

## Benjamin Rush: Statesman and Scientist

GATHERING THE INFO: As you watch the webisode, complete this sheet. You may need to pause the webisode and/or watch it more than once to get all of the information.

### Rush the Statesman

<b>Hero</b> -evidence that Rush had admirable ideas and performed positive actions	<b>Hypocrite</b> -evidence that Rush's actions did not always follow his stated beliefs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wrote pamphlets on liberty and abolition</b></li> <li>• <b>Told Thomas Paine to name pamphlet <i>Common Sense</i></b></li> <li>• <b>Signed Declaration of Independence</b></li> <li>• <b>Active in abolitionist community; member of Pennsylvania Abolition Society</b></li> <li>• <b>Financial supporter of free black community</b></li> <li>• <b>Dedicated to improving Philadelphia and America</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Purchased a slave in 1776; kept him for 10 years</b></li> <li>• <b>Thought dark skin was a form of leprosy</b></li> </ul>

### Rush the Scientist

<b>Genius</b> -evidence that Rush was a doctor ahead of his time	<b>Quack</b> -evidence that Rush was a doctor who caused much suffering and death
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Went to med school in Edinburgh, Scotland—best in the world</b></li> <li>• <b>Resigned from position as head of army hospitals because of bad conditions; criticized George Washington</b></li> <li>• <b>Became chief of mental ward at Pennsylvania Hospital</b></li> <li>• <b>Emphasized occupational therapy to cure mental disorders</b></li> <li>• <b>Wrote first American textbook on mental illness</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Used bloodletting, laxatives etc. ("heroic treatment")</b></li> <li>• <b>Refused to alter his methods of bleeding and purging</b></li> </ul>

**EXPLORING PRIMARY SOURCES:**

1. *Why do you think Rush decided to write AN ACCOUNT OF THE Bilious remitting Yellow Fever, AS IT APPEARED IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA IN THE YEAR 1793 (shown at 6 minutes, 6 seconds)?*

**He probably wanted to defend his controversial views about the treatment of yellow fever.**

2. *Pause at 6:23. Based on what you have learned about Rush's approach to medicine, how do you think the "tranquilizing chair" was meant to work? Do you think it would have been a successful medical innovation?*

**Answers will vary, but students can infer that it would not have been a gentle method.**

3. *Pause at 6:25. What message was Rush trying to convey with his MORAL AND PHYSICAL THERMOMETER (note: "temperance" means abstaining from the drinking of alcohol)?*

**Rush was trying to show that people who drank less alcohol are better, healthier people.**

**ANALYZING THE INFO:** *Professor Richard Newman says that Dr. Rush was "profoundly wrong in a way that permits others to be right". Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?*

**Answers will vary.**

