

## TOEFL Junior : Reading Comprehension Test 16

Read the passage . 60 - 100 minutes

### Benjamin Franklin

Few people can embody the spirit of early America as much as Benjamin Franklin. He lived through almost the whole of the eighteenth century, being born six years after it began, and dying ten years before it ended. In this time he saw the American colonies grow from tiny settlements into a nation, and he also contributed much to the development of the new state.

At the age of 17 Franklin ran away to Philadelphia. He had already received some training as a printer's apprentice, and this helped him seven years later, with his first publication, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. He also received a contract to do government printing work, which helped him to rise from his poor background to become a successful entrepreneur. Some of his experience in business was shared in his famous *Poor Richard's Almanak*, which established his reputation throughout the American colonies. In another of his works, the *Autobiography*, which was written toward the end of his life, he shows the same quiet common sense.

He was deeply interested in science and natural history, and his experiments with electricity and lightning led directly to the invention of the lightning rod. He was also interested in improving the conditions of his fellow men. He was involved in a number of projects in his native Philadelphia, including the setting up of a library, a university, a philosophical society, and - because he was a pragmatic man - a fire prevention service. In 1753 he became Postmaster-General of the colonies. Through this experience he began to develop the idea that the colonies of North America should be a single nation. Later, he went to London to try to persuade the British government to change the conditions, especially the taxes, that later led the American colonists into rebellion.

Whatever Benjamin Franklin's personal feelings about the rebellion of the American states, he worked hard to make it succeed. As ambassador to France, he encouraged the French to help George Washington. After the war he attended the American constitutional congress. This was his last contribution, for he died later that year. He is still fondly remembered by Americans as one of the creators of the United States.

**1. What is a good description for this text?**

- a. An autobiography of Benjamin Franklin.
- b. The life of Benjamin Franklin
- c. The works of Benjamin Franklin.
- d. Franklin and American Independence

**2. When was Benjamin Franklin born?**

- a. 1806
- b. 1794
- c. 1717
- d. 1706

**3. Which of these happened first?**

- a. Franklin trains as a printer.
- b. Franklin runs away to Philadelphia.
- c. The American colonies rebel.
- d. Franklin starts his first publication

**4. What was *Poor Richard's Almanac* about?**

- a. Franklin's reputation.
- b. How to succeed in business.
- c. How to do government printing.
- d. The text does not say.

**5. Which words best describe his character?**

- a. Egotistical and selfless.
- b. Philosophical and diplomatic
- c. Spirited and rebellious
- d. Sensible and inventive.

**6. Which of these did he not help to create?**

- a. The lightning rod.
- b. The Postmaster General of the colonies.
- c. A university.
- d. The United States.

**7. How did Franklin feel about the British government?**

- a. It should change its policies.
- b. It should help the French.
- c. It should have never governed America.
- d. It should make the colonies into a nation.

**8. In which countries did Franklin live?**

- a. England and France.
- b. Philadelphia and England.
- c. London and America.
- d. England, America and France.

## Answers and Explanations

1. B
2. D
3. A
4. B
5. D
6. B
7. A
8. D