

**TITLE:**

**American History Jeopardy**

**CONTRIBUTOR:**

**National Society Children of the American Revolution (N.S.C.A.R.)**

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**TOPIC:**

American History: Benjamin Franklin, Betsy Ross, Seal of the United States

**GRADE LEVEL:**

K – 6\*

\*Can be adjusted for all age groups (young children through adults)

**TIME ALLOTMENT:**

20 – 30 minutes

**STANDARDS TO BE ADDRESSED:**

(Texas) Title 19. Part 2. Chapter 113. Subchapter C. Rule 113.44 Throughout social studies in Kindergarten-Grade 12, students build a foundation in history; geography; economics; government; citizenship; culture; science, technology, and society; and social studies skills. The content, as appropriate for the grade level of course, enables students to understand importance of patriotism, function in a free enterprise society, and appreciate the basic democratic values of our state and nation... (TEC 28,002(h))

**STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVE AND LESSON OUTCOME:**

The learner will:

- Recite two-to-three facts about Benjamin Franklin, Betsy Ross, and/or the Great Seal of the United States.
- Engage in collaborative and competitive play

## MATERIALS, RESOURCES, AND TECHNOLOGY TO BE USED BY TEACHER / STUDENT:

- Jeopardy game board\*
- Questions/Answers sheet\*
- A watch or clock with a second hand (to be able to judge 10 second-time intervals)
- Pictures of Benjamin Franklin (preferably one with him doing the kite/key flying experiment), Betsy Ross and the first American flag, and the Great Seal of the United States (both sides)
- A small bell or hand buzzer (optional)
- Small prizes (optional)

*\*These items will need to be constructed prior to setting up the activity. Instructions for the construction of these items can be found under the “Procedures” portion of the Lesson Plan.*

## INTRODUCTION OF TOPIC:

**Benjamin Franklin:** “One of the leading figures of early American History, Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) was a statesman, author, publisher, scientist, inventor, and diplomat. Born into a Boston family of modest means, Franklin had little formal education. He went on to start a successful printing business in Philadelphia and grew wealthy. Franklin was deeply active in public affairs in his adopted city, where he helped launch a lending library, hospital and college and garnered acclaim for his experiments with electricity, among other projects. During the American Revolution, he served in the Second Continental Congress and helped draft the Declaration of Independence in 1776. He also negotiated the 1783 Treaty of Paris that ended the Revolutionary War (1775-1783). In 1787, in his final significant act of public service, he was a delegate to the convention that produced the U.S. Constitution.” “Benjamin Franklin is the only Founding Father to have signed all four of the key documents establishing the U.S.: the Declaration of Independence (1776), the Treaty of Alliance with France (1778), the Treaty of Paris establishing peace with Great Britain (1783), and the U.S. Constitution (1787).” Source: History.com (Benjamin Franklin): <https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/benjamin-franklin>

**Betsy Ross:** “Betsy Ross (1752-1836). Considered essential to the American Revolution, Betsy Ross is credited with sewing the first United States flag. A symbol of patriotism, Ross is often celebrated as the woman who helped George Washington finish the design. Although there is no historical evidence that she created this flag, her story has made her a national icon.” “Betsy Ross was born Elizabeth Griscom on January 1, 1752. She was the eighth of seventeen children,

but only about nine survived. Her father Samuel Griscom owned an old farmhouse and was a successful carpenter in New Jersey. When Ross was only three years old, her parents Samuel and Rebecca Griscom moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Ross and her family were members of the Quaker religion and she attended a traditional Quaker school in Pennsylvania. Upon finishing her schooling, Ross became an apprentice for the popular upholsterer, John Webster. Ross learned how to make and repair many items including: curtains, tablecloths, bedcovers, and rugs. She became a very skilled seamstress and upholsterer. While working for Webster, she fell in love with another apprentice named John Ross. John Ross was the son of the former Assistant Rector of Christ Church. The Quakers did not approve of their members marrying people outside of their faith, so Betsy's family did not approve of her relationship with John Ross." "On November 4, 1773, Betsy and John ran to Hugg's Tavern in Gloucester, New Jersey and eloped.....started their own upholstery business... and it is reported that they even made bed hangings for George Washington in 1774. John Ross was also a member of the Pennsylvania militia. After three years of marriage, John Ross passed away. At 24-years-of-age, Betsy Ross became a widow. She continued to run the upholstery business and worked on uniforms, tents, and flags for the Continental Army." ".... According to a speech her grandson gave to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania years after her death, George Washington, Robert Morris, and George Ross visited Ross' upholstery shop in the summer of 1776. Washington and the two other members of the Continental Congress brought a rough sketch of a flag with thirteen red and white stripes and thirteen pointed stars. Ross suggested that the six-pointed stars be changed to five-pointed stars because they were easier to make. .... Ross is said to have made the first American flag shortly after that meeting." Source: Womens History:

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/betsy-ross>

**Great Seal of the United States:** "(1782) Just a few hours after the Declaration of the Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, the first committee to design a seal for the United States was appointed, and its design began. After undergoing numerous changes, on June 20, 1782, the seal was officially adopted by the Continental Congress. The Great Seal of the United States is the symbol of our sovereignty as a nation. Its obverse is used on official documents to authenticate the signature of the President and it appears on proclamations, warrants, treaties, and commissions of high officials of the government. The Great Seal's design, used as our national coat of arms, is also used officially as decoration on military uniform buttons, on plaques above the entrances to U.S. embassies and consulates, and in other places..... The committee members – Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams – prepared a very complicated design that was promptly tabled by Congress. However, one prominent feature of their design appeared in the design that was originally adopted – the motto *E Pluribus Unum*, 'Out of Many, One.' "In 1780, a second committee – James Lovel of Massachusetts and John Morin Scott and William Churchill Houston of Virginia – developed a second design, but it was also tabled by Congress. Like the first design, the second had elements that were later incorporated into the final seal, including the olive branch, the constellation of 13 stars, and the shield with red and white stripes on a blue field." "A third committee was appointed in May of 1782. This committee's design employed the eagle for the first time in the crest." "Early in 1782, Congress referred the three designs to the Secretary of the Continental Congress Charles Thompson. Thompson made a fourth design that was revised by William Barton, a Philadelphia student of heraldry. Thompson submitted a written description of his final version to the Continental Congress that described the design and explained its symbolism. The

Continental Congress approved this design on June 20, 1782.” Source: U.S. Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/original-design-of-the-great-seal-of-the-united-states> The Great Seal is full of symbolism. “the face side of Thomson’s seal, also known as the ‘obverse’ side, displays a bald eagle with wings spread. The eagle clutches a bundle of 13 arrows (representing the 13 colonies) in its left talon and an olive branch in its right talon. Together, the items in the eagle’s talons stand for war and peace. The eagle’s beak holds a banner that reads *E Pluribus Unum*. The Latin phrase roughly translates as ‘Out of many, one,’ describing the formation of a single nation from 13 colonies. On the eagles’ breast is a shield with 13 red and white stripes below a blue chief, or the upper region of the shield. The red and white chevrons stand for valor and purity, while the blue represents vigilance, perseverance, and justice. A cloud floats above the eagle’s head and surrounds 13 stars forming a constellation. The formation of this constellation alludes again to the formation of a new nation. The ‘reverse,’ or back side, of the Great Seal contains a 13-step pyramid representing strength, while the Eye of Providence sits above the pyramid with a triangle. The year 1776 in Roman numerals rests at the base of the pyramid. Inscribed above the Eye is the Latin motto, *Annuit Coeptis*, meaning ‘He [God] has favored our undertakings.’ The inscription characterizes the favorable circumstances that bolstered the American cause for independence. The scroll below the pyramid reads, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, which is Latin for ‘A new Order of the Ages.’ This phrase represents the beginnings of a new era for the United States.” Source: U.S. Archives: <https://prologue.blogs.archives.gov/2015/06/20/the-great-seal-celebrating-233-years-of-a-national-emblem/>

## PROCEDURE FOR INSTRUCTION:

### *Materials to Make before the Activity:*

- Jeopardy Board
  - Cut each of the three colors of paper into halves and produce five rectangles (approximately 4” x 5 ½”) You need at least at least 6 of these rectangles in each color.
  - Using a black Sharpie-style maker, largey write “100”, “200”, “300”, “400”, and “500” on each of the 5 colored rectangles so that you have 100-500 in each color. Then write “Benjamin Franklin” on one color, “Great Seal” on one color, and “Betsy Ross” on the third color. The writing of the numbers should nearly fill the rectangle so that they numbers can easily be seen from across a room.
  - If you have a laminator, laminate these cards so that they can be reused for future Jeopardy-style games. (Note: You can also make additional colored cards with titles for other topics if you want to expand the game into other areas or have additional rows.)
  - Using 2-3 white poster boards or butcher block paper, make a chart of 3 columns and 6 rows. The top row will be for the title card, then the other rows will be 100, 200, 300, 400, and 500 moving down. The colors should be a single color in each row. Example:

Benjamin Franklin	Great Seal of the U.S.	Betsy Ross
100	100	100

200	200	200
300	300	300
400	400	400
500	500	500

- Add Velcro the white poster board and the corresponding Velcro to the backs of the number cards and titles. This allows the numbers to be removed from the board and replaced to replay Jeopardy-style game again.
- *Special Note:* If you do not have time to make a board, a board can be drawn onto a dry-erase or chalk board. It can also be done by putting the numbers on large Post-It-style notes and having a board on any wall.
- Questions/Answers Sheet – Make a Question and Answer sheet with 5 progressively harder questions about each of the three topics. The “100” level question is the easiest, and the “500” level question is the hardest. Feel free to research and make your own questions or use the following pre-done questions:
  - Benjamin Franklin
    - 100 points: Benjamin Franklin used what toy-like instrument to work with electricity? (What is kite?)
    - 200 points: Normally flying a kite is a safe thing to do. Why was flying a kite dangerous for Benjamin Franklin? (What is it was during a thunderstorm?)
    - 300 points: What metal instrument was used to attract lightening in Benjamin Franklin’s experiment? (What is a [metal] key?)
    - 400 points: Benjamin Franklin is on a specific U.S. paper currency. What amount is this currency? (What is a \$100 bill?)
    - 500 points: What are two of the four documents that Benjamin Franklin signed that is related to the American Revolution? (What is: (any two of the following? the Declaration of Independence (1776), the Treaty of Alliance with France (1778), the Treaty of Paris establishing peace with Great Britain (1783), and the U.S. Constitution (1787)?)
  - Great Seal of the United States
    - 100 points: The Great Seal has this number of stripes, leaves, olives, and stars. (What is 13?)
    - 200 points: One side of the Great Seal has a picture of this bird on it. (What is an eagle?)
    - 300 points: One side of the Great Seal has 13 steps in this geometric design (What is a pyramid?)
    - 400 points: Roman numerals at the base of the pyramid are for this date. (What is 1776?)
    - 500 points: The meaning of the phrase *E Pluribus Unum* (What is “Out of Many, One”?)
  - Betsy Ross
    - 100 points: Betsy Ross’s home city (What is Philadelphia?)
    - 200 points: The first American flag was made with this number of stripes (What is 13?)

- 300 points: The first American flag was made with this number of 5-pointed stars arranged in a circle (What is 13?)
- 400 points: Betsy Ross lived in Philadelphia, a popular place for people of this religion in the early American colonies (What is Quaker?)
- 500 points: According to her grandson, Betsy Ross worked with this man to help design the Flag of the United States (Who is George Washington? Also accepted: Who is Robert Morris? Or Who is George Ross?)

***Set-up Prior to the Activity:***

- Prepare a large spread-out area for the participants. They can be at tables or on the floor but each participant should be able to see the Jeopardy board.
- Set up the Jeopardy board so that all the numbers are attached to the board under the titles.

***The Activity:***

- Divide the participants into 2-4 equal teams. It is helpful to not have more than 2-4 players on each team. If you have an unequal number of participants, the extra person can help remove the numbered cards, keep score, or even read the questions (if age appropriate).
- With your fingers, hold a number between 1 and 5 behind your back. Have a person from each team select a (different) number from 1-5. The team that gets the number or closest to the number (without going over, if needed), goes first. Play will then proceed clockwise around teams.
- Show pictures of Benjamin Franklin, Betsy Ross, and the Great Seal of the United States to the participants. Explain to them that you are going to learn some historical facts about these topics by using a Jeopardy-style game. Let them know that it is ok that if they do not know the answers in the game. The game is for learning.
- Have the first team select a category and point amount. (They do not need to start at “100” but can skip around.)
- Once the number is selected, read the statement/question to that team. They team has approximately 10 seconds to answer the question correctly in the form of a question. (Use a buzzer to make a sound at 10 seconds – or just verbally call out “Time!”)
  - If the team answers correctly, they get to keep the points for the card (or the points are tallied by a score keeper). They then ask for their next category/point amount. (It can be the same category or different category.)
  - If the team does not answer correctly or fails to answer in the 10 seconds, call on the team that raises its hand first after “time” was called (or the buzzer goes)
- Continue this process until there are no more questions left.
- Tally the points to determine the winning team. (Prizes may be given, if desired.)
- Note: You need to decide before hand how to handle valid answers. Options include:
  - The teams can have any of their members blurt out an answer and that answer is taken.
  - The teams can have a single spokesperson who can give the valid answer.
  - The teams can privately confer to get their collective answer.
  - The teams rotate members, with each member answering the question on their own.

- Optional: Provide more information about the two people and the Great Seal by reading or talking about information found in the Introduction of the Lesson Plan. Other ways may be by reading a book or an article. Pictures can also be shown.

***After the Activity:***

- Clean up the board

**LESSON CLOSURE:**

Ask the following: “Now that we’ve participated in these activities what was something interested that you found out?”

Optional: Challenge the participants to find the seal on something that is in their home or school (hint: dollar bill, passport, maybe on a wall)

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT UNDERSTANDING:**

Review the objectives for possible assessment questions. Give a quick quiz to see how many of the objectives were achieved.

- Example: What is a fact about Benjamin Franklin?
- Example: What is a fact about Betsy Ross?
- Example: Explain one of the symbols on the Great Seal of the United States

Optional: A good though discussion may surround Betsy Ross’s authenticity of the Flag designer.

- Example: Do we know for a fact that Betsy Ross designed the first American Flag? What leads us to believe she may have? Does it matter?