Lesson: Collecting Research and Writing Paragraphs on Franklin Topics

(Day 1)
1. As a group, students are given limited time to examine a variety of written documents pertaining to Benjamin Franklin. Materials would include the following: copies of articles (e.g., from Cobblestone Magazine'), images (such as those from the PSU BF site), picture book biographies, street maps of colonial Philadelphia, facsimile excerpts of advertisements pertaining to slave purchases and runaway notices from the Pennsylvania Gazette, excerpts from encyclopedia entries.

2. Students work in pairs to develop research points. Each pair generates lists of five to ten Wh- questions inspired by the materials.

(Day 2)
3. Pairs share their question lists with the class. All questions are recorded. With help from the teacher, if needed, the class organizes the questions in categories and in a meaningful order (chronological, by degree of detail, etc.). They develop labels for each category -- biography, politics, science, social history, local government, urban planning.

4. Student writers -- as a class or individually, depending on English fluency skills of the students-- choose a single category as a research topic and copy the
questions. They may supplement the recorded questions with additional ones. Writers must use no fewer than five research questions. The teacher models how to turn questions into statements if needed as part of a grammar review.

(Day 3)
5. Students return to documents for in-depth, purposeful reading to find answers to their questions as well as to revise their question lists. They write complete sentences as responses to their research questions. Sentences are organized in paragraphs. Drafts are written, revised; final drafts are emailed to the teacher.

6. If time permits, techniques in bibliographical citation are modeled. Students conclude their paragraphs by citing sources.

7. Students will be evaluated via a rubric measuring some or all of these elements: choosing a topic, describing how the topic relates to Benjamin Franklin and/or colonial Philadelphia, supporting the topic with details, writing five or more sentences, applying rules of mechanics, preparation for work, following directions, using time efficiently, demonstrating one's best effort.

The following Pennsylvania standards in Social Studies and Literacy are addressed:

- Analyze and interpret historical sources.
- Analyze chronological thinking.
- Write complex informational pieces that gather evidence in support of a thesis; incorporate and document information and ideas from primary sources and secondary sources accurately and coherently; anticipate readers’ potential expectations.

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/standards_aligned_system/4228/social_studies/442029

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/standards_aligned_system/4228/literacy/440541