

# The americanization of benjamin franklin assignment

[History](#)



In the book "The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin," Gordon Wood gives an extensive biography on Benjamin Franklin and explains how and why Franklin is such a celebrated historic figure in not just America, but all over the World. In the biography, many historical issues, attitudes and events were touched upon but there select-few that really stood out in the process of Benjamin Franklins "Americanization." The New World, or America, was a land of opportunity because everyone who settled there was an immigrant that wanted to start a new life.

The trades became the center of wealth and prosperity due to the influx of commerce with Britain. Merchants, artisans and farmers began to make good money thanks to the large trading ports America had with Europe. The attitude in the Americas was that if you worked hard, no matter where you came from, success was in your future. This was especially true for the young American Benjamin Franklin. With only a few years of schooling, Franklin managed to get into the printing trade and educated himself on how to become a successful writer.

Once poor, Franklin managed to earn more than enough money to live comfortably and become very well known throughout the colonies. When thinking about America, usually what comes to mind is wealth, liberty and independence. What one probably did not realize was that Franklin, for a while, was a huge royalist and devoted his service to the expansion of the British Empire. (p. 81) He was fond of Britain and their superiority they had over most nations.

Very interested in the life of a gentlemen, (this was a way certain people lived without ever having a job and simply just made a living based off of their relation with others) Franklin retired at the age of 45 and became a true gentleman in 1748. (p. 55) He put his focus into experimenting with electricity and discovered many new inventions like the lightning rod and the electrical battery. His name was reaching to a lot of the European empires due to these amazing findings.

If it wasn't for this specific transition in his life to become a gentleman, he most likely would not have been the influential person he was in not just the colonies but also Britain and other nations. America was wanted by many empires including France and Spain, plus the Indians who once owned the land before the colonists. After the Seven Years War, Great Britain came out victorious but also in major debt, so they looked to tax the colonists in America to help pay for their expenses.

Feeling mistreated and mirthfully taxed, Franklin took it upon himself to testify against the Stamp Act of 1764 and claimed that the government had no right in taxing the colonists because they had no representatives in the Parliament and could not vote for the taxation. (p. 116) Not truly knowing Benjamin Franklin, since perceived as the definition of a true American, one would think that he was instantly on the colonists side and would fight for their rights.

It turned out he actually was all for the taxation in the first place, but once called upon by his close associates in America, he appealed the unfair tax to the House of Commons and had it dropped in 1766. This very incident

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helped America unite and begin to show the world how strong their nation was and how effective they can be when protesting. Franklin tried to explain to the English that colonists were still as loyal as ever but his argument was beginning to diminish as America and Britain were becoming more so two separate countries rather than one. (p. 15) With this great achievement, Franklin still was as loyal to Great Britain as ever and even contemplated on living in London permanently when he gained a position in government. In one of his last attempts to unite Britain and America, Franklin was given some letters written by an American governor to a British secretary in which the governor was requesting that Britain would take away and shorten some liberties given to the colonists in order to keep their loyalty on Great Britain. (p. 140) These letters were literally the reason for all the rioting in America and the unjust taxes that Britain was enforcing at the time.

Franklin thought that if he sent the letters to America, then the author of the letters would be used as a scapegoat for all the chaos and have the colonies feel less hostile towards Britain. Ironically it did the opposite and ended up infuriating both the colonists and Englishmen. With the two nations literally despising one another, it was Franklin that was taking all the heat. The final straw in which Franklin had enough of Britain's arrogance was when he made a plan for conciliation in 1775 to finally end all the disputing.

When presented to Lord Sandwich, who was one of the heads in the House Of Lords, he was mocked and ridiculed. After a couple of weeks of listening to Englishmen bash on the colonists and becoming depressed with his failed efforts, Franklin moved back to Philadelphia and began his process of

Americanization. 3 It's shocking to see that such a celebrated figure in our History was about to permanently live in the country that was trying to gain complete control over America and even be an active roll in their government. Gordon Wood's biography really helps lay out all the events that contributed to Franklins decisions.

Wood also gives good detail into what Benjamin Franklins motives were behind his becoming of a true patriot and explains step by step what he did when America finally separated from the Britain Empire. After successfully fending off General William Hose's army in 1777, the colonies proved to France (with Franklin in France the whole time negotiating a treaty) that they were a worthy nation to fight for. In 1778, France signed a treaty stating that they would help support America's military in their fight for independence. (fig. 191) The French adored Franklin and everything he and his nation stood for and showed their appreciation by carving and painting his picture everywhere. His eight years in France definitely helped give him the last little push he needed to take down the British Empire's attempt to diminish the colonies in the Revolutionary War. By 1782 with the help of French commissioners, Britain had finally signed a peace treaty with the United States declaring the U. S. S independence from the British empire. (fig. 98) With America now an independent country, their constitution was constructed and their people were now ruled by their own government that they created. Franklins death occurred shortly after all this and weirdly enough, Wood points Out, not many people took major notice to the death of Benjamin Franklin even though he was seemingly the symbol of America. It almost seemed as if France was more sympathetic and beat up over the

death. Not until after the publication of Franklins Autobiography and a few other essays he had wrote id Americans truly appreciate who Benjamin Franklin was.