

The Life of Benjamin Franklin

Student A:

Benjamin Franklin was born in (1) _____ into a family of seventeen children. He had only (2) _____ years of formal education. When he was not allowed to (3) _____, he ran away to Philadelphia where he became a journalist. There, he published the (4) _____ and *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Franklin was also an inventor. He created bifocal spectacles and (5) _____.

In 1776, he signed the Declaration of Independence and became (6) _____ to France, where he secured French support for the USA. He was a negotiator of the (7) _____. In 1785, he returned to the United States, where he died in (8) _____.

Franklin was regarded as an 'elder statesman'. After the Seven Years War he felt that tight British control would lead to revolt and that without more autonomy, America would need to fight.

Student B:

Benjamin Franklin was born in 1706 into a family of (1) _____ children. He had only two years of formal education. When he was not allowed to write, he ran away to Philadelphia where he became a (2) _____. There, he published the *Pennsylvanian Gazette* and (3) _____. Franklin was also an (4) _____. He created (5) _____ and the lightning conductor.

In 1776, he signed the (6) _____ and became ambassador to France, where he secured French (7) _____ for the USA. He was a negotiator of the Treaty of Paris. In 1785 he returned to the United States, where he died in 1790.

Franklin was regarded as an (8) _____. After the Seven Years' War he felt that tight British control would lead to revolt and that without more autonomy, America would need to fight.

TEACHER'S NOTES

The Life of Benjamin Franklin

Activity

Information gap

Aim

To complete a text about the life and achievements of Benjamin Franklin.

Interaction

Pairs

Language focus

Past simple; simple past passive; question forms

Skills focus

Listening; speaking

Preparation

Photocopy one worksheet for each pair of students and cut it in half.

Time

20 minutes

Procedure

- 1 Ask students if they have heard of Benjamin Franklin and what they know about him. Elicit or explain that he was a very important political figure and one of the founding fathers of America. Tell students that Franklin was also a noted polymath. Write the word 'polymath' on the board and ask students to guess what this could mean. Tell students that the word comes from the Greek meaning 'having learned much' and refers to a person with a wide range of knowledge and skill covering many different subjects.
- 2 Divide the class into two groups, A and B. Explain that they have the same piece of writing about Benjamin Franklin but that some information is missing. The students are going to work together to complete the text about Benjamin Franklin. Tell them that A has the information B is missing and vice versa.
- 3 Tell the students to work with a partner from the same group and write the questions that they are going to ask for

their missing information. Monitor and help as required.

- 4 When the students have written their questions, tell them to find a new partner from the other group. Tell them to take turns to ask their questions and write the answers in the appropriate gap on their worksheet. Monitor and correct as required.
- 5 When the students have finished asking and answering questions, ask them to compare their pieces of writing to make sure they are the same.

Key

Student A

- 1 When was Benjamin Franklin born?
- 2 How many years of formal education did he have?
- 3 What was he not allowed to do? or Why did he run away to Philadelphia?
- 4 What did he publish in Philadelphia (as well as *Poor Richard's Almanack*)?
- 5 What did he create/invent (as well as bifocal spectacles)?
- 6 What did he become in 1776?
- 7 What did he negotiate?
- 8 When did he die?

Student B

- 1 How many children were there in Benjamin Franklin's family?
- 2 What did he do/become in Philadelphia?
- 3 What did he publish in Philadelphia as well as the *Pennsylvanian Gazette*?
- 4 What did he also do?
- 5 What did he create (as well as the lightning conductor)?
- 6 What did he sign in 1776?
- 7 What did he secure for the USA?
- 8 What was he regarded as? or How was Franklin regarded?