

**Teacher Guide to Student Worksheet 2-  
The Mysterious Shoebox of J. Priest**

A good mystery draws people in. History is filled with mysteries and suspense. Some of the mysteries are created by our own lack of knowledge on a subject while others are mired in the wrinkles of time. Today you are going to be given a small mystery. The mystery begins with a shoe box that has some items in it. The only things on the box are the letters "J.Priest." scribbled on the top. Your job as amateur sleuths is to try to identify as much as possible about the "person in the box". Use the questions below to lead your way. These old pictures, artifacts and writings tell a story that you have to put together. Try to pull together these bits of history to reveal the incredible story of this man.

**1. What do you think the person's name is on the box?**

Joseph Priestley, the famous enlightenment scientist

**2. List the things here that you have found in the box and try to identify them.**

1. Political Cartoon



*A Birmingham toast, as given on the 14th of July by the--revolution society, [London] : Pubd. by S.W. Fores, N. 3 Piccadilly, 1791 July 23d.*

Priestley is standing with the platter in his hand at the July 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Revolution Society in Birmingham. The Revolutionists supported the Revolution in France and would have liked to see the same thing happen in England. Priestley was seen by both the British and Americans as being in favor of the Reign of Terror and the new French Republic. This particular meeting set off very serious and destructive riots in Birmingham in 1791.

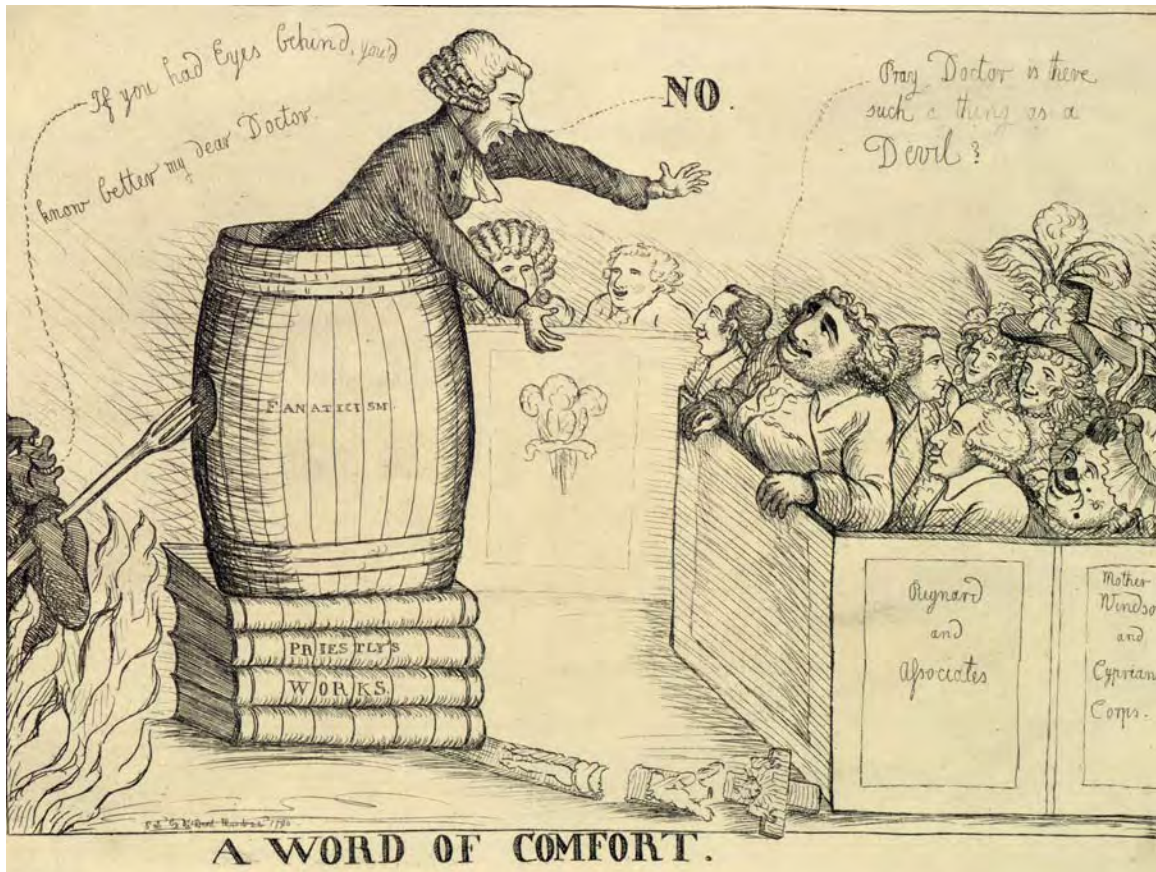
*Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

2. Picture



Picture of the Joseph Priestley home in Northumberland, Pa.  
*Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission*

### 3. Political Cartoon (2)

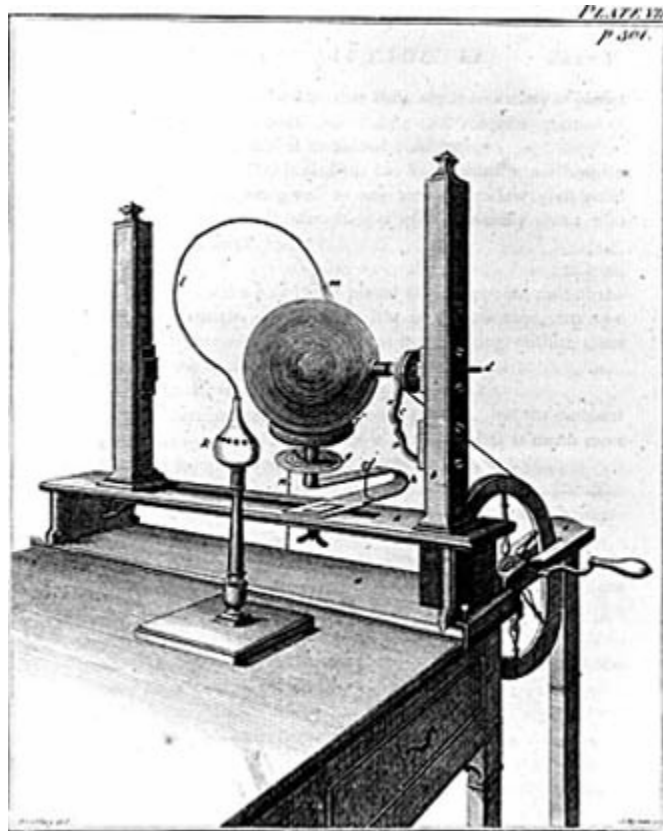


**SUMMARY:** A British satire on the efforts of Charles James Fox to get the Test and Corporation Acts repealed. Joseph Priestley, preaching, speaks for the concerns of the clergy, stating their opposition to "Reynard and Associates" (Fox, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, John Townshend, and another man, possibly William Windham). Fox asks, "Pray, Doctor is there such a thing as a Devil?" to which Priestley responds with a resounding "NO." The Devil, standing amid flames, is about to skewer Priestley. The Test and Corporation Acts required membership in the Church of England, as well as other religious and civil obligations, for anyone seeking public office. In a touch of irony, the Prince of Wales (George IV) and Maria Fitzherbert, joined in an illegal marriage, sit in a pew on Priestley's left, facing the viewer. That Priestley's "NO" is printed in the same type as the title "A WORD OF COMFORT" suggests a play on words.

[London] : Pubd by W. Dent, 1790 March 22d.

*Forms part of: British Cartoon Collection (Courtesy Library of Congress).*

4.Print



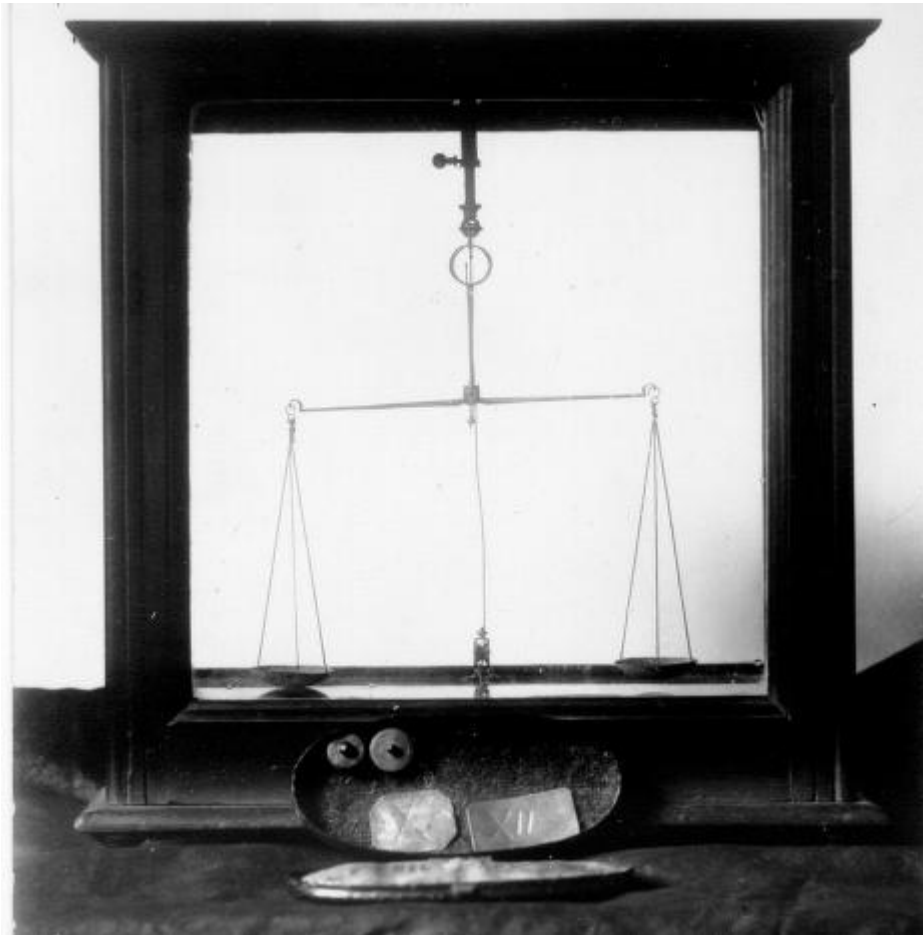
1767-The history and present state of electricity, with original experiments.  
*Courtesy of the Dewey Library and the Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Imaging*

5. Print from an Engraving



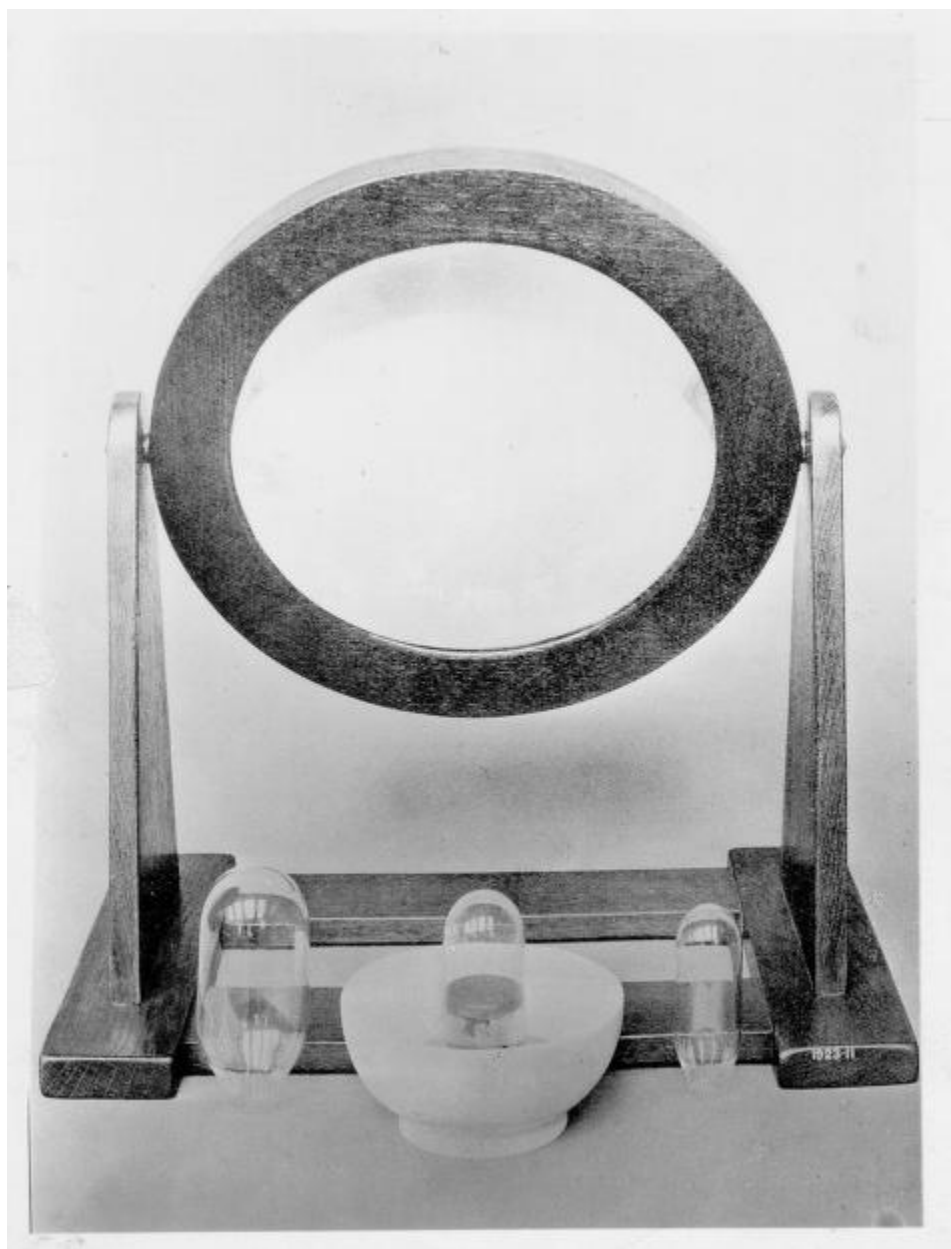
Burning Glass from Priestley's laboratory.  
*Courtesy of the Dewey Library and the Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Imaging*

6. Picture



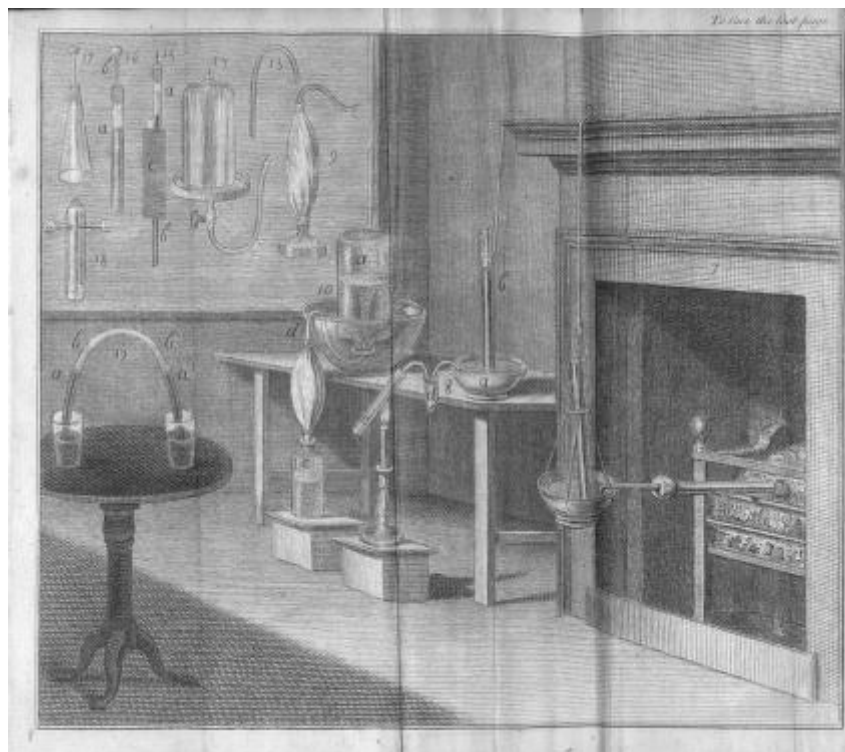
This is an image of balance and weights brought by Priestley to America in 1794.  
*Courtesy of the Dewey Library and the Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Imaging*  
Originals located at Joseph Priestley House, Northumberland, Pennsylvania.

7. Picture



Picture of Priestley's oxygen apparatus.  
*Courtesy of the Dewey Library and the Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Imaging*

8. Print



Joseph Priestley's laboratory in 1774.  
*Courtesy of the Dewey Library and the Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Imaging*



9. Picture



Picture of the Priestley Medal dated 1922.

*Courtesy of the Dewey Library and the Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Imaging*

**3. From the items above, write down as many attributes as you can to describe J. Priest.**

- He was a scientist.
- He was religious (and his views were considered “fanatical” by the British)
- He was active politically.
- He was a famous scientist.
- He also was a member of the Revolution Society.
- He supported the French Revolution.