


# REVOLUTIONARY LITERATURE

Rise to  
Rationalism

# THE SECRET TO UNDERSTANDING AMERICAN LITERATURE:



**Every literary  
period is  
a reaction to the  
period that came  
before it.**

# RECAP: COLONIAL LITERATURE



- 1620-1750
- New colonists attempted to establish their government and protest European ways
- Influenced by Puritan way of life and religion
  - Hard work, simple life, and Christianity
  - Man is inherently evil
- Amateur writers (ordinary people)
- They wrote about what they knew best: their own life
- Types of Writing:
  - Diaries/journals, personal narratives, sermons
- Representative Authors:
  - William Bradford, Jonathan Edwards, Mary Rowlandson

# THE CHANGING OF AN ERA: THE ENLIGHTENMENT

- An intellectual movement in the mid 1600s that began in Europe
- Led to an American Revolution
- Emphasized reason, science, and observation.
- People believed that reason and science could be applied to society.
- A shift from a God-centered way of life to a man-centered view of life.



# HOW DID IT CHANGE?

<b>Colonial Lit/Puritanism</b>	<b>Revolutionary Lit/Rationalism</b>
<b>God controls the universe in mysterious ways</b>	<b>God created the laws of nature</b>
<b>Man is inherently evil and damned, the elect were “saved”</b>	<b>Man is inherently good and our environment influences us</b>
<b>Humans are perfectible</b>	<b>Humans are, and will always be, imperfect</b>
<b>The holy Bible contains all truth</b>	<b>We should seek further truth/knowledge</b>

# RECAP: REVOLUTIONARY LIT

- 1750-1815
- Writers focused on justifying the American Revolutionary War
- Emphasis on reason as opposed to faith alone; rise of science, philosophy, theology
- Shift to a print-based culture—literacy is seen as a sign of social status.
- Instructive in values, ornate writing style, highly political/patriotic
- Representative Authors:
  - Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson

## TRIVIA QUESTION

**Who is on the  
\$100 bill?**

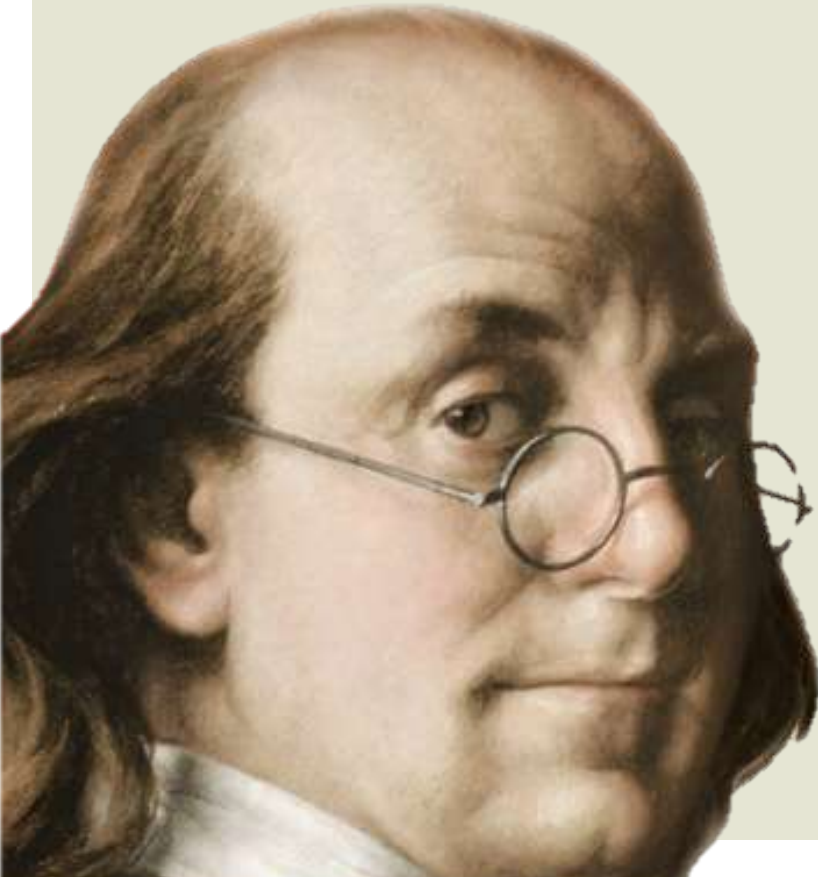
# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



It's all  
about the  
Benjamins  
!



# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: BACKGROUND



- **1706-1790**
- **Born in Boston, MA**
- **One of the Founding Fathers of the United States**
- **Had many professions including:**
  - **Leading author, printer, political theorist, politician, postmaster, scientist, musician, inventor, satirist, civic activist, statesman, and diplomat...and many more.**

# BEN FRANKLIN: THE PRINTER



- By the time he was 16, Ben was not only printing, but writing parts of his brother's newspaper.
  - Used pseudonym "Silence Dogood"
- Moved to Philadelphia to open his own print shop when he was 17
- Worked as a printer from his teens until he was 42

# FRANKLIN: THE SCIENTIST



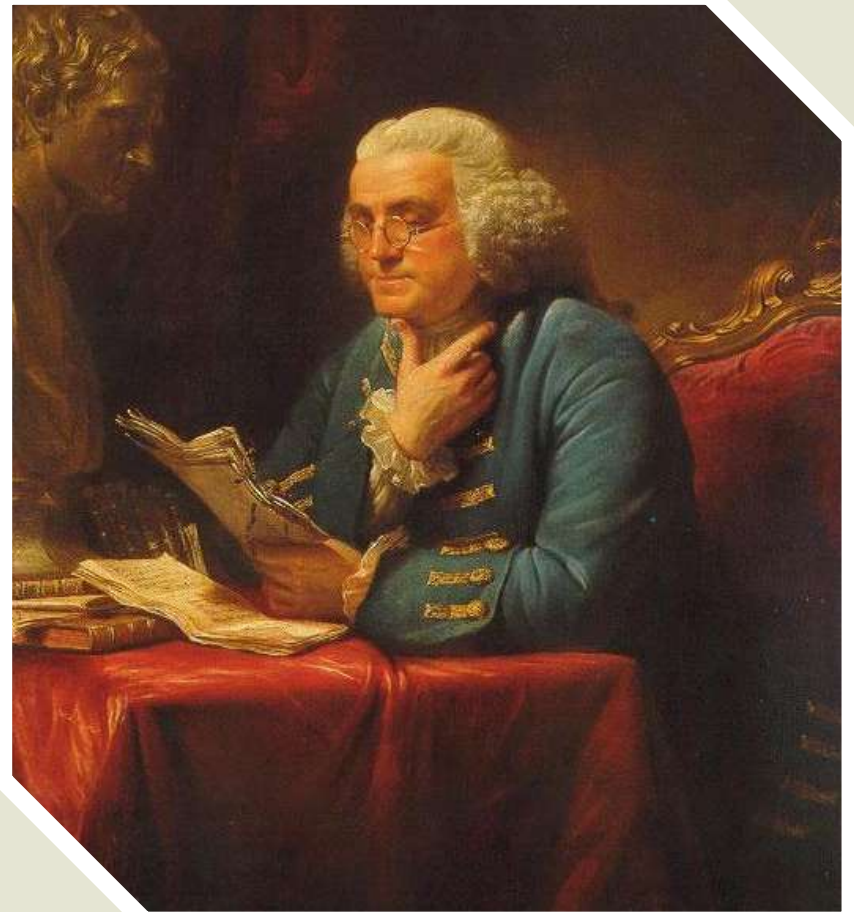
- Lightning rod
- Bifocals
- The Franklin stove
- A carriage odometer
- Glass armonica
- First fire department/insurance company
- He made many discoveries about electricity.
- The famous kite experiment that proved lightning was static electricity.
- Listen to kids tell the story

ivings time



# BEN FRANKLIN: THE POLITICIAN

- Played an important role in drafting the Declaration of Independence
- Enlisted French support during Revolutionary War
- Negotiated peace with Britain
- Considered “father of his nation” before George Washington earned the title

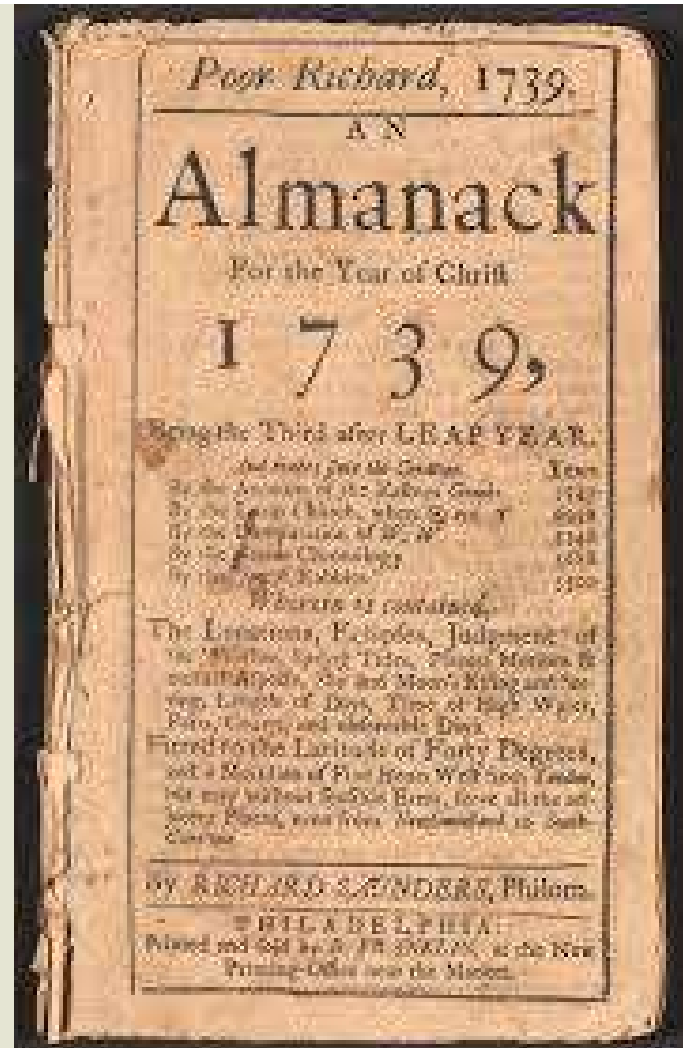


# BEN FRANKLIN: THE WRITER

- As an old man Ben Franklin wrote his life story to serve as an example for younger people and to offer advice.
  - He titled it *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*
- 1<sup>st</sup> section written in 1771 when he was 65
- Eventually wrote three more sections and still did not finish
  - Only accounted his life up to 1759

# BEN FRANKLIN: THE WRITER

- Like his life story, aphorisms in *Poor Richard's Almanack* help to paint a portrait of Franklin's attitude and the world he lived in.
- **Aphorisms**– short sayings with a message
  - “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.”
  - “There's no one that is deceived but he that trusts”



**APHORISM  
PROJECT/SPEECH**

**A speech!  
What?**

# APHORISM ASSIGNMENT/SPEECH

- You will be assigned one of Benjamin Franklin's aphorisms from *Poor Richard's Almanack*.
- You will prepare a speech of no less than one minute to present to the class.
- Your speech should explain:
  - The meaning of the aphorism
  - Provide examples and details that bring the aphorism to life for the class
- You are encouraged to be creative in your approach to the assignment and presentation for the class
- You may use a note card during the presentation



# CHECKLIST/RUBRIC

- Checklist to exceed standard (25 points each)
  - The presentation lasts the full minute, without repetition and/or stall tactics
  - The aphorism is explained correctly and completely
  - Your speech is organized with a beginning, middle, and end.
  - The qualities of the delivery are impressive, including pacing, eye-contact, and volume.

# LAWS OF LIFE ESSAY

Yes, you get  
the  
opportunity  
to write  
this... again.  
😊