

Quiz: RI.5.9

Read the passages. Then answer the questions.

Excerpt from “Benjamin Franklin”

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- 1 One of the greatest Americans that ever lived was Benjamin Franklin. The story of his life sounds like a fairy tale. Though he stood before queens and kings, dressed in velvet and laces, before he died, he was the son of a poor couple who had to work very hard to find food and clothes for their large family—for there were more than a dozen little Franklins!
- 2 Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston, one bright Sunday morning more than two hundred years ago. That same afternoon his father took the baby boy across the street to the Old South Church, to be baptized. He was named for his uncle Benjamin, who lived in England.
- 3 As Benjamin grew up, he made friends easily. People liked his eager face and merry ways. He was never quiet but darted about like a kitten. The questions he asked—and the mischief he got into! But the neighbors loved him. The women made little cakes for him, and the men were apt to toss him pennies.
- 4 One day when Benjamin was about seven, someone gave him all the pennies he could squeeze into one hand. Off he ran to the toy shop, but on his way he overtook a boy blowing a whistle. Ben thought that whistle was the nicest thing he had ever seen and offered his handful of pennies for it. The boy took them, and Ben rushed home with his prize. Well, he tooted that whistle all over the house until the family wished there had never been a whistle in the world. Then an older brother told him he had paid the other boy altogether too much for it, and when Ben found that if he had waited and bought it at a store, he would have had some of the pennies left for something else, he burst out crying. He did not forget about this, either. When he was a grown man and was going to buy something, he would wait a little and say to himself: “Careful, now—don’t pay too much for your whistle!” An Italian sculptor who had heard this story made a lovely statue called “Franklin and his Whistle.” If you happen to be in the beautiful Public Library in Newark, New Jersey, you must ask to see it.
- 5 Ben always loved the water and was a wonderful swimmer as a little fellow. He could manage a boat, too, and spent half his play hours down at the wharves. One day he had been flying kites, as he often did, and thought he would see what would happen if he went in swimming with a kite tied to his waist. He tried it and the kite pulled him along finely. If he wanted to go slowly, he let out a little bit of string. If he wanted to move through the water fast, he sent the kite up higher in the air.
- 6 But it was in school that Ben did his best. He studied so well that his father wanted to make a great scholar of him, but there was not money enough to do this, so when he was ten he had to go into his father’s soap and candle shop to work. The more he worked over the candles, the worse he hated to, and by and by he said to his father: “Oh, let me go to sea!”
- 7 “No,” said Mr. Franklin, “your brother ran away to sea. I can’t lose another boy that way. We will look up something else.”

