



### LESSON 6:

## Franklin's Philadelphia: Another Point of View

### OVERVIEW

Benjamin Franklin was a very talented, hardworking, and ambitious man who achieved fortune and fame in colonial Philadelphia. He is often cited as the classic example of the “rags-to-riches” American success story. Not all were so fortunate. Philadelphia grew quickly in Franklin’s long life, absorbing many new immigrants, migrants, slaves, and indentured servants. Many did well in the growing Quaker City; others did not. This lesson looks at the Philadelphia landscape encountered by another tradesman who arrived in the 1720s, just a few years after Franklin’s arrival.

### OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Develop an understanding of daily life in colonial Philadelphia through the experiences of an indentured servant, William Moraley.
- Read a brief scholarly essay describing Moraley’s 1729 arrival in Philadelphia.
- Analyze the social and economic conditions of what was one of the Western world’s most multicultural cities.
- Reflect on why Moraley was not able to achieve the fame and fortune that Franklin achieved.

### TIME

This lesson and activity require approximately two to three class periods.

### MATERIALS

- *Walking Moraley’s Streets: Philadelphia* by Billy G. Smith  
Available at [www.common-place.org/vol-03/no-04/philadelphia/](http://www.common-place.org/vol-03/no-04/philadelphia/)
- “Walking Moraley’s Streets” homework sheet
- Poster board and art supplies

### McREL STANDARDS

#### Historical Understanding

Standard 2. Understands historical perspective

#### United States History

Standard 3. Understands why America attracted Europeans and why they brought enslaved Africans

### LESSON AND ACTIVITY

#### 1. Reading

For homework, students read *Walking Moraley’s Streets: Philadelphia* by Billy G. Smith and complete the attached worksheet.

#### 2. Discussion

After the homework has been completed, lead a class discussion based on the Smith essay and the completed handout, focusing on the physical, social, and economic conditions of colonial Philadelphia, and the comparisons the author draws between Franklin and Moraley.

3. Activity

Students are assembled into small groups of three or four individuals. Using the information from the Moraley article and their own impressions of colonial Philadelphia, students will illustrate two Philadelphias: one being the Philadelphia experienced by Moraley; the other that of Franklin. Encourage each group to depict the specific places described in the article. Groups can illustrate their scenes on large poster boards.

4. Writing

Each group will also prepare a paragraph description for each "Philadelphia." The paragraphs should have strong topic sentences and supporting details. Instruct the students to use one quote from the article for each of their two paragraphs.

**ASSESSMENT**

Students are assessed on the quality of their homework, group participation, and final artwork and paragraph.

**EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**

- Ask students to write an essay that compares and contrasts the experiences of Moraley with those of Franklin.
- Direct the students to the Common-Place website ([www.common-place.org/vol-03/mp-04](http://www.common-place.org/vol-03/mp-04)) to select another colonial city to investigate.

**FURTHER RESOURCES**

Smith, Billy G. *The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750-1800* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1990).

## Walking Moraley's Streets

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the essay, *Walking Moraley's Streets: Philadelphia* by Billy G. Smith. As you read the essay, keep in mind the following questions, which you are to answer in two or three sentences on a separate piece of paper after completing the reading:

1. How would you describe William Moraley?
2. What options did Moraley have upon his arrival in Philadelphia?
3. What factors made Philadelphia a good city in which to live in the 1720s?
4. What factors made Philadelphia a difficult place to live in that time?
5. Why does the author say that Moraley characterized himself as a “voluntary slave?”
6. What conditions favored an artisan's success in Philadelphia?
7. Why does the author keep comparing Moraley to Benjamin Franklin?

As you read, look up the following words and any others that you don't know. Write the word and the definition on a separate sheet of paper. Be sure to write down the definition that best fits the way the word is used in the article.

- dilapidated
- reputable
- imbibe
- entrepot
- edifice
- mariner
- artisan
- bigamy
- indenture
- stagnate

