
Franklin published *Poor Richard's Almanack* every year for twenty-five years (1733–1758), pretending the attitudes and observations were those of one “Richard Saunders.” An **almanac** is an annual collection of statistics, weather forecasts, current events, and other useful or entertaining information. Franklin enlivened his almanac with Poor Richard’s **proverbs** and **aphorisms**, short sayings memorable for their wit and wisdom, which he later collected into a book titled *The Way to Wealth*.

Benjamin Franklin

from **Poor Richard's Almanack**

God helps them that help themselves.

Fish and Visitors stink after three days.

Beware of little Expenses: a small Leak will sink a great Ship.

No gains without pains.

Love your Neighbor; yet don't pull down your Hedge.

There are no ugly loves, nor handsome prisons.

At the working man's house hunger looks in, but dares not enter.

To err is human, to repent divine; to persist, devilish.

Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee.

You may be too cunning for One, but not for All.

The Cat in Gloves catches no Mice.

Dost thou love Life? Then do not squander Time; for that's the Stuff Life is made of.

He that falls in love with himself, will have no rivals.

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.

What you would seem to be, be really.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Interpreting

1. According to the second aphorism, why do fish and visitors have a common characteristic? According to the third aphorism, why can little expenses be compared to a leak in a ship?
2. Why are there “no ugly loves, nor handsome prisons”?

3. Which of the aphorisms stress the importance of hard work? Of thrift? Of honesty?
4. What recommendations and observations about human behavior do the other aphorisms make?

Extending

5. Which of these sayings do you find applicable today? Which do you think are amusing? Why?

These Names of Virtues with their Precepts were

1. TEMPERANCE
Eat not to Dullness.
Drink not to Elevation.

2. SILENCE
Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself. Avoid trifling Conversation.

3. ORDER
Let all your Things have their Places. Let each Part of your Business have its Time.

4. RESOLUTION
Resolve to perform what you ought. Perform without fail what you resolve.

5. FRUGALITY
Make no Expense but to do good to others or yourself: i.e., Waste nothing.

6. INDUSTRY
Lose no Time. Be always employed in something useful. Cut off all unnecessary Actions.

7. SINCERITY
Use no hurtful Deceit.
Think innocently and justly; and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

8. JUSTICE
Wrong none by doing Injuries or omitting the Benefits that are your Duty.

9. MODERATION
Avoid Extremes. Forbear resenting Injuries so much as you think they deserve.

10. CLEANLINESS
Tolerate no Uncleaness in Body, Clothes or Habitation.

11. TRANQUILITY
Be not disturbed at Trifles or at Accidents common or unavoidable.

12. CHASTITY
Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.

13. HUMILITY
Imitate Jesus and Socrates.¹⁴

I made a little Book in which I allotted a Page for each of the Virtues. I ruled each Page with red Ink, so as to have seven Columns, one for each Day of the Week, marking each Column with a Letter for the Day. I crossed these Columns with thirteen red Lines, marking the Beginning of each Line with the first Letter of one of the Virtues, on which Line and in its proper Column I might mark by a little black Spot every Fault I found upon Examination to have been committed respecting that Virtue upon that Day.

TEMPERANCE							
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
T							
S	••	•		•		•	
O	•	•	•		•	•	•
R			•			•	
F		•			•		
I			•				
S							
J							
M							
Cl.							
T							
Ch.							
H							

I determined to give a Week's strict Attention to each of the Virtues successively. Thus in the first Week my great Guard was to avoid every the least Offense against Temperance, leaving the other Virtues to their ordinary Chance, only marking every Evening the Faults of the Day. Thus if in the first Week I could keep my first Line marked *T* clear of Spots, I supposed the Habit of that Virtue so much strengthened and its opposite weakened, that I might venture extending my Attention to include the next, and for the following Week keep both Lines clear of Spots. Proceeding thus to the last, I could go through a Course complete in Thirteen Weeks, and four Courses in a

14. Socrates [sok' rə tēz]: Greek philosopher and teacher (470?-399 B.C.).

Writing your Own Aphorisms:

1. Can create a pseudo-name
2. Using Poor Richard's Almanac's 15 Aphorisms, on page 57. **Re-Write FIVE** sayings that are similar to his but in 21st century language. – Be able to relate at least THREE to other pieces of literature, movie or context.
3. **Create FIVE OF YOUR OWN** aphorisms that you deem important about attitudes, values and wisdom.
4. These must be **TYPED** – can work in pairs or individually. Put both names on paper.
5. Due this **Friday, September 25, 2015** - Will have time tomorrow after quiz to perfect.

VIRTUES:

Franklin lists the thirteen most important virtues- keeping track his progress to moral perfection. He writes to focus on one virtue a week. He uses direct, literal language emphasizing the seriousness of his desire for self-improvement. Franklin's attempt to achieve moral perfection reflects his belief that everyone can become the best person possible.

Self Improvement One Virtue for One Week – Due Friday, October 2nd, 2015

1. Write down which virtue you are going to concentrate on – it must be one that you have more difficulty in than another. Can involve personal behavior or habits. Can be to do with school, sports, relationships.
2. Choose small things to work on – rather than large. Looking for improvement not perfection.
3. Create plan to achieve their goal.
4. Follow that plan for one week and then type a report evaluating success of failure.
5. Report should contact why you chose the particular thing to improve, what was the plan, how well it was followed, and how successful it was or wasn't.
6. Did your heightened awareness led to re-direction of thought and behavior?