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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1982 Volume II: Autobiography

My Place in Time

Guide for Curriculum Unit 82.02.03
by Michael Conte, Jr.

This unit is specifically for grade 6 students as an alternative to the basal series used to teach Language Arts. As it is important to teach Language Arts, not in an isolated area, but in the content areas, and in order to acquire a full view of the personality of Benjamin Franklin, I believe, it is necessary to use an interdisciplinary approach including the areas of Music, Art, Science, History, and Geography. This unit using the Autobiography of “Benjamin Franklin” can be used in three areas: open discussion following readings relating to the topic of the day Science, History, etc., answering questions from the book, and mainly to have the children interpret Franklin’s style, ease of writing, and content using this to inspire, motivate, and guide the children to do more writing. This unit can be used in two different ways. You could use a thematic study approach incorporating all the areas at one time concentrating on Franklin, or by taking the unit in parts fitting it in to your curriculum when it coincides with the areas you are teaching. I would keep the Language Arts component together for a full six weeks. Finally, the State of Connecticut is taught in grade 6 and through the use of the Franklin book, the children will be able to interpret how it was to live in colonial times. Also, they will discover what was going on during that period and get a sense of Connecticut History by learning about a similar colonial life.

(Recommended for 6th grade Language Arts (primary), Science, History, Geography, Art, and Music)

Key Words

Benjamin Franklin Colonial American History Reading Instruction Autobiography Basic Skills Writing

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