

Ben Franklin's 300th Birthday Bash



This year and next, Americans -- as well as people all over the world -- are celebrating the 300th anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's birth. A special exhibit about his life, called Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World, is traveling around the U.S. The exhibit is in Houston, Texas, now. Soon it will travel to other places around the United States. Its last stop will be next December in Paris, France.

Ben Franklin was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on January 17, 1706. When Franklin was 17 years old, he moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. There he became the city's most wealthy printer. He also was a leader in the fight for America's independence from England. He was one of five people chosen to write America's "Declaration of Independence." During America's war against England, called the *Revolutionary War*, Franklin traveled to France to convince the French to help America fight for independence.

NEWS WORD BOX

anniversary convince
exhibit wealthy propose
Declaration of Independence

Ben Franklin was the most famous American in the world during his time. He is remembered most because he was good at many things. He was a writer, a government leader, and a scientist. He was an inventor too. His inventions included a stove to keep homes warm, bifocal eyeglasses, and swim fins! Franklin was the first to propose setting clocks ahead one hour in the spring so there would be more daylight during spring and summer. That idea didn't fly when Franklin was alive, but we use it today. We call it Daylight Saving Time.

MORE FACTS ABOUT BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

- Benjamin Franklin started the first hospital, the first library, and the first volunteer fire department in the U.S.
- Benjamin Franklin's picture is on the \$100 bill.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Benjamin Franklin is often called a "great American."
What are the characteristics of a "great American"?
Name someone living today who you might call a "great American."
Explain why that person might deserve the title.