


# 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?

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

# 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?**

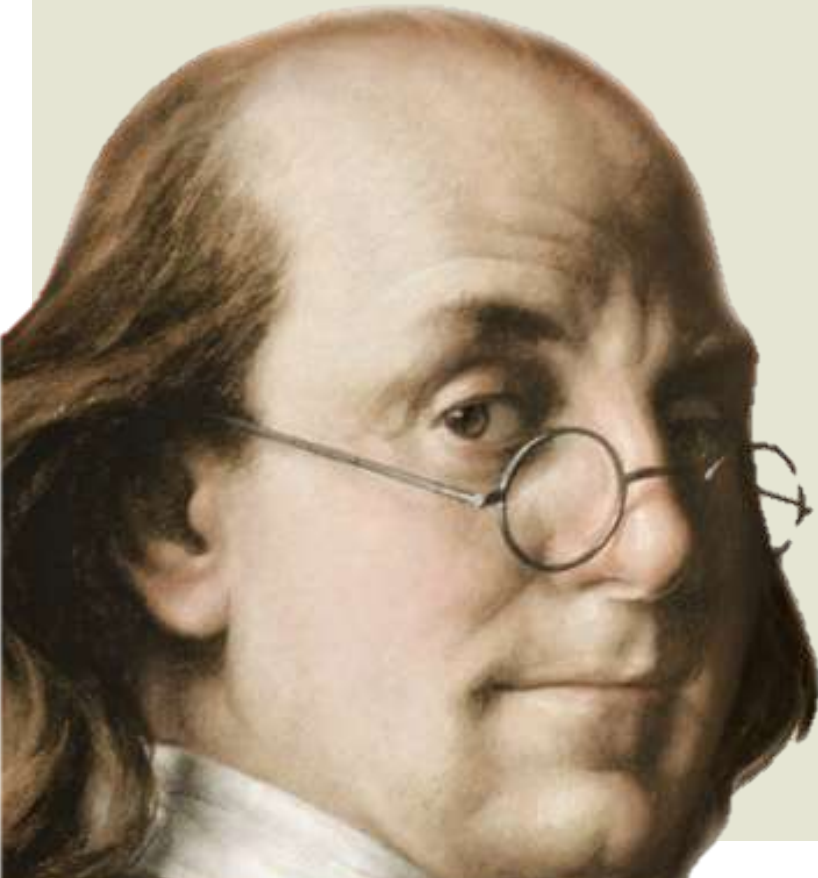
# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

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

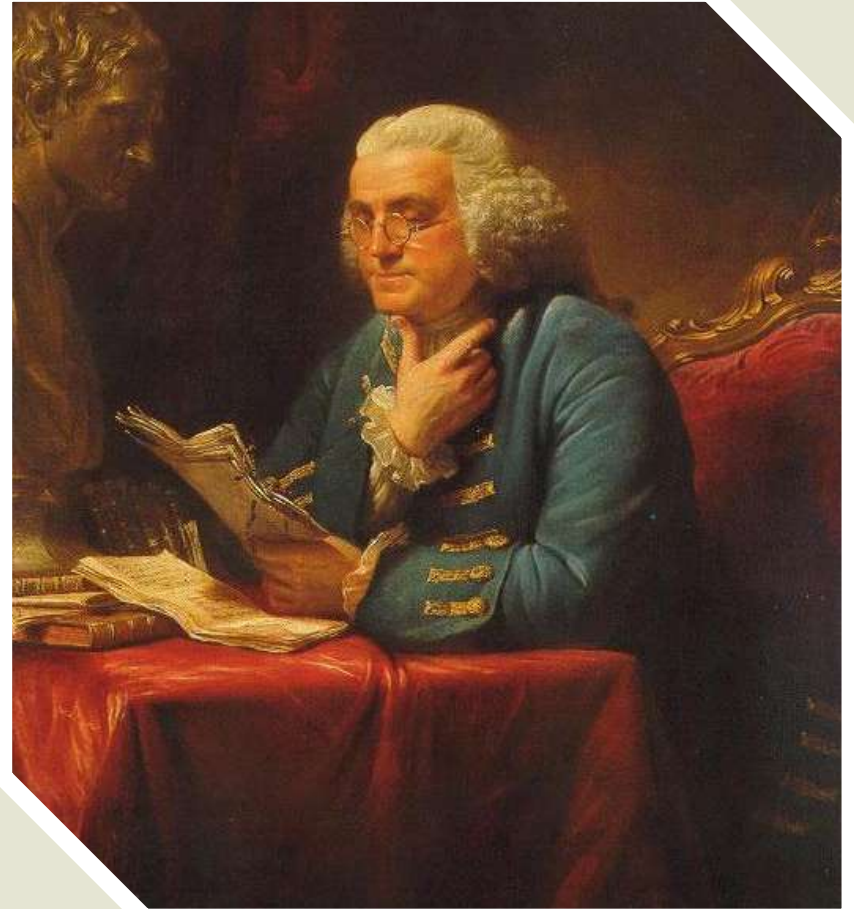


- Lightning rod
- Bifocals
- The Franklin stove
- A carriage odometer
- Glass armonica
- First fire department/insurance company
- Daylight savings time
- He made many discoveries about electricity.
- The famous kite experiment that proved lightning was static electricity.
- Listen to kids tell the story



# 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

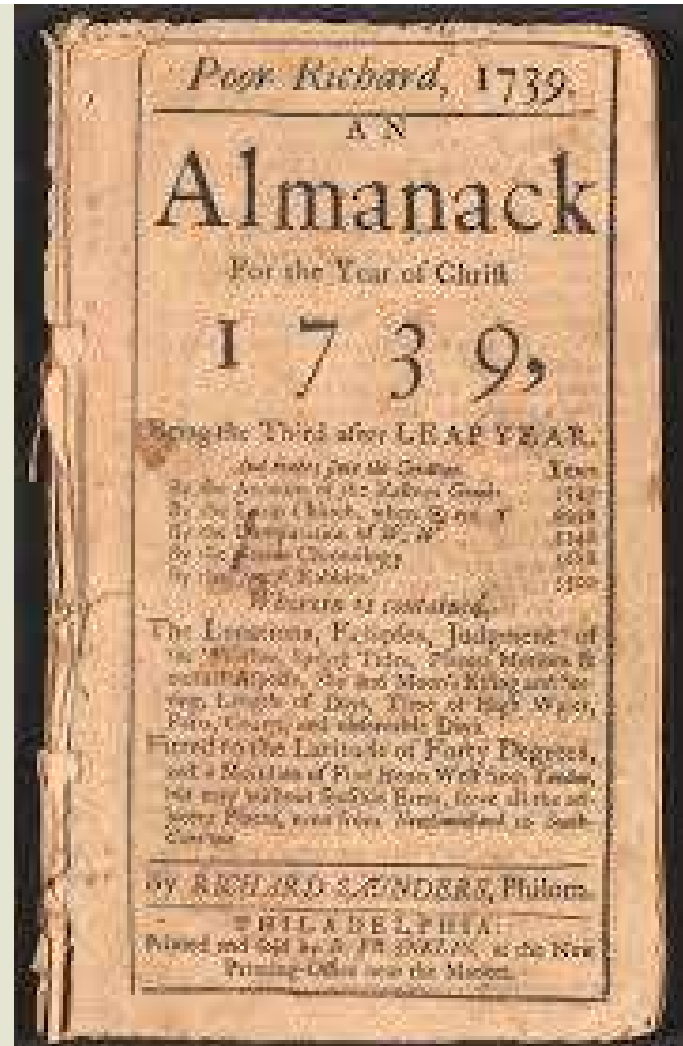


# BEN FRANKLIN: THE WRITER

- 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”





## **JUNIORS**

**Get out your notebook, a piece of paper, and something to write with– you have an open-note quiz.**

**It's two questions.**

# QUIZ

- Yesterday we talked about the differences between colonial literature and revolutionary literature and the change from puritanism to rationalism.
- Using your notes and what we talked about yesterday, explain to me (in a well-developed paragraph) WHY the change occurred. Also, explain a couple of the differences between puritanism and rationalism.



# 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.  
