Benjamin Franklin: The Man – The Myth – The Truth

**Directions:** In the first column write down at least four things you believe you KNOW about Benjamin Franklin. In the second two columns you are to find two sources that either CONFIRMS your knowledge or debunks what you thought was true – **BE SURE TO CITE YOUR SOURCE OF WHERE YOU FOUND YOUR NEW INFORMATION.** In the last column, speculate why we remember Benjamin Franklin in this way *(whether or not it is true).* If you need more room, use the back or a separate piece of paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I know about Benjamin Franklin</th>
<th>The real truth is...</th>
<th>The real truth is...</th>
<th>Why I believe this is the way we remember it this way (from column #1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write an introduction for Benjamin Franklin, based on what you have learned that you would use to introduce him to an audience at an awards show *(at least 300 words):*

Jennifer Truman-Nanik
NEH Summer Workshop
A Rising People: Benjamin Franklin and the Americans

**Title:** Benjamin Franklin: The Man – The Myth – The Truth

**Subject:** US History

**California State Standard (HS):** 11.1.2; 11.1.3

**Grade Level:** 6 - 12 – this lesson has been developed for a mainstreamed classroom and should be easily
modified to meet various learning levels such as: English Learners, GATE, Socio-Economically Disadvantaged (SED), Developmentally Disadvantaged, as well as Honors and Advanced Placement curriculums.

**Time:**
One to two 45 minute class periods.

**Materials:**
Access to various history sources – preferably the internet or a well stocked school library.

Probably one of the top three most recognized Founding Fathers was Benjamin Franklin and like the other two – George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, a lot of what we believe we know about Benjamin Franklin may or may not be true.

**Objective:**
Through research, students will identify the truth versus fiction about Benjamin Franklin as well as learn how to compare and contrast historical sources. Students will continue to develop critical thinking skills by hypothesizing how something may come about. Lastly, students will also work on their creative writing skills through the development of their introduction paragraph. This objective may be enhanced with public speaking skills if the teacher expands the lesson to include students reading their introductions to the class.

**Introduction:**
1) This lesson can be introduced at any time. It is recommended that it be used during the “Colonial Unit” or the “Revolutionary Unit” as part of a discussion or reading of the Founding Fathers.

**Guided Practice:**
1) Pass out the worksheet: **Benjamin Franklin: The Man – The Myth – The Truth**
2) Instruct students to complete the first column by putting ONE thing in each box of what they know about B. Franklin (i.e. flew a kite, the Constitution, a printer, France, etc.). This step can be easily modified to be done in pairs, small groups, or as an entire class.
3) Students are then to find two historical sources that either support or debunk what they knew and to record their findings in the next two boxes. Again, modify with pairs, groups, etc.
4) Have students share the information they found and the sources they used. This should lead itself to a discussion of the validity of sources and the importance of fact vs. myth.
5) In the last column, students are to hypothesize why they believe their statement in column #1 is why they remember it that way (cartoon? Primary grade teacher? Easier to remember. Etc.)

**Evaluation:**
The evaluation of student learning is contingent based on student population and how teacher may have modified this lesson. As written, the evaluation of this lesson is based on the last step on the worksheet. First it should be evaluated on the sources that the student used and the detail of what they found. What may also be used in the evaluation is how/what the student used to introduce Benjamin Franklin.