Imagine seeing a picture of a wild turkey on United States coins and dollar bills. Did you know that if Benjamin Franklin had his way, you would?

In the late 1700s, the United States was a young nation. It had just won its hard-earned independence from British rule. Americans wanted to select an emblem, or a symbol, for their new country. And they wanted that symbol to be a national bird.

Benjamin Franklin, a Founder of the United States, felt that the wild turkey should be the national bird. He believed it was an honorable bird and unique to North America.

“He is a Bird of Courage,” Franklin wrote in favor of the wild turkey. Franklin would discuss his opinion with others and make a tremendous effort to win support for his idea.

However, not everyone agreed with Franklin. Some members of Congress were convinced that the bald eagle should be the nation’s symbol. Like their new country, the bald eagle was free. And it was brave and strong, just like the country’s new citizens.

Franklin was opposed to making the bald eagle the national bird. He thought it was too fierce a creature. Besides, other countries already had the eagle as their national bird.

There were other kinds of eagles, but the bald eagle lived on the North American continent. It, too, was a true American bird.

Congress and Franklin never came to an agreement about the issue. Congress eventually won. On June 20, 1782, the bald eagle was officially declared the national bird of the United States.
Answer the questions. You may reread parts of the passage to help you.

1. Which word provides a clue to the meaning of the word *emblem* in the sentence below?
   
   **Americans wanted to select an emblem, or a symbol, for their new country.**
   
   - country
   - select
   - symbol
   - wanted

2. Why did Congress want the bald eagle to be the national bird?
   
   - It was the national bird for other countries.
   - It was free, like the United States.
   - It was an honorable bird.
   - It was a bird of courage.

3. Why did Franklin oppose picking the bald eagle as the national bird?
   
   - It was unique to North America.
   - It was an honorable bird.
   - It was too independent.
   - It was too fierce.

4. How are the wild turkey and the bald eagle ALIKE?
   
   - They both were national birds for other countries.
   - They both lived on the North American continent.
   - They both were picked by Congress to be the national bird.
   - They both were picked by Benjamin Franklin to be the national bird.

5. List two reasons why Franklin wanted the wild turkey to be the national bird. Write your response on another sheet of paper.