

## LESSON TWO: ELEMENTARY POST VIEWING

# George Washington and Ben Franklin

<b>Grade Level</b>	Elementary School
<b>Time</b>	Fifty minutes
<b>Materials</b>	<b>Handout A:</b> Join or Die <b>Handout B:</b> Why did George Washington want to be called “Mr. President”?
<b>Movie Clips</b>	Scene 62 to 71 (use scene that accompanies “Benjamin Franklin of Philadelphia...” Scene 79 “the First election is held the next year...”

### ACTIVITY I

20 MINUTES

- A. Have students view the scenes from the film with the Join or Die cartoon, and/or print out **Handout A: Join or Die**. Explain to students that the cartoon was drawn by Benjamin Franklin in 1754. At the time, there was a superstition that a snake cut into pieces would come back to life if the pieces were joined together before sunset. In 1754, Franklin wanted the colonies to come together during the French and Indian War. His cartoon became popular again in the 1770s. Ask students:
- What do the snake segments represent? (individual colonies)
  - Why do you think cartoon became popular again in the 1770s? (The cartoon become popular again as the colonies united against British tyranny.)
- B. Ask students to brainstorm why Franklin might have believed the snake was a good symbol for the US.
- C. Read Ben Franklin’s explanation of the symbolism to the class. If needed, define the words in bold for students.

“I collected that her eye excelled in brightness...and that she has no eye-lids—She may therefore be [seen as] an emblem of **vigilance**.—She never begins an attack, nor, when once engaged, ever surrenders: She is therefore an emblem of...true **courage**.— ... the weapons with which nature has furnished her, she conceals in the roof of her mouth, so that, to those [do not know] her, she appears to be a most defenseless animal; and even when those weapons are shown and extended for her defense, they appear weak...; but their wounds however small, are decisive and fatal: —Conscious of this, she never wounds till she has generously given notice, even to her enemy, and cautioned him against the danger of treading on her. —Was I wrong, Sir, in thinking this a strong picture of the temper and conduct of America?” (1775)

- D. Ask students to respond to Franklin’s description. You may also ask: What other symbols of America can you think of? What do those symbols mean to you? Do any of these symbols show unity, like Franklin was concerned with in the Join or Die cartoon?

**ACTIVITY II****20 MINUTES**

- A. Tell students that another way the Founders were concerned with symbols was the Presidency. The President had to be different from a King not just in practice, but in the symbols of the office. One “symbolic” part of the Presidency that George Washington, our first President, was especially concerned with was his title. The Congress originally proposed, “His High Mightiness, the President of the United States and Protector of their Liberties.” Many, including Washington, did not like this. Why did George Washington want instead to be called “Mr. President”? (They thought it sounded too much like a King’s title.)
- B. Distribute **Handout B: Why did George Washington want to be called “Mr. President”?** Working as a large group and using **Handout B** as a guide, have students brainstorm the qualities of a monarch—a King or Queen—as well as those of the President of the United States. Students should fill in the chart as the conversation goes on.
- C. As a class, go over possible responses to the questions below the chart.

**WRAP-UP****10 MINUTES**

Have students use colored pencils and poster board or presentation software to create a collage that demonstrates the contributions of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, or both, to the United States of America. The collages should illustrate the ideas and concepts that were important to Franklin and Washington—unity and democracy.

**EXTENSIONS**

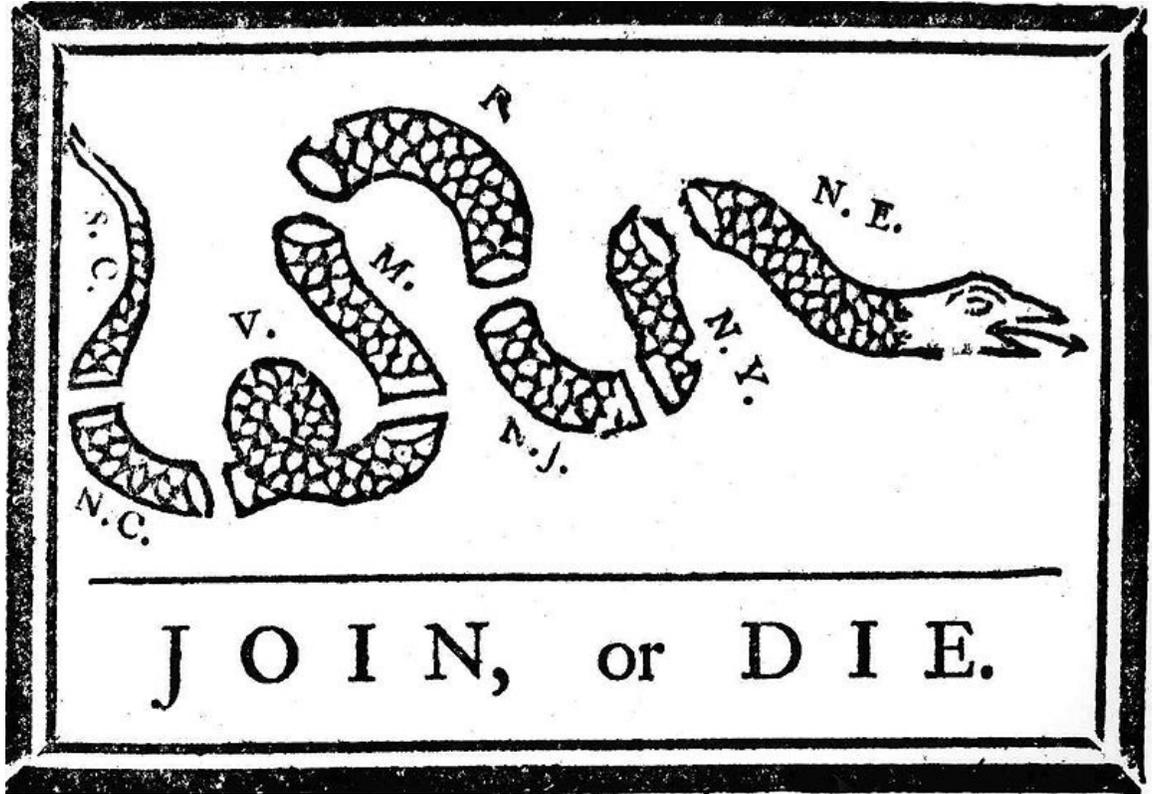
- A. Have students draw their own political cartoon about the United States using a symbol other than a snake, and write a one-paragraph explanation of the symbol on the back.
- B. Have students draw a scene that illustrates the difference between a King and the President of the United States. They should write a one-paragraph explanation on the back.

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# *Handout A: Join or Die*

**DIRECTIONS**

Ben Franklin drew this cartoon and published it in his newspaper, the Pennsylvania Gazette, in 1754. At the time, Franklin wanted the colonies to come together during the French and Indian War. The cartoon became popular again in the 1770s.



**WHY DO YOU THINK THAT HAPPENED?**

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## LESSON TWO: ELEMENTARY POST VIEWING

# Handout B: Why did George Washington want to be called “Mr. President”?

### DIRECTIONS

Using what you learned in the We the People film as well as your own knowledge, complete the chart.



**His Royal Highness**  
The King of England



**Mr. President**  
The President of the United States

How does he or she act as a head of state?	“Rules” over “subjects”	“Governs” or “leads” over “citizens.”
1. Source of power		
2. Length of term		
3. How can he be removed from office?		
4. Can he or she grant titles of nobility?		
5. How do people greet him or her?		

6. Why did George Washington want to be called “Mr. President”?

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**LESSON TWO: ELEMENTARY POST VIEWING**

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# ***Handout B: Why did George Washington want to be called “Mr. President”?***

**ANSWER KEY**

1. Monarch rules by birth or “divine right;” President takes office by the consent of the governed.
2. Monarch rules for life; President is limited to two four-year terms.
3. King cannot be removed from office; President can be impeached by the House of Representatives and is tried by the Senate.
4. Monarch can grant titles of nobility; President cannot.
5. People usually bow or curtsy before a monarch; people usually greet the President as they would respectfully greet any other citizen—shaking hands, for example.
6. The Founders had fought a revolution to escape the tyranny of a King and did not want to simply trade one monarch for another. This was important not only in the powers delegated to the executive, but in symbolic matters like his or her title.