasks required.

Part One of each unit is introductory and should be done in class. Parts two and three should be assigned as homework. The remainder of each unit can be done in class with students working in pairs or groups of three. Teacher-led discussion should follow all pair and small group work.

An audio cassette accompanies the listening comprehension sections; however, if the teacher wishes to read these sections to the class, transcriptions are found in the appendix. Some passages may have to be repeated more than is specified in the directions. Students should compare their answers with a partner before the teacher reviews them with the whole class.

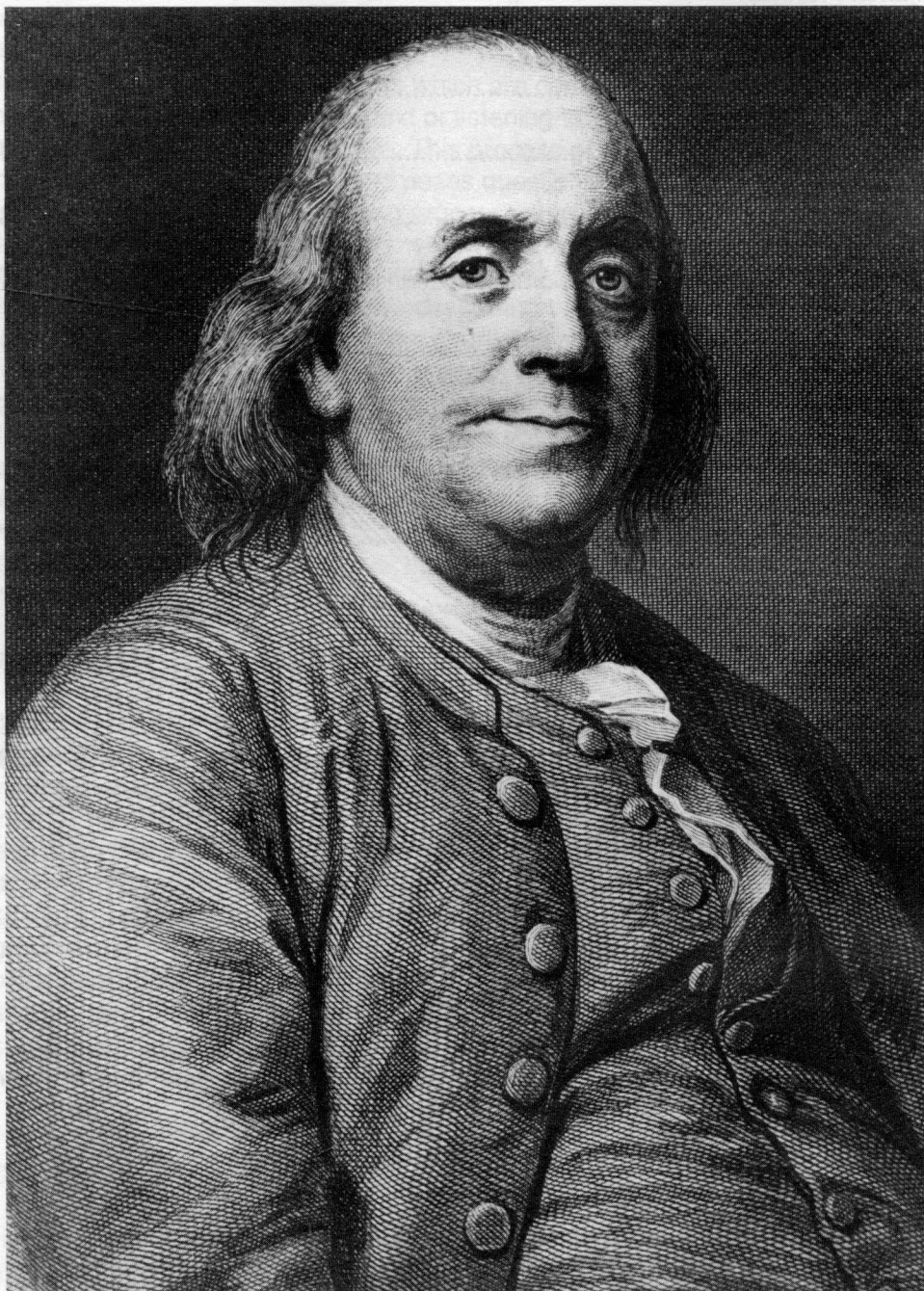
American Culture

Apart from its language development activities, *Twelve Famous Americans* is a collection of biographies of Americans who greatly influenced life in the United States and who continue to have effect upon American thought.

Students are encouraged to look for counterparts in their own national heritage; they will find them there, for many of the ideals which motivated these 12 Americans are universal ideals; and many of the personal experiences these Americans have had, in asserting those ideals, may be experiences shared by great people of other nations.

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Benjamin Franklin. An engraving from the original painting completed in 1786. Source: Library of Congress.

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UNIT ONE

Benjamin Franklin: "The First American"

- I. **ANTICIPATION EXERCISE.** Before reading the whole selection, skim the following paragraphs and answer the questions below.

Paragraph 1.

How can Benjamin Franklin be characterized?

Paragraph 3.

Why was Franklin expected to work at an early age?

What were his first jobs?

Paragraph 6.

Why did Franklin leave Boston?

Where did he eventually find employment?

How did Franklin become successful and well-known?

Paragraph 13.

What are some of Franklin's inventions?

Paragraph 16.

Why did Franklin go overseas?

What happened to Franklin during his years abroad?

Discuss your answers with your teacher and classmates before continuing.

- II. **READ THE ENTIRE ESSAY**

Benjamin Franklin: "The First American"

How does one characterize Benjamin Franklin? Journalist, scientist, educator, politician, writer, administrator, philosopher—he truly seemed to be able to do almost everything. His accomplishments and the talents and interests which he displayed during the course of his long life—1706 to 1790—have caused him to be called both “the first American” and “the last universal man.”

Historian Samuel Eliot Morison gives this view of the man: “Franklin’s secret, the thing that ‘made him tick’ and pulled every aspect of his mind together, was his love of people. He talked with English and French statesmen as an equal; he was as homely and comfortable as an old shoe.” Morison even speculated that if we had been alive in 1776 and had made a call upon Benjamin Franklin, he would have made us feel at home. He would have asked about our parents, and probably would have known them, or at least about them; he would then have asked us about ourselves, drawn us out, and sent us away with some good advice, a handshake, and a smile.

Benjamin was one of 17 children, all of whom were expected to help support the large Franklin household. As a young child, he worked in the shop of his father, a soap and candlemaker, but this work did not appeal to a boy who loved to read and study. Therefore, when he was 12, Benjamin was sent to assist his half-brother James who had a printing shop. There, surrounded by books, young Ben would often stay up late into the night reading on a wide range of subjects; and as he read, he practiced improving his own style of writing.

In 1721, James began publishing a newspaper, the *New England Courant*. Benjamin secretly wrote articles for the paper under the pen name of “Dame Silence Dogood,” putting them under the door of the

(1) print shop late at night so that his brother would not know the articles were his. They were full of humor and wise observations of life in Boston, Franklin’s birthplace, and they immediately became popular with the public.

When James was jailed for criticizing the British authorities, young Benjamin took over the publishing of the paper. In defense of freedom of speech and the press, he courageously printed a quotation from a London newspaper: “Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as wisdom; and no such thing as public liberty without freedom of speech; which is the right of every man as far as by it if he does not hurt or control the right of another.”

After a quarrel with James, Benjamin left Boston to seek his own fortune. Failing to find work in New York City, the 17-year-old boy went on to Philadelphia where he found a job as a printer’s apprentice and soon had a wide circle of friends. Within a few years, Franklin had married, had started his own printing shop, and was looked upon as a successful young businessman.

In 1729, Franklin purchased the newspaper, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. Besides the regular news, Franklin included his own articles and editorials alive with humor and wisdom; and soon the paper was the most widely read in all of colonial America.

Reproduction of the print “Franklin, The Printer” by Charles E. Mills showing young Benjamin Franklin operating a printing press. Source: Library of Congress

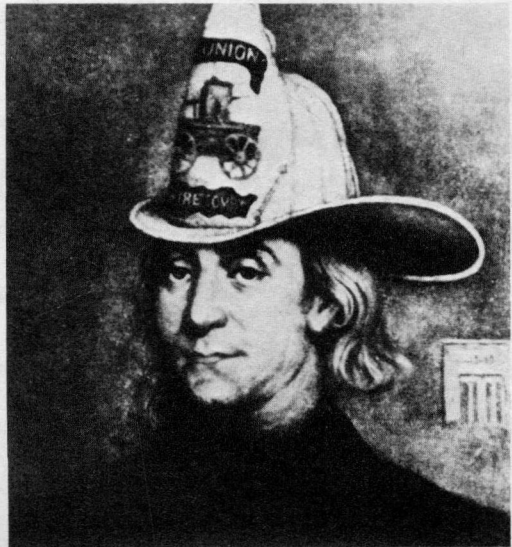


At the same time, Franklin involved (8) himself in community projects. He founded, for example, the Junto, a discussion group that met weekly to debate the issues of the day. The Junto was active for 30 years and developed into the American Philosophical Society. He also founded the country's first subscription library and organized America's first fire-fighting and fire insurance companies. He helped to improve the local police force and to establish a hospital and a college which later became the University of Pennsylvania. He once said of his activities, "I would rather have it said, 'He lived useful,' than 'he died rich.'..."

In 1732, Franklin began the publication (9) of an almanac under the name Richard Saunders (an English astrologer). He continued to publish it annually for about 25 years, and it came to be known as *Poor Richard's Almanac*. As Franklin said in his autobiography: "I endeavored to make it both entertaining and useful....I considered it a proper vehicle for conveying instructions among the common people who bought scarcely any other books; I therefore filled all the little spaces that occurred between the remarkable days in the calendar with proverbial sentences chiefly such as inculcated industry and frugality."

By his own admission, Franklin's (10) proverbs were not original but drawn from "the wisdom of many ages and nations." In his pursuit of this wisdom, he taught himself to read French, Spanish, Italian, German, and Latin. Some of the devices Franklin used to give the sayings a sharpness and impact were (a) the change of one or more words to a more graphic word or phrase, (b) the use of a shorter, more concise construction, and (c) the use of alliteration. The following are examples:

- (a) Original: Many strokes fell great oaks.
Franklin: Little strokes fell great oaks.
- (b) Original: The greatest talkers are the least doers.
Franklin: Great talkers, little doers.
- (c) Original: Waste not, want not.
Franklin: Sloth and silence are a fool's virtues.



Benjamin Franklin as a fire fighter and wearing helmet of Philadelphia's Union Fire Company which he organized in 1736. Source: Courtesy INA Museum.

These practical words of advice to (11) the people, improved by Franklin's talent for simple, humorous writing, had universal appeal. Many of them, in one form or another, are still quoted today. *Poor Richard's Almanac* achieved worldwide fame and was published in many languages.

As to his proverbs on industry and (12) thrift, Franklin practiced all he preached; and by 1748, at the age of 42, he was able to retire from business to devote his life to public service and the study of science. Little did he know that he was entering the most important period of his life.

As an experimenter and practical (13) user of scientific facts, Franklin looked for easier and better ways to do things. He invented an open stove, the Franklin stove, which gave more heat and wasted less fuel than a fireplace. He also made the first pair of bifocal glasses and invented a musical instrument called the glass harmonica and the stepladder chair.

Franklin is especially famous for (14) his contributions in the field of electricity. The commonest terms used in electricity today are Franklin's words: battery, brush, armature, charge, condense, conductor, plus, minus, positive, negative—terms he made up as he



Franklin's kite demonstration. The popular illustrators Currier and Ives published this print in 1876 on the one-hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence to commemorate Franklin's kite demonstration showing that lightning and electricity are identical.

made observations or conducted experiments. He is best known, however, for his discovery that electricity and natural lightning are the same. Flying a silk kite during a summer thunderstorm, Franklin was able to attract an electrical spark to a key tied to the kite string. By comparing the characteristics of the natural spark with the man-made charge, Franklin was able to prove the similarity of electric matter and lightning. Using this knowledge, he invented the lightning rod which today protects millions of buildings from lightning.

He also did pioneer work in the (15) field of weather observation. Few people know that it was Benjamin Franklin who discovered the movement of storms from west to east upon which all weather forecasting today has been based. He also made the first scientific study of the Gulf Stream, that mysterious body of warm water that flows up the eastern coast of the United States and then heads off for Europe.

In 1757, Franklin went to London as (16) an agent for the colony of Pennsylvania. He was later also colonial agent for Georgia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. During these years abroad, he worked hard to bridge the developing division between England and her American colonies. He had always considered himself a loyal Englishman. Gradually, however, his sympathies became more and more American and less British, and his ideas favoring American independence became stronger.

Returning to Philadelphia in 1775 (17) at the start of the American Revolution, Franklin worked tirelessly for the cause of independence. In 1776, he was appointed to the committee to help write the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson submitted the original draft to Franklin who made a few minor changes and gave it his approval.

Franklin was then sent to France to (18) seek French aid for the American cause. In

Paris, Franklin was greeted with warmth and enthusiasm. Here was Poor Richard whose proverbs were so appealing. Here was the great scientist whose experiments had made him world famous. Before long, money and the French fleet were on their way to aid America.

In 1781, the British surrendered, (19) and Franklin was chosen to go to London to help negotiate the peace treaty with England. In 1783, the treaty was signed, and two years later Franklin returned home to retire for the second time. He was 79 years old. But there was still one more task for him to perform for his country. In 1787, Franklin was again called from retirement, this time to help write a constitution for a democratic federal government.

When he died three years later, at (20) the age of 84, he was buried with all the solemn pomp and splendor befitting his many years of service to his country and the world. Both the French National Assembly and the United States House of Representatives voted to wear mourning in his honor. No one, however, thought of using the simple, characteristically worded epitaph that Franklin had written for himself when he was 23 years old:

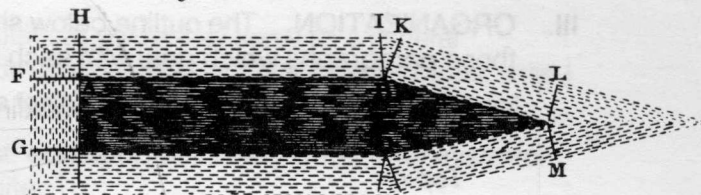
The Body
of
Benjamin Franklin
Printer

(Like the cover of an old book
Its contents torn out
And stript of its lettering and gilding)
Lies here, food for worms.

But the work shall not be lost
For it will (as he believed) appear once more
In a new and more elegant edition
Revised and Corrected
By
The Author.

[Approximately 1,500 words]

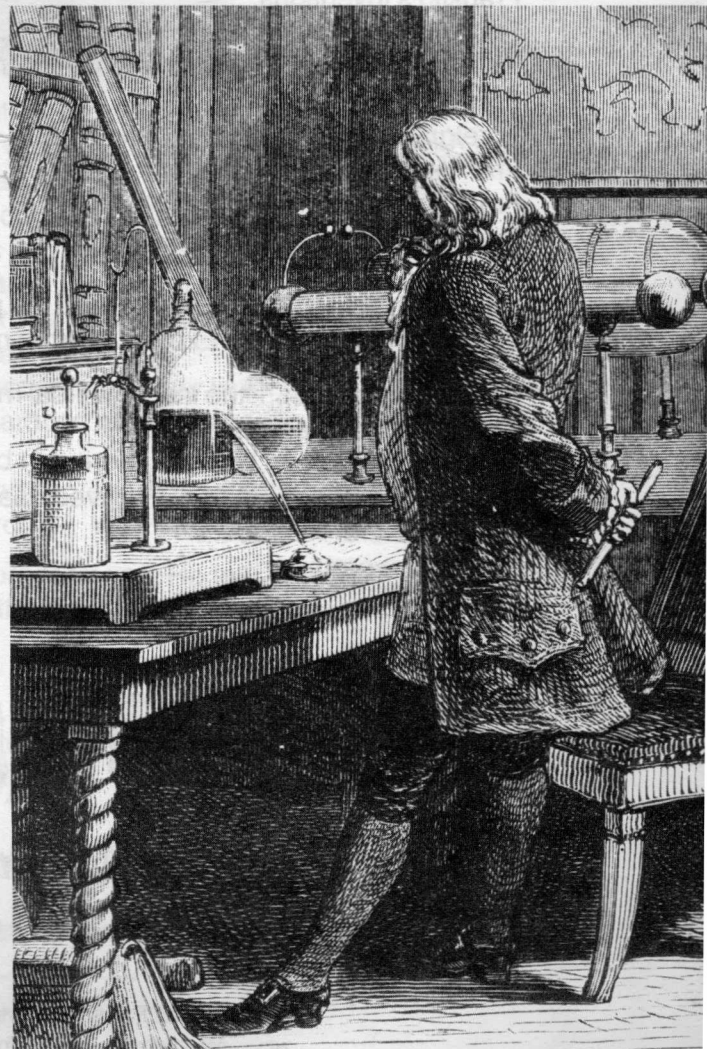
Fig.V



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The flow of electricity through objects. This illustration appeared in Franklin's text "Experiment and Observations on Electricity," which he published in London in 1774.

Franklin the scientist. Franklin ponders over his notes in his Philadelphia laboratory. Source: Culver Service.



- III. **ORGANIZATION.** The outline below shows the organization of the essay. Identify those paragraphs which deal with each topic in the outline.

Benjamin Franklin: "The First American"

Topic	Paragraph(s)
I. Introduction	_____
II. Childhood	_____
III. Franklin, the Printer	_____
IV. Franklin, the Community Leader	_____
V. Franklin's Almanac	_____
VI. Franklin, the Scientist	_____
VII. Franklin, the Statesman	_____

- IV. **SCANNING FOR FACTS.** Find the following information in the reading selection. Give the number(s) of the paragraph(s) which provide(s) the facts.

Franklin's inventions.

Franklin's birthplace.

Names of the newspapers for which Franklin wrote.

Franklin's pen names (2).

Foreign languages which Franklin knew.

Franklin's first role in London.

Franklin's responsibility in France.

Franklin's last official task.

- V. **CHECKING THE MEANING.** Find the paragraph in which the following phrases and statements occur. Explain the meaning of these items in your own words.

"the first American," "the last universal man."

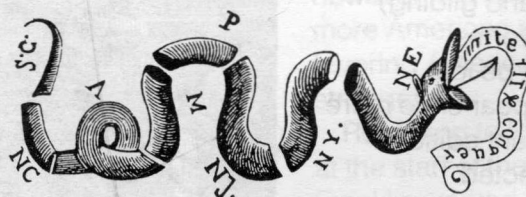
"the thing that made him tick."

"Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as wisdom."

"I would rather have it said, 'He lived useful', than 'he died rich'."

"Great talkers, little doers."

"Food for worms."



JOIN or DIE

The Battlecry - Created by Benjamin Franklin

"Join or Die." Franklin's cartoon urges the American colonists to unite to fight for independence.

VI. **LOOKING AT IDEAS.** Some of the sentences below may serve as a general introductory statement while others provide specific detail. In the spaces provided, write I before those sentences which introduce a topic and D before those which give detail.

- ___ 1. Franklin was a journalist, scientist, educator, politician, writer, administrator, and philosopher during his long life.
- ___ 2. Franklin is called "the last universal man."
- ___ 3. Franklin seemed to be able to do almost everything.
- ___ 4. Franklin worked in his half brother's printing shop.
- ___ 5. Franklin worked in his father's soap and candle shop.
- ___ 6. Early in life, Franklin was expected to help support his family.
- ___ 7. Franklin had a great talent for writing.
- ___ 8. Franklin wrote popular articles under the pen name "Dame Silence Dogood" while still a teen-ager.
- ___ 9. Franklin's editorials in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* were popular with the reading public.
- ___ 10. Franklin's proverbs, appearing in *Poor Richard's Almanac*, gained worldwide popularity.
- ___ 11. Franklin's proverbs were not original, but he rewrote them to make them more easily remembered.
- ___ 12. Franklin did pioneer work in weather observations.
- ___ 13. Franklin invented an open stove which gave out more heat and used less fuel than other stoves available at that time.
- ___ 14. Franklin introduced many of the common terms used in electricity.
- ___ 15. Franklin conducted experiments to discover the nature of electricity.
- ___ 16. Franklin's accomplishments as an inventor and scientist are noteworthy.
- ___ 17. Franklin helped to write the American constitution.
- ___ 18. Franklin was an excellent diplomat.
- ___ 19. Franklin established the first subscription library in America.
- ___ 20. Franklin helped to write the Declaration of Independence.

VII. **USAGE: SYNONYMS.** Complete each sentence by selecting the item that is closest in meaning to the italicized word.

Example: Franklin *regretted* being born too soon. He felt sorry that he would miss seeing the inventions of the future.

relieved
sorry

upset
happy

afraid
convinced

1. Franklin's *advice* to people to wear white clothes in a hot, sunny climate was followed. This _____ helped people to be cooler.

demand
invention

idea
recommendation

plan
suggest

2. He made practical use of facts gathered from *personal* observation and experiment. In fact, he did most of his research _____.

without money
secretly

by himself
quickly

at home
with friends

3. His inventions *influenced* science and _____ people's daily lives.

advanced
helped

complicated
affected

lengthened
freed

4. Franklin's *talent* as an inventor was matched by his _____ as a statesman.

identity
position

recognition
work

ability
dedication

5. He always had *faith* in the steady progress of science.

This _____ is characteristic of most American men of science.

sadness
dream

conclusion
stubbornness

opinion
belief

6. He played a leading *part* in the conflicts of his time, but his _____ in the publishing business is not well-known.

effort
responsibility

role
leadership

experience
history

7. Franklin also *achieved* fame as an inventor and _____ a respected place in the history of American science.

lost
demanded

sought
discovered

attained
refused

8. His experiment with a kite successfully *attracted* lightning. The results _____ public attention to his research work.

drew
ignored

limited
stirred up

encouraged
rejected

LISTENING COMPREHENSION ACTIVITIES

Franklin, The Swimmer*

- A. PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITY.** Aside from his other accomplishments, Benjamin Franklin is also famous as a swimmer. Before you listen to a passage about Franklin's feats in this area, look over the following sentences which you will hear in a longer discussion.

Benjamin Franklin was America's first internationally famous swimmer and swimming teacher.

As a boy, he learned to swim during the warm Boston summers.

Franklin was always interested in getting the fullest enjoyment from life.

Not content with enjoying the sport, he studied manuals on swimming strokes and taught himself to do stunts in the water.

Franklin's support for swimming may have come from his belief that even one's leisure should be employed usefully.

- B. LISTENING ONE.** Now listen to the passage and answer the following questions after you have heard it one time.

1. Where did Franklin swim as a boy?
2. For what purpose did Franklin use a kite in this passage.
3. How far did Franklin swim down the Thames?
4. Where did Franklin introduce swimming instruction?

- C. LISTENING TWO.** Listen to the passage a second time. Circle those words in the list below which you hear in the lecture.

amuse
angel
coast
content
famous

fatty
invention
kick
leisure
method

plump
pretty
riding
sandal
Scuba divers

shoes
suits
tricks
unsuccessful
weather

*Transcript for the listening passage is found in the appendix.



Elizabeth Blackwell, the first American woman doctor. Source: Hobart College, Geneva, New York.

UNIT TWO

Elizabeth Blackwell: Pioneer Woman Doctor

LISTENING COMPREHENSION ACTIVITY*

Elizabeth Blackwell was America's first woman doctor of medicine. Born in Bristol, England, she emigrated to the United States with her family 11 years later in 1832. Upon reaching adulthood, she taught for several years before pursuing a career in medicine.

A. PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITY. Below are some of the sentences you will hear in the biography. Look over the sentences before you listen to the selection.

1. The graduation ceremonies at the Geneva School of Medicine made history January 23, 1849.
2. On this occasion, the hall where the ceremony took place was crowded with spectators.
3. Twenty-six young men and one young woman received their medical degrees.
4. Elizabeth Blackwell was the first woman to receive a medical degree.
5. The moment of her graduation was the climax of a long struggle.
6. Elizabeth Blackwell had not been interested in practicing medicine, yet she became a doctor to make it possible for other women.
7. Elizabeth Blackwell had good qualifications for her role as pioneer.
8. Elizabeth's father was a businessman who believed his daughter should have as good an education as his sons.
9. The Blackwell home was a gathering place for social reformers.
10. Harriet Beecher Stowe and William Lloyd Garrison, leaders in the fight to abolish slavery, were frequent visitors.
11. One of Elizabeth's brothers married Lucy Stone, suffragette.
12. One of Elizabeth's sisters became a foreign correspondent.
13. "What do you expect from one of Samuel Blackwell's children?"
14. Elizabeth's father died when she was 17, leaving his family with little money.
15. Elizabeth's mother took care of the housekeeping.
16. Elizabeth and her two older sisters taught school.
17. The school closed when Elizabeth's brothers were old enough to go into business.
18. A family friend suggested that Elizabeth study medicine.
19. Elizabeth's friend died of a painful disease.
20. The thought of being a doctor began to interest Elizabeth.

*Transcript for the listening passage is found in the appendix.