

cobblestone®

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

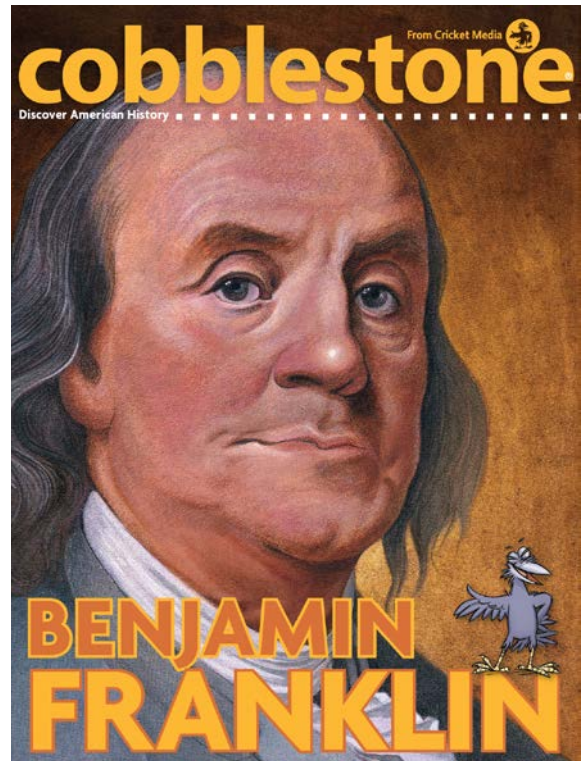
It is difficult to name a more multitalented figure in U.S. history than Benjamin Franklin. In this issue of Cobblestone, your students will read about his varied roles, including printer, writer, community leader, scientist, inventor, and diplomat.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

Why are Benjamin Franklin's contributions to American society valued today?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about Benjamin Franklin's contributions to the development of American society and government
- Students will learn about the ways Benjamin Franklin contributed to historical change in America
- Students will analyze the significance of historical figures and developments
- Students will compare life in a specific historical period to life today
- Students will write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events
- Students will use distance and time to calculate speed
- Students will draw evidence from literary or informational text to support analysis, reflections, and research



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core Social Studies skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

- **Citizen Ben**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1050L
- **Mr. Postmaster**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1150L
- **America's First Diplomat**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1150L

Citizen Ben

pp. 11–16, Expository Nonfiction

This article details Benjamin Franklin's contributions to American institutions and values, including his role in shaping local government, the arts, and social movements. Use it to help students analyze Franklin's historical significance.



RESOURCES

- Analyze Historical Significance Organizer

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze an expository nonfiction article
- Students will analyze the significance of historical figures and developments
- Students will write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events

KEY VOCABULARY

- **civic** (p. 11) relating to citizenship or being a citizen
- **venture** (p. 12) an activity involving chance or risk
- **cultivate** (p. 13) to acquire or develop something

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: Why are Benjamin Franklin's contributions to American society valued today?

Before reading the article, ask students to discuss their ideas about what being a good citizen means. Then ask them to explain the influences—events and people—that helped shape their ideas about being a good citizen.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Together, review the vocabulary words and read them aloud. Then ask students to make predictions about the topic of the text using the vocabulary words. If necessary, help students guess the topic by revealing the title of the article.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- How did Franklin's goals relate to helping people become good citizens?
- What groups of people came together to work to support Franklin's goals?
- How did people in America benefit from Franklin's efforts?

CONCEPT: Analyze Historical Significance

INSTRUCT: Remind students that Ben Franklin had a passion for improving. Explain that in his drive to make improvements that would benefit people, he often had to challenge old ideas and ways of thinking. Distribute a copy of the *Interpret Historical Significance* graphic organizer to each student. Have students work in pairs to review the article and fill in the organizer with details about Franklin's work and how it improved society.

ASSESS: Have students work in small groups to share and discuss the ideas they recorded in their graphic organizers. Circulate during the discussions to check on students' understanding. Finally, invite volunteers to share ideas with the class.

EXTEND

Language Arts Explain that an ode is a poem that celebrates and praises someone or something. Continue by explaining that in an ode, the poet directly addresses his or her subject. (Example: "Ben Franklin, your wisdom is a timeless gift!") Have students write a ten-line ode to Ben Franklin using details from the article. Invite students to read their odes to the class.

Analyze Historical Significance

Choose four organizations from the article that were started or supported by Ben Franklin. Explain the purpose of each organization and how it improved society.

Name of Organization	What did it do?	How did it improve society?

Mr. Postmaster

p. 17, Expository Nonfiction

This article explores Benjamin Franklin's contributions to the development of a modern and efficient American postal service. Use it to help students understand historical changes.



RESOURCES

- Compare Historical Changes Organizer

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze an expository nonfiction article
- Students will compare life in a specific historical period to life today
- Students will use distance and time to calculate speed

KEY VOCABULARY

- **distribution (p. 17)** the act of delivering something to people
- **operation (p. 17)** a business or organization
- **standardized (p. 17)** changed things to make them similar and consistent

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: Why are Benjamin Franklin's contributions to American society valued today?

Before reading the article, have students share what they know about how messages were sent between people in the 1700s. Ask them to discuss the challenges mail carriers likely faced during that time. Then have students compare how past methods of delivering mail differ from today's methods. Finally, have students share hypotheses about how postal service methods became faster over time.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Together, review the vocabulary words and read them aloud. Then ask students to choose two or more words from the vocabulary list and write a sentence about postal delivery using them.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- What challenges did postal workers face before Franklin became involved?
- What did Franklin do to improve postal service?
- How did Franklin's changes affect what and how fast something could be sent through the postal service?

CONCEPT: Compare Historical Changes

INSTRUCT: Have students reread the article. Then, ask students to analyze how Franklin's innovations changed how the postal service was used. Have students work in small teams to gather information about the actions he took and the changes these actions brought about.

ASSESS: Distribute a copy of the *Compare Historical Changes* organizer to all students. Have them work independently to complete it and then gather in small groups to share and discuss their ideas. Suggest to students that they may want to revise their ideas based on the discussions. Finally, have students share their ideas with the class.

EXTEND

Mathematics Have students choose a section of a walkway on the school campus and determine the speed they walk it. Students should measure the walkway section and then divide the length of the section by the time it takes them to walk it.

Compare Historical Changes

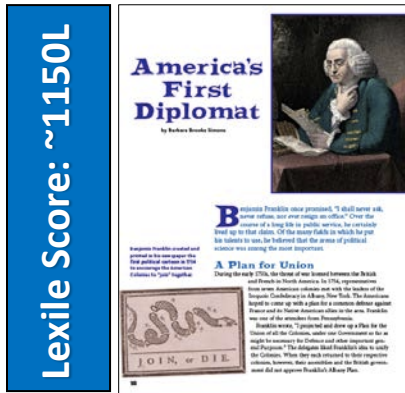
Compare the distribution of written materials in Franklin's era with distribution today. Fill in the chart with details from the article.

Characteristic of Change	Franklin's Era	Modern Era
Types of materials distributed		
Distribution methods		
Length of delivery time		
Innovations and improvements to distribution		

America's First Diplomat

pp. 18–23, Expository Nonfiction

This article explains Benjamin Franklin's political contributions to America, from his role in creating the Albany Plan to shaping the U.S. Constitution. Use it to help students analyze Franklin's historical significance.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze an expository nonfiction article
- Students will analyze the significance of historical figures and developments
- Students will draw evidence from literary or information texts to support analysis, reflection, and research

KEY VOCABULARY

- **delegates** (p. 18) persons chosen or elected to vote or act for others
- **legislatures** (p. 20) groups of people with the authority to make or change laws
- **diplomatic** (p. 21) involving the work of maintaining good relations between the governments of different countries

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: Why are Benjamin Franklin's contributions to American society valued today?

Before reading the article, invite students to share what they know about people who had a large, positive impact on the development of American government. Then ask students to share what they know about Benjamin Franklin's contributions to the same.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Write the following sentences on the board. Then have students use the vocabulary words to complete the sentences.

- State _____ have worked hard to create a society that is organized on the principles of freedom and equality.
- Throughout the convention, _____ often disagreed on important matters.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- How did Franklin attempt to promote peaceful relations between America and Great Britain before the Revolutionary War?
- Was Franklin a successful diplomat for America? Why or why not?
- How did Franklin help to shape the values upon which modern American government is based?

CONCEPT: Analyze Historical Significance

INSTRUCT: Have students work in small groups to develop a list of questions about the ways in which Franklin had an impact on American government and society. Then have groups trade questions and write answers to the new questions. Finally, have groups come together as a class and discuss the questions and answers.

ASSESS: Have students write a short persuasive essay to answer this question: *Why are Franklin's contributions to American government and society celebrated today?* Remind students to express their opinions on why his contributions are historically significant and to support their ideas with details from the text.

EXTEND

Language Arts Have students research the issues at the Constitutional Convention that Franklin's quote on pages 22–23 alludes to ("I confess that . . ."). Then have them use their knowledge of Franklin's actions and values to hypothesize Franklin's views on those controversial issues.