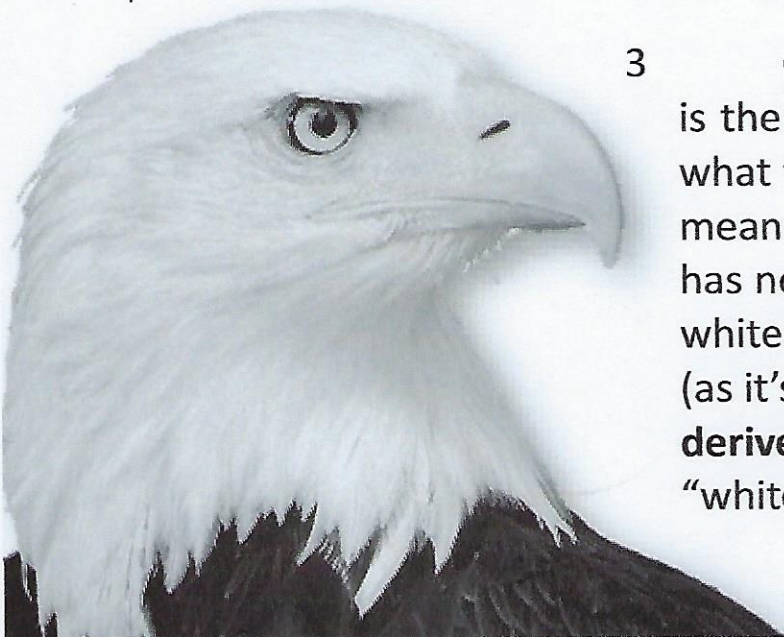


# A NATIONAL BIRD IS CHOSEN

1 You might think that the choice for America's national bird was an easy one, but that wasn't exactly the case. After the Declaration of Independence was signed, the American colonists were not only fighting for their freedom, but a national identity as well. An American Flag was created as a way of uniting the people fighting for independence as well as symbolizing the 13 colonies. Now, Congress had to choose the right bird.

2 The bald eagle seemed the perfect choice for many members of Congress. For one thing, the bird is only found in North America. This made it unique as opposed to other eagles found throughout the world. It has a beautifully broad wingspan of seven feet. The Bald Eagle soars high in the air, and is strong and independent. These were some of the attributes that Congress hoped would represent the people of the new country. In addition, the bald eagle can live up to 30 years which is a very long life for a bird. America's founders were hoping the new country they were creating would also have longevity.



3 One fun fact about the bald eagle is the way many people misunderstand what the word "bald" in its name really means. It does not mean that the eagle has no hair. Actually, it has an attractive white-feathered head. The term bald (as it's used to refer to the eagle) is **derived** from old English, and stands for "white."

**derived** = resulting in origin



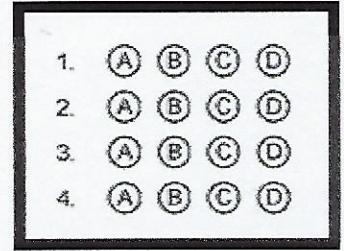
4 One American Founding Father in particular, believed that there was a better choice for our country's national bird. Ben Franklin argued that the wild turkey was a more sensible option. He considered the wild turkey to be a "bird of courage" as opposed to the bald eagle which took away food from other birds. Franklin was in the minority however (actually, there is no official documentation of Ben Franklin arguing with Congress in favor of using a turkey instead of the Bald Eagle; although he did write a letter to his daughter two years after the Seal's official approval, voicing his concerns regarding the "bad moral character" of the Bald Eagle).

5 In 1782, Congress decided on a design for the Great Seal of the United States of America. The bald eagle is proudly displayed right in the middle. Congress must have been pleased with their choice, because The bald eagle is also on various forms of American currency, stamps, and patriotic decorations. Almost two centuries later bald eagles had become an endangered species, due to over hunting and pollution. Fearing that they might become extinct, Congress enacted laws in an effort to protect this important and beloved symbol of America.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



1. Which sentence best describes the main idea of the article?

- A. Most countries have national birds
- B. The American Flag was chosen before the Bald Eagle
- C. Congress gave a lot of thought to America's national bird before making their choice.
- D. Ben Franklin thought the national bird should be the wild turkey.

2. Read this sentence from paragraph number 2: "America's founders were hoping the new country they were creating would also have longevity." What does the word **longevity** mean?

- A. The wisdom to make good choices
- B. The ability to soar
- C. Wings to fly
- D. A long existence

3. Which sentence from the article best suggests that Ben Franklin's choice was not going to be picked?

- A. Ben Franklin argued that the wild turkey was a more sensible option.
- B. Franklin was in the minority however.
- C. He considered the Wild Turkey to be a "bird of courage" as opposed to the Bald Eagle which took away food from other birds.
- D. Fearing that they might become extinct, Congress enacted laws in an effort to protect this important and beloved symbol of America.

4. In paragraph number 3 the author uses the "fun fact" as a way of

- A. persuading his audience to believe the bald eagle is a better choice for our national bird than the wild turkey
- B. entertaining and informing his audience
- C. persuading his audience that the wild turkey is a better choice for our national bird than the bald eagle
- D. Give a fact about why Congress chose the bald eagle as our national bird

5. Briefly describe whether you believe Congress made the right choice by picking the Bald Eagle as America's national bird. Support your opinion with at least 2 examples from text.

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