

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), *A Chart of the Gulf Stream* published in *Maritime Observations: in a Letter from Doctor Franklin...* (1786)

This widely known *Chart of the Gulf Stream* is the first that was printed in the United States. Created by Benjamin Franklin, the map builds upon his earlier collaboration with Folger and Le Rouge (map 61) and provides a detailed chart of the Gulf Stream. Franklin made his first observations in 1726 and continued to think and write about them 60 years later. This map includes a closer look at the Gulf Stream as it heads away from the United States and Canada out into the Atlantic Ocean – three ships are located in the Gulf Stream with arrows indicating the direction of flow. The inset (top left) shows the path of the currents as they travel between North America and Europe. Also note the lively cartouche in the bottom right corner, as Franklin himself appears to discuss the Gulf Stream with King Neptune.

Essential Questions

How are maps used to teach us science?

How can one person's passionate interest in a natural phenomenon influence and guide us today?

