



Lesson Four: Franklin's Virtues

Centered on the virtues that Benjamin Franklin presents in his autobiography, this lesson encourages students to consider the role of self-examination and civic participation in a democracy.

Journal

Journal about a time when you tried to break a bad habit.

1. Were you successful? Why/why not? What was required? Did you have a plan? A support team of sorts?
2. When, if ever, is it our social responsibility to break our individual bad habits?

Contextual Information

1. This [2-minute clip](#) from HBO's miniseries *John Adams* characterizes Benjamin Franklin (It appears in "Independence," Part 2 of the series). Watch it and jot down what you know about Benjamin Franklin.
2. Review [this biographical snapshot](#). Put a checkmark over the facts that you had jotted down based on your prior knowledge. If there is anything interesting that you did NOT know about Franklin, add it to your list!

Guided Reading Exercise and Closure

1. In *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, Franklin reveals that his commitment to personal improvement as a younger man drove his civic interests as an older man. Read [a short excerpt of this autobiography](#) in which Franklin reviews the self-improvement practice that he dedicated himself to as a young man.

**** BEFORE YOU READ**, please note that this excerpt is essentially an answer to the journal questions you answered at the start of this lesson. Franklin called his plan to break his bad habits a “Plan for Attaining Moral Perfection.”

2. Skim through the piece once, review [the guided reading questions on Google Forms](#), then read through and answer the questions on the Google Form.