

The purpose of this lesson is to familiarize students with Ben Franklin's many talents and his passion for free speech and freedom of the press—two of the five freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution. This lesson focuses on one of Ben Franklin's Silence Dogood letters, which is on the subject of free speech, and on a poem he wrote about freedom of the press.

READINGS:

Silence Dogood No. 8 and "On the Freedom of the Press" --Ben Franklin

Silence Dogood No. 8 - Read individually. Answer the critical thinking and discussion questions (which are also included in the accompanying PowerPoint slide deck) alone, or as a class.

Poem: "On the Freedom of the Press" - Read individually or as a class. You may either discuss and interpret the poem as a class or instruct students to: Summarize the meaning of this poem in your own words in 1-3 paragraphs.

You may supplement the readings with the PowerPoint slide deck or use the PowerPoint alone, without the readings, if time is short.

Have students look up any vocabulary words they do not know:

Satyr (satire), Abstract (noun), Libelling, Diadem, Enquiry, Affecting, Prerogative, Disaffection, Sedition, Knavish, Pernicious, Undesigning, Censure, Pseudonym, Pruning, Exuberant, Compendium, Prerogative, Subdue, subduing, subjugation, "Renaissance Man", Gorgon, Largesses, Convey, Fecundous, Quelled, Zeal.

