SAYINGS OF POOR RICHARD

In 1732, Franklin wanted another income, and he turned to the business of publishing a yearly almanac. Almanacs were sure sellers: every house had one. An almanac was not only a calendar; it also calculated the tides and the phases of the moon, claimed to forecast the weather for the next year, and even provided astrological advice for those who believed in it. Many almanacs also supplied recipes, jokes, poems, and maxims.

Poor Richard's Almanack was Franklin's biggest publishing success, and it continued to appear for over twenty-five years. "Poor Richard" was an imaginary astrologer, who had a wife named Bridget. Over the years, a running dispute took place between Richard and the critical Bridget. One year, Bridget wrote the maxims, to answer those her husband had written the year before on female idleness. Once, Bridget went through the whole almanac and included better weather forecasts so that women would know the good days for drying their clothes.

Franklin took Poor Richard's wit and wisdom where he found it—from old sayings in other languages, from other writers, from popular adages. He never hesitated to rework the texts to suit his own purposes. For example, for the 1758 almanac, Franklin skimmed all his previous editions to compose a single speech on economy. Poor Richard claimed to have heard an old man, Father Abraham, deliver the speech at an auction. This speech, called "The Way to Wealth," has become one of the best known of Franklin's works. It has been mistakenly believed to be representative of Poor Richard's wisdom. Poor Richard often called for prudence and thrift, but he just as often favored extravagance.
1. Fools make feasts, and wise men eat them.
2. Be slow in choosing a friend, slower in changing.
3. Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee.
4. Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.
5. Three may keep a secret if two of them are dead.
6. God helps them that help themselves.
7. The rotten apple spoils his companions.
8. An open foe may prove a curse; but a pretended friend is worse.
9. A small leak will sink a great ship.
10. No gains without pains.
11. 'Tis easier to prevent bad habits than to break them.
12. Well done is better than well said.
13. Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time; for that's the stuff life is made of.
14. Write injuries in dust, benefits in marble.
15. A slip of the foot you may soon recover, but a slip of the tongue you may never get over.
16. If your head is wax, don't walk in the sun.
17. A good example is the best sermon.
18. Hunger is the best pickle.
19. Genius without education is like silver in the mine.
20. Haste makes waste.
21. The doors of wisdom are never shut.
22. Love your neighbor; yet don't pull down your hedge.
23. He that lives upon hope will die fasting.
24. If a man empties his purse into his head, no man can take it away from him. An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.
25. Tart words make no friends; a spoonful of honey will catch more flies than a gallon of vinegar.
26. Glass, china and reputation are easily cracked and never well mended.
27. Fish and visitors smell in three days.
28. He that lieth down with dogs shall rise up with fleas.
29. A little neglect may breed mischief; for want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; for want of a horse the rider was lost; for want of the rider the battle was lost.
30. He that composes himself is wiser than he that composes books.
31. He that is of the opinion that money will do everything may well be suspected of doing everything for money.
32. 'Tis hard for an empty bag to stand upright.
33. A plowman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees.
34. None preaches better than the ant, and she says nothing.
35. There are no ugly loves nore handsome prisons.
36. Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterward.

WRITE IN COMPLETE SENTENCES

1. The sharpness of these sayings is partly due to Franklin's ironic view of human nature and human relationships. People, he implies, are not always what they would like to be (or what they think they are). Find five sayings which reflect this attitude? (Explain why)

2. What are two recurring themes you see in the aphorisms? Which aphorisms speak to each of those themes?

Write out the sayings! (You should have at least 3 for each)

3. Which one would you choose as a motto for your own life? Explain why?

Write in complete sentences.

USE NOTEBOOK PAPER