from Poor Richard's Almanack

Benjamin Franklin
Fools make feasts, and wise men eat them.

Be slow in choosing a friend, slower in changing.

Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee.

Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.

Three may keep a secret if two of them are dead.

God helps them that help themselves.

The rotten apple spoils his companions.

An open foe may prove a curse; but a pretended friend is worse.

Have you somewhat to do tomorrow, do it today.

A true friend is the best possession.

A small leak will sink a great ship.

No gains without pains.

'Tis easier to prevent bad habits than to break them.

Well done is better than well said.

Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time; for that's the stuff life is made of.

Write injuries in dust, benefits in marble.

A slip of the foot you may soon recover, but a slip of the tongue you may never get over.

If your head is wax, don't walk in the sun.

A good example is the best sermon.
A good EXAMPLE is the best SERMON.

- Hunger is the best pickle.
- Genius without education is like silver in the mine.
- For want of a nail the shoe is lost; for want of a shoe the horse is lost; for want of a horse the rider is lost.
- Haste makes waste.
- The doors of wisdom are never shut.
- Love your neighbor; yet don't pull down your hedge.
- He that lives upon hope will die fasting.

Critical Reading

1. Respond: In *The Autobiography*, which virtue on Franklin’s list strikes you as being the most important? Explain.

2. (a) What efforts does Franklin make to become more orderly? (b) Infer: Is he successful? Explain. (c) Analyze: What aspect of his attempt to become more orderly is illustrated by the anecdote of the man with the speckled ax?

3. (a) Interpret: When Franklin began his project, he was a young man. How do you think he felt at the time about his chances of attaining moral “perfection”? (b) Compare and Contrast: What insights does Franklin gain about the goal of achieving perfection as he gets older?

4. (a) Note three aphorisms that deal directly with friendship. (b) Analyze: Is Franklin’s message about friendship consistent? Explain.

5. (a) According to the aphorism, what happens to a person who “lives upon hope”? (b) Speculate: What more reliable value would Franklin say a person can successfully “live upon”?

6. Generalize: In what ways can analyzing one’s own behavior contribute to personal growth?

7. Evaluate: With which of Franklin’s aphorisms do you most strongly agree and disagree? Why?

What makes American literature American? In what ways do the goals Franklin sets for himself and the aphorisms he wrote express values that are still widely held in America? Explain. Use at least two of these Essential Question words: individualism, thrifty, practical, humorous.