

Documents: Franklin

Name: _____

Time: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Analyze the document and answer the questions.

Background: Historians have called Benjamin Franklin the perfect example of the colonial American. Born in Boston, he learned the printing trade from his abusive older brother, James. In Franklin's late teens, he ran away to Philadelphia where he eventually ran his own printing business publishing the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and *Poor Richard's Almanac*. As a successful writer, politician, diplomat, scientist, and inventor, he became the most famous American in the world. Below is an excerpt from *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* written between 1771 and 1790.

I have been the more particular in this description of my journey, and shall be so of my first entry into that city, that you may in your mind compare such unlikely beginnings with the figure I have since made there. I was in my working dress, my best cloaths being to come round by sea. I was dirty from my journey; my pockets were stuff'd out with shirts and stockings, and I knew no soul nor where to look for lodging. I was fatigued with travelling, rowing, and want of rest, I was very hungry; and my whole stock of cash consisted of a Dutch dollar, and about a shilling in copper.

Then I walked up the street, gazing about till near the market-house I met a boy with bread. I had made many a meal on bread, and, inquiring where he got it, I went immediately to the baker's he directed me to, in Secondstreet, and ask'd for bisket, intending such as we had in Boston; but they, it seems, were not made in Philadelphia. Then I asked for a three-penny loaf, and was told they had none such. So not considering or knowing the difference of money, and the greater cheapness nor the names of his bread, I made him give me three-penny worth of any sort. He

gave me, accordingly, three great puffy rolls. I was surpriz'd at the quantity, but took it, and, having no room in my pockets, walk'd off with a roll under each arm, and eating the other. Thus I went up Market-street as far as Fourth-street, passing by the door of Mr. Read, my future wife's father; when she, standing at the door, saw me, and thought I made, as I certainly did, a most awkward, ridiculous appearance. Then I turned and went down Chestnut-street and part of Walnut-street, eating my roll all the way. . . .

Thus refreshed, I walked again up the street, which by this time had many clean-dressed people in it, who were all walking the same way. I joined them, and thereby was led into the great meeting-house of the Quakers near the market. I sat down among them, and, after looking round awhile and hearing nothing said, being very drowsy thro' labor and want of rest the preceding night, I fell fast asleep, and continued so till the meeting broke up, when one was kind enough to rouse me. This was, therefore, the first house I was in, or slept in, in Philadelphia.

Benjamin Franklin

Central Ideas. A central idea is the overall topic of the entire piece.

1. What is the central idea of the excerpt from Ben Franklin's autobiography?
 - E. Franklin arrived in Philadelphia with very little money.
 - H. Franklin was completely out of place upon his arrival in Philadelphia.
 - O. People can sleep in churches if they have to.
 - Y. The people of Philadelphia act differently than people in Massachusetts.

Words in Context. Define words based upon how they are used in the writing.

“I was dirty from my journey; my pockets were stuff’d out with shorts and stockings, and I knew no soul nor where to look for lodging.”

2. What does the word “lodging” mean as it is used in the quote above?
- D. a place to live temporarily
 - I. a place to eat
 - R. a place to work; employment
 - W a place to worship

“my whole stock of cash consisted of a Dutch dollar, and about a shilling in copper.”

3. What do you think the word “shilling” refers to in the story?
- D. buttons
 - I. shingles to put on a roof
 - R. a credit card
 - W money

Reading for Understanding. Answer the questions about the article.

4. Why did Franklin think he looked ridiculous?
- E. Franklin was walking barefoot.
 - H. Franklin was carrying bread under his arms.
 - O. Franklin had little money.
 - Y. Franklin had no idea where he was going.
5. What important person does Franklin pass by on his first day in Philadelphia?
- E. Franklin passes by his future wife.
 - H. Franklin meets the baker.
 - O. Franklin introduces himself to Mr. Read.
 - Y. Franklin learns he talked with Mr. Quaker, the head of the Church of Philadelphia.
6. What happened to Franklin at the Quaker meeting house?
- E. Franklin continued eating his bread.
 - H. Franklin bought a newspaper and read about crime in Philadelphia.
 - O. Franklin fell asleep.
 - Y. Franklin met his future wife.