Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Read the following passages about two very notable people in American History.

**George Washington**

George Washington became known as "The Father of Our Country". He is an important person in the history of the United States.

George was born to on Februrary 22, 1732 to Augustine and Mary Washington. They had five more children after George was born. He only went to school for 7 or 8 years, and his favorite subject was arithmetic.

His father died when he was 11, and he helped his mother take care of the plantation. He grew very tall; 6 feet and 2 inches, and he liked to show how far he could throw rocks.

When he was sixteen he went to live with his half-brother, Lawrence, who had inherited Mount Vernon from their father. Later on George would inherit the estate from Lawrence since Lawrence did not have any surviving children. George married a widow , Martha Custis. They never had children of their own, but they raised Martha's two children, John Parke Custis, who was called "Jacky", and Martha "Patsy" Custis. Then after Jacky's death in the war, they adopted two of his children, their grandchildren.

Men came to Philadelphia to meet with the First Continental Congress. Washington thought he would be a good man to be general of the army, so he showed up in a uniform he had designed himself. The men agreed he would be the best person for the job.

Washington was always trying to become a better person. He worked to learn how to write neatly so people could read his writing easily. To improve his manners, he copied 110 rules or sayings written by a French priest. One of his favorites was: "When walking with a great man, don't walk right beside him, but somewhat behind. Stay close enough that he may speak easily to you."

The people wanted to make him king, but he thought the country needed a different kind of government. They elected him president in 1789. He received a unanimous vote by the men who were doing the electing. Every one of them voted for him.

He served for two terms; 8 years, as president. The people wanted him to run for a third term, but he said, "No", and went back to the plantation.

It is said of Washington he was "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen".

**Benjamin Franklin**

Benjamin Franklin was born into a large family. He was the 15th child of seventeen children in the family. His father, Josiah, was a candle maker. Benjamin helped him make candles and soap.

His father wanted him to take over the family business when he grew up, but he wasn't interested. To help Ben decide on a career, Josiah took him on long walks around Boston so he could observe men doing the work of their trade. Benjamin learned how to do many things during these excursions, but he didn't want to pursue any of the trades.

When Ben was twelve years old his father apprenticed him to his older brother James, who was a printer. Ben had to sign "articles of indenture "; a contract that bound him to work for James for nine years until he was 21 years old! He worked twelve hours a day in the printing shop, but still found time to educate himself. Though he only had two years of formal schooling, he taught himself foreign languages and read books on grammar, science, and math.

Finally Ben ran away and went to Philadelphia. He started his own successful printing business and published a newspaper, The Pennsylvania Gazette, for many years. He is most famous for "Poor Richard's Almanac" which he published for 25 years. People frequently quote from his sayings such things as, "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise" and "A penny saved is a penny earned". Ben followed this rule all his life and accomplished more than most men of his time.

He started the first library in America, the first volunteer fire department in Philadelphia, and the first hospital in Pennsylvania. They appointed him postmaster and he created a working postal system. He even created the "Dead Letter Office".

He invented bifocal glasses so he would not have to switch glasses when looking at things far away and close up. He invented the lightning rod to protect people's homes from being destroyed by lightning.

He invented the Franklin stove which provided better heat for their homes. He refused to patent the Franklin stove and the lightning rod because he thought more people would benefit from the inventions if he did not patent them.

He proved that lightning and electricity are the same thing using a kite, string, and key in a thunderstorm. His experiments earned him fame. He was also awarded honorary degrees from Harvard and Yale even though he lacked formal schooling.

He helped to write the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.
He also worked to put an end to slavery in America long before others took up the cause.

Some say when he died in 1790 the whole civilized world went into mourning. 20,000 people honored him at his funeral in Philadelphia. People still visit his grave today and throw pennies on his headstone. Every year $6,000 worth of pennies are collected and given in his honor to help the poor.

**3) What are two ways the life of George Washington was different from the life of Benjamin Franklin?**

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1. **What are two ways the life of George Washington was similar to the life of Benjamin Franklin?**

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