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Unite or Die

Although most identify this Benjamin Franklin cartoon with the phrase “Join or Die”, this sign is based on an original engraving published in the *Pennsylvania Journal*; and the weekly *Advertiser*, Philadelphia, November 16, 1774, which read, “Unite or Die”.

Ben Franklin became a successful newspaper editor and printer in Philadelphia, publishing the *Pennsylvania Gazette* at the age of 23. He became wealthy publishing this and *Poor Richard's Almanack*, which he authored under the pseudonym “Richard Saunders”. After 1767, he was associated with the *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, a newspaper that was known for its revolutionary sentiments and criticisms of British policies.

The engraving, a prominent device in the masthead of the *Pennsylvania Journal*, shows a snake cut into various pieces, each with a label of a colony with the implied message that only by each of the separate colonies uniting under a single cause could the country—the snake—hope to strike back & be successful in defeating the British. Considered the very first political cartoon, Franklin used it in his *Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1754 to rally the colonies to unite during the advent of the French & Indian War. It would become a symbol of colonial freedom during the Revolutionary War.

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