A Rising People: Ben Franklin and the Americans
June–July 2009
A Landmarks in American History and Culture Workshop

Early Primer
Printed by B. Franklin

From the Van Pelt Library collection
University of Pennsylvania
Photos courtesy of Gina Langley
Colonial America Unit Lesson Plan

Culmination Activity – Alphabet Primer

Duration – This will take several sessions to complete

1st – 5th Grade

Lesson Objective: The students will work alone, or in pairs depending on the grade level.

Through this activity the students will be able to demonstrate all they have learned about Colonial life during their Unit of study. The children will write either a whole class primer, or make their own individual Alphabet Primers. (See attached photographs).

Materials: paper for student planning
4 pieces White construction paper cut in half (size will be 4 ½” high X 11” wide)
White copier paper
Black ink pens
Serif letter stamps (upper and lower case)
Black stamp pad
Needle and white thread to sew pages together
Procedure:

- Show students the photographs of the Primer. Ask if they notice anything different about the alphabet (ex: letters J and U are missing, lower case s looks like a lower case f.)
- Decide whether you are going to use all 26 letters or just the 24 used in the original.
- Ask students to brainstorm topics that could be used to illustrate each letter of the alphabet.
- If making a class book, assign a letter or two (depending on class size) for each student to design. Provide the children with a piece of paper for planning. When the students have decided on a topic for their letter, they will then plan an illustration and write a short description of the topic.
- Help each student edit their work.
- When their work is edited, the students will need a sheet of copy paper 4 1/2” high by 5 1/2” wide. This is for their finished work. Make sure the children stamp an upper case letter in the top left of the page and a lower case letter in the top right of their page.
- For a whole class book, fold 6 or 7 of the half pieces of construction paper in half so that each page is now 4 1/2” X 5 1/2”. Sew the pages along the spine to form a book. Glue each illustrated alphabet page into the book. Ask a student to illustrate the cover just as the Colonial book was done.
Example:

A a B b

Stitch along center line with needle and thread

Native Americans wove baskets to hold food. They also taught the Pilgrims how to weave them.