

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

Constitutional Convention Lesson from Christine Brooks

Benjamin Franklin's Speech to the Constitutional Convention on September 17, 1787

Grade 8

Two classes (50 minutes each)

How and why was Benjamin Franklin able to influence the members of the Constitutional Convention?

Students will be able to analyze a primary source document and make a judgment about its effectiveness to persuade the listener to act according to the writer's wishes.

Materials – Benjamin Franklin's Address to the Constitutional Congress on September 17, 1787

Transcript of convention can be found at

<http://www.constitutionalconcepts.org/madison2.htm>

Dr. Franklin's speech is attached to the lesson.

Primary Source Document Analysis Worksheet

http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/written_document_analysis_worksheet.pdf

Research Worksheet on vocabulary and Ben Franklin (attached pages at end of lesson)

Day 1 (50minute class) Research Day

Each student will research (or in pairs, if there is limited computer access) the vocabulary list and facts about Benjamin Franklin's life. Use Research sheet.

Day 2 (50 minute class) Discovery Day

Students will work in pairs or groups of 3 to read and analyze Benjamin Franklin's speech. They will use the primary source document analysis sheet and answer the questions.

After answering the questions, the teacher will lead a class discussion about the document. Discuss the analysis worksheet and then expand the discussion. Sample Questions:

Why would members of the Constitutional Convention listen to Franklin?

Was he for or against the ratification of the Constitution?

How did he try to persuade those listening to his speech? Site examples.

Was Day 1 necessary for you to be able to complete today's assignment? Explain.

Assessment: Homework Question: Would you have been convinced to vote in favor of the Constitution by his speech? Why or why not?

Standards: Demonstrate an understanding of significant events and themes in United States history.

Explain how specific individuals and their ideas and beliefs influenced United States history.

Interpret information from a variety of primary and secondary sources to evaluate the credibility of a speaker.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

CLASS: _____

RESEARCH WORKSHEET: BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S ADDRESS

VOCABULARY LIST: Define each of the following words, giving multiple definitions.

Sect:

Infallibility:

Sentiment:

Despotism:

Inevitably:

Confounded:

Constituent:

Partisan:

Salutary:

Unanimity:

Procure:

Integrity:

Posterity:

Endeavor:

Infallibility:

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: THE MAN

FACT SHEET

BORN: Place: _____

Date: _____

FAMILY:

EDUCATION:

JOBS:

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

AGE on September 17, 1787: _____