

Ben Franklin's Game

Purpose

Students will learn to quote or paraphrase information sources and to cite them appropriately.

Materials

For the teacher: chalk, chalkboard

For the students: copies of *What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?* by Jean Fritz, reference sources, style guides, dictionaries, paper, pencils

Activity

A. Pre-Activity Preparation

1. Make or find appropriately cited style guides for your students (e.g., www.mla.org).
2. Write a correct bibliographic entry for *What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?* (e.g., Fritz, Jean. *What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?* New York: Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, 1996.) on the chalkboard.

B. Write Sources in the Correct Form

1. Tell students that the idea for their activity today has been taken from [insert page number] of *What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?*
2. Tell them that the page has a picture of pirates walking the plank on it. Have a student quickly check your citation by looking up the page.
3. Discuss the reasons why someone might want to know which page your idea came from, and distribute style guides.
4. Have students pick a book in the classroom and write a bibliographic entry for it, using the model that you put on the chalkboard. If they have a book with two authors, an editor or any other type of book different from the one you used, have them consult the style guide.

C. Learn to Paraphrase

1. Tell students about how Ben Franklin learned to write poetry. [He would take an essay and create a poem out of it, using his own wording, and later turn it back into an essay, again using his own wording.]

(continued)

EXTENDING THE ACTIVITY



Write several debatable statements from books in the classroom or library on the chalkboard. Have students choose one statement and quote it at the beginning of their own original written commentary on it. Have them cite the source of the statement at the end.

MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS



Give students who are having difficulty with this activity an opportunity to practice paraphrasing with short portions of articles or poetry. Have the students listen to the piece, read it, and then retell it in their own words.

Standards Link
4.5.6

Activity (continued)

2. Explain that by practicing in this way, he made an original piece out of an idea he had found in a book, and improved his vocabulary by doing it.
3. Tell students that you are not going to require them to write poetry about the source they have in front of them, but that they will be practicing paraphrasing by reading a few sentences from their books and explaining those sentences in their own words to a partner. Write the word “paraphrasing” on the chalkboard as you say this.
4. Divide the class into pairs. Explain to the pairs that the partner’s job will be to write down the explanation and then to check it against the text. Tell students that the partner should check to be sure that:
 - the idea of the sentence is accurately conveyed, and
 - the idea is in the speaker’s own words and does not use exact phrases from the text.
5. Make dictionaries available to students.


D. Close the Activity


1. Explain to students that paraphrased ideas have to be cited, just as you cited the Ben Franklin book when you started this activity, because one is using another person’s thoughts.
2. Explain that statements that contain another person’s ideas and wording have to be put in quotation marks and cited.


Questions for Review


Basic Concepts and Processes

Assess students’ knowledge by asking the following questions:

 Imagine that you find the perfect source for your paper. You read the information and create a beautiful explanation of what the source told you, all in your own words. Do you have to cite your source?

 Imagine that you rephrase most of an author’s points, using only one or two phrases that the author created. Do you have to cite your source?

 Where can you go to find out how to cite a source?

 Can you paraphrase this for me [*read an excerpt from a text*]?
