

- President Washington in his Farewell Address talked about “good faith and justice toward all nations,” and “cultivating peace and harmony with all...always guided by justice and kindness.” Ask students who among them would agree to such advice to the nation by an outgoing president today and who would not agree, and have them from small groups and pretend they have the job of actually writing a farewell speech by a president today and of having to decide what he ought to say.
- Have students imagine it is the year 1795 and that their town wants to build one of Ben Franklin’s Philadelphia innovations. Divide the class into four groups and assign each one a type of building: a firehouse, a hospital, a school or a library. Each group prepares a speech to persuade their fellow citizens to donate money to build this particular innovation.
- Have students imagine it is the year 1795 and that they have the job of writing ads for a store that is selling three inventions of Ben Franklin: the Franklin stove, bifocal eyeglasses and the lightening rod. The ads will be read by people who have never had knowledge of or experience with the three items.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- www.archives.gov/national_archives_experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers.html
This “National Archives Experience” gives a biographical sketch for each of the 55 men who were delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1787.
- www.constitutioncenter.org/visiting/ExhibitExperience/VirtualTour.shtml
This site contains a virtual tour of the new National Constitution Center in Philadelphia.
- www.mountvernon.org/learn/index.cfm
Mount Vernon’s web site contains a wealth of information about the first president, including a time line of his life and a virtual tour of his home. Resources for teachers include sample lesson plans and reading lists.
- www.greatseal.com
This site provides detailed information about the history, design elements and mottoes of the Great Seal of the United States.
- www.ushistory.org/franklin/
“The Electric Ben Franklin” site is developed and maintained by the Independence Hall Association with the goal of making Franklin accessible to students of all ages. Materials of interest include a time line, a kite experiment, “The Quotable Franklin,” interactive games, a biography of Benjamin Franklin, and links to other sites of interest.

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- bensguide.gpo.gov/benfranklin/index.html
This is another good Franklin site, which discusses his work as a printer, a librarian, an inventor and a statesman. Also includes a time line.

Suggested Print Resources

- Allen, Thomas B. *George Washington, Spymaster: How the Americans Outspied the British and Won the Revolutionary War*. National Geographic, Washington, D.C.; 2004.
- Catrow, David. *We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States*. Dial Books for Young Readers, New York, NY; 2002.
- Chandra, Deborah. *George Washington's Teeth*. Farrar, Strous and Giroux, New York, NY; 2003.
- Gibling, James. *The Amazing Life of Benjamin Franklin*. Scholastic, New York, NY; 2000.
- Roop, Peter and Connie Roop. *Benjamin Franklin*. Scholastic, New York, NY; 2000.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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United States Constitution

Grades K-4

Studying history is an essential part of understanding the world we live in today. The history of the United States includes the experiences and accomplishments of diverse peoples, from Native Americans and immigrants to the descendants of European settlers and of Africans brought here by force. Key events such as the Revolutionary War, the writing of the Constitution and the Emancipation Proclamation influenced how the nation developed. The study of history also involves facing painful aspects of the country's past, such as slavery and the treatment of Native Americans. Over time, songs, holidays and other observances have shaped and reflected how Americans see themselves and their country. History provides a framework for interpreting and living in the ever-changing present.



Program Summary

After winning the Revolutionary War, the states needed to agree on rules to guide the new country's government. Led by George Washington, people chosen from each of the states met in Philadelphia in 1787 to write these rules, which became known as the Constitution. Many of the men who wrote the Constitution had already spent years working to free the colonies from the British, and they continued to serve the new country in many important ways. Washington, sometimes called "the father of our country," grew up on a Virginia farm and fought against the British in the colonial wars. He was the first president elected under the new Constitution. Benjamin Franklin, who also helped to write the Constitution, worked as an inventor, a writer and a printer in addition to representing the United States in dealing with other countries. While changes have been made to the Constitution over time, this remarkable document continues to control how the government works more than 200 years after it was written.

Vocabulary

United States Constitution — A document that describes how the three main parts of the government — the president, Congress and the Supreme Court — work together.

colonies — Places that are settled far from one's home country, but are ruled by the home country. The people who live in colonies are called colonists.

Revolutionary War — The war in which America defeated the British and achieved its independence. Also known as the American Revolution.

delegates — Persons sent to a meeting to speak and to act for others, like the 55 delegates from the 13 states sent to Philadelphia to write the new Constitution.

equal representation — A way of organizing a government that gives each state the same amount of power, regardless of how large or small the state is.

Constitutional Convention — The meeting held in Philadelphia in 1787 at which the Constitution was written.

article — One of the seven sections of the Constitution.

amendments — Additions or changes made to the U.S. Constitution.

land surveys — Drawings that show the exact size and boundaries of a piece of land.

Mount Vernon — The home of George and Martha Washington in Virginia.

slavery — The practice or system of people owning other people and forcing them to work against their will for no money.

Continental Army — The name of the American colonial army during the Revolutionary War, commanded by General George Washington.

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elected — Chosen by voters to hold a certain position in the government.

address — A speech.

currency — Money made of paper or metal.

symbol — An object that stands for and reminds us of something very important.

The Great Seal — The official mark used by the U.S. government to indicate approval.

E pluribus unum — Latin words on the Great Seal of the U.S., which in English mean "out of many, one."

inventor — A person who invents, or creates, something entirely new.

humorist — A person who is skilled in expressing ideas in humorous or amusing ways.

diplomat — A person who represents the government of his or her nation in its dealings with other nations.

Poor Richard's Almanack — A collection of news, observations, advice and humor, written and published by Benjamin Franklin every year from 1733 to 1758.

bifocals — Eyeglasses with two lenses, one for distance and one for reading, invented by Benjamin Franklin.

Franklin stove — A cast-iron heating stove invented by Benjamin Franklin.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Ask students to discuss any rules they must follow at home to keep things in order and to help all the members of the household to get along. What about rules they follow in the classroom and the school? Why is having such rules important?
- Show students a one dollar bill and ask them to describe all the pictures and images that they can find on it. Ask them whose picture is on the front and why they think this person was chosen to be pictured here. What do they think the images on the back of the bill might mean?
- Can any students think of anything used every day by someone in their families or something in their houses or community that was invented or first started by Benjamin Franklin? If not, ask them about bifocal glasses being worn, about a lightning rod on the house or about a public library and a firehouse in the community.
- Sometimes people use clever sayings to convey commonsense ideas, such as the saying "A penny saved is a penny earned." Ask students to think of as many commonsense sayings as they can. What do these sayings mean?

Focus Questions

1. Who wrote the Constitution? What does it do?
2. What is an amendment?
3. What was George Washington's job during the Revolutionary War?
4. Describe George Washington's attitude toward the enslaved people who lived on his farm.
5. What is the Great Seal? Where does it appear?
6. Name at least three jobs held by Benjamin Franklin.
7. Why did Benjamin Franklin fly a kite in a thunderstorm?
8. What are a few of Benjamin Franklin's several famous sayings?

Follow-up Discussion

- Ask students to discuss why a constitution with a set of rules about governing became necessary after the colonists had been so successful in winning their independence.
- During the writing of the Constitution, the small states and the large states disagreed about how much power each state should have based on the size of the population. Discuss with students the pros and cons of equal representation. What would they have argued for, if they had been at the Convention?
- Have students discuss why the delegates provided for future amendments instead of writing a complete Constitution that could never be changed. What changes have been made to the Constitution since it was written?
- Ask students if they think George Washington did the right thing when he decided to retire after two terms instead of continuing to serve as the country's first president.
- Discuss with students what they think Benjamin Franklin ought to be remembered for most of all.

Follow-up Activities

- Divide the class into several small groups and ask each group to propose and to write down three rules of classroom behavior. After each group has reported its proposed rules, the entire class can debate the pros and cons of each proposed rule and select and adopt three rules by majority vote.
- Ask students to study dollars they brought to class and to get to know the Great Seal, and then to pair up with other students to design either a new Great Seal for the United States, or a Great Seal for their school, city or state.

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