**(6-32) Franklin and Madison Defend the Constitution**

**Constitutional Convention Speech by Benjamin Franklin (1787)**

**Instructions:** On the last day of the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin rose to give a speech. He was over eighty years old and too weak to speak for himself. James Wilson, a fellow Pennsylvanian, delivered the speech for him. Benjamin Franklin made eight important points in his speech. Working as a team, read the passage and rewrite it in your own words. You can use a dictionary. Be prepared to explain your interpretation to class.

1. I confess that there are several parts of this constitution which I do not at present approve. But I am not sure I shall never approve them. For having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged, by better information, or fuller consideration, to change opinions even on important subjects.
2. It is therefore that the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment, and to pay more respect to the judgment of others.
3. I agree to this Constitution with all its faults, if they are such; because I think a general Government necessary for us.
4. I doubt . . . whether any other Convention . . . may be able to make a better Constitution. For when you assemble a number of men to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men, all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views.
5. From such an assembly can a perfect production be expected? It therefore astonishes me to find this system approaching so near to perfection as it does.
6. Thus I consent to this Constitution because I expect no better, and because I am not sure, that it is not the best.
7. Much of the strength and efficiency of any Government in . . . securing happiness to the people, depends, on opinion, on the general opinion of the goodness of the Government, as well as well as of the wisdom and integrity of its Governors.
8. I hope therefore that for our own sakes as a part of the people, and for the sake of posterity, we shall act heartily and unanimously in recommending this Constitution.

**Follow-Up Assignment**: Write a formal business letter to Benjamin Franklin. In your letter, tell him whether you agree or disagree with this speech. Be sure to explain the reasons you agree or disagree with him.

**James Madison Defends the New Constitution**

**Federalist No. 10, *The New York Packet*, November 23, 1787**

**Questions**

1. Why is Madison concerned about the effect of “faction” on the new nation?

2. Why did Madison oppose just eliminating factions?

3. Why did Madison believe the Constitution protected the country against the “mischief” of factions?

4. Do agree with Madison’s concerns? Explain

5. In your opinion, has the Constitution effectively prevented the “mischief” of factions during the course of United States history? Explain.

A. Among the numerous advantages promised by a well constructed Union, none deserves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of faction . . . Complaints are everywhere heard from our most considerate and virtuous citizens, equally the friends of public and private faith, and of public and personal liberty, that our governments are too unstable, that the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties, and that measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority . . .

B. By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adversed to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.

C. There are two methods of curing the mischiefs of faction: the one, by removing its causes; the other, by controlling its effects. There are again two methods of removing the causes of faction: the one, by destroying the liberty which is essential to its existence; the other, by giving to every citizen the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests.

D. It could never be more truly said than of the first remedy, that it was worse than the disease. Liberty is to faction what air is to fire, an aliment without which it instantly expires. But it could not be less folly to abolish liberty, which is essential to political life, because it nourishes faction, than it would be to wish the annihilation of air, which is essential to animal life, because it imparts to fire its destructive agency.

E. The second expedient is as impracticable as the first would be unwise. As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed . . . The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man . . . The inference to which we are brought is, that the CAUSES of faction cannot be removed, and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its EFFECTS . . .

F. From this view of the subject it may be concluded that a pure democracy, by which I mean a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person, can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction. A common passion or interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the whole; a communication and concert result from the form of government itself; and there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party or an obnoxious individual. Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths. Theoretic politicians, who have patronized this species of government, have erroneously supposed that by reducing mankind to a perfect equality in their political rights, they would, at the same time, be perfectly equalized and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions.

G. A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect, and promises the cure for which we are seeking . . . The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic are: first, the delegation of the government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater number of citizens, and greater sphere of country, over which the latter may be extended.