



Samples from Exploring History Through Primary Sources: Pilgrims

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Writer, Reader, and Leader

Standard/Objective

- Compare and contrast different stories or accounts about past events, people, places, or situations, identifying how they contribute to our understanding of the past. (NCSS)
- Students will demonstrate their understanding of the historical importance of recording major events and daily happenings. They will compare and contrast different forms of storing information for the future.

Materials

Copies of both sides of the *William Bradford's Bible* photo card; Copies of the historical background information (page 20); Chart paper; For demonstration purposes: a 45 record, a 78 record, a VHS tape, a reel-to-reel tape, a CD, a DVD, and/or a newspaper

Discussion Questions

- Why were the writings of William Bradford important to the colonists?
- Why are the writings of Bradford important to historians today?
- How are we recording our history in this age of technology?
- Is this a good way to keep historical stories and information? Will future citizens be able to read what we have written?
- People used to write letters all the time. We can read these letters today to know what they thought and did. Today we send e-mails. How will people in the future still be able to know what we thought and did?

Using the Primary Source

Show the photo of William Bradford's Bible. Explain that today you will be studying a very important man in colonial history. This is the Bible that he read every day. He was one of the Pilgrims who struggled for religious freedom. Discuss the first two questions above.

Distribute copies of the historical background information (page 20). As a class, read and discuss Bradford's life. Distribute the photo card. Students should work in groups to complete the activities on the photo card. (**Teacher Note:** The number of pages in the Geneva Bible is 1226, about 100 more than in the King James Bible.)

Focus on Bradford's role as a recorder of Plymouth's history. Much of what we know today about that early colony is due to his writings. Talk about how people record history today. Using chart paper list the ideas students have about how people save information today so that our great-great grandchildren can know our history. Show them a 45 record, 78 record, VHS tape, etc. Have students place these items in order from the oldest to the newest method of storage. Then have students place them in order from the best way to the worst way to store information for the future. Hold a discussion about their choices. Use the final three questions listed above to continue your discussion.

Extension Idea

- Students should each list five events that have happened at their school this year that should be recorded as important parts of their school's history.

Writer, Reader, and Leader *(cont.)*

Historical Background Information



William Bradford was born in England in 1590. His parents died when he was very young, leaving him an orphan. William lived in the houses of several relatives but never felt at home. He taught himself to read and write and studied the only book available—the Bible.



One day at the age of 12, he attended a Separatist church service. The people in the church welcomed him. Bradford really enjoyed their simple style of worship, so he became a member of the church. At last he felt he could be part of a “family.” Eager to learn, Bradford studied with the Separatists and when they moved to Holland, he moved, too.



By the time the Separatists were ready to move to the new colony in America, Bradford was 30 years old. He was married and had a small son. He was also a business leader for the group. One of his jobs was to get permission from the English government to settle the new colony.



When it was time to sail, Bradford decided that his young son must stay with relatives. His wife, Dorothy, sailed with him but she was deeply saddened to leave their son behind. After the ship arrived in the new colony, Dorothy fell from the ship's deck and drowned. The next year, Bradford married a widow in Plymouth. Bradford's son finally arrived in the colony when he was in his early teens.



Within five months of landing, half of the Pilgrims had died. Among the dead was John Carver, the elected governor of the colony. Bradford was chosen to be the new governor. As the governor, Bradford and his assistants ran the colony and served as judges. Bradford remained governor for the rest of his life with just one five-year break. He served the colony for 36 years. He was a fair and firm leader who led the Pilgrims to build a successful colony.



Bradford was a busy writer. He kept a daily journal of the *Mayflower* trip and life in the Plymouth colony. Bradford used the term *pilgrim* to describe the group. He wrote, “they knew they were pilgrims, and . . . lifted up their eyes to heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits.” His diary of important events and daily life was called *Of Plimoth Plantation*. This diary has helped others to learn about life in the colony. Bradford also made a copy of the Mayflower Compact. It is the only version of that document that exists today.





William Bradford's Bible

Historical Background Information

This is William Bradford's Bible. He brought it with him to the Plymouth colony aboard the *Mayflower*. It is a Geneva Bible which was published in 1560. This Bible was produced by English religious leaders who had left England. They lived in the city of Geneva, Switzerland. They were against the Church of England. It was the first English Bible to use Roman type and to divide the chapters into verses. This is the version that the Separatists used. Bradford was a religious and colonial leader who liked to study his Bible. As the governor of Plymouth Colony, he recorded the history of the colony.



Analyzing the Picture

What Do You See?

- What clues let you know that this is a very old Bible?
- How many pages do you think this Bible has?
- Look carefully at the page on the left. Notice how far the type goes over to the margin. These are called margin notes. They give information about how to read and understand the verses. Why do you think they included margin notes in their Bibles?

Yesterday and Today

- Today, most governors can only serve their state for eight years. Bradford served for 36 years as governor of Plymouth. List four reasons why it is better to change governors every eight years. Then write four reasons why it might be fine to keep the same governor for many years.

Writing Focus

Fiction

- Imagine that you are Bradford's son and you have not seen your father since you were a baby. Write a description of the first meeting you have with your father when you finally arrive in the colony. Think about what you would say to him and what he would reply.

Nonfiction

- With a partner, design an illustrated booklet about Bradford's life. Each page should have one or two sentences and an illustration about an event in his life.

Challenge

- Bradford's son John was born in 1618. He died in 1676. How old was he when the *Mayflower* sailed? How old was he when he died? Find out two more facts about John Bradford's life.

Setting Up Plymouth Colony

Standard/Objective

- Examine the interaction of human beings and their physical environment, the use of land, building of cities, and ecosystem changes in selected locales and regions. (NCSS)
- Students will read and interpret a colonial map. Students will describe why the Pilgrims made certain decisions when setting up their colony.

Materials

Copy of the facsimile *Plymouth Colony Map*; Copies of the historical background information (page 44); Copies of the student activity sheet, *Studying a Colony Map* (page 45); For optional use: *Map of Plymouth Colony* (page 46)

Discussion Questions

- Why was the Plymouth area a better place to settle than Cape Cod?
- How did the colonists work together? How did they work independently?
- How did the American Indians help them survive?
- How did the colony plan to defend itself?

Using the Primary Source

Show the students the facsimile *Plymouth Colony Map*. Have students study the map before any background information is read. Give them time to make inferences just from what they see on the map. Ask students to share their observations. Record these comments on the board.

Then, read and discuss the historical background information (page 44) as a class. Now that they have additional information, ask the students to add or change the comments already listed on the board. Students can then work in pairs to complete the student activity sheet (page 45).

The Pilgrims made several important decisions about their colony. They decided to:

- leave Cape Cod and settle at Plymouth.
- build their small colony with a common house, family homes, and a main street.
- find an area to place cannons to protect their colony.
- make friends with the nearby Wampanoag tribe.
- keep working even in times of sorrow and fear.

Have the students write paragraphs telling why each of these decisions helped to make the colony successful.

Extension Idea

- Students should pretend that they are starting new colonies. They will need to plan how the colonies should be laid out. Students can draw birds-eye-view maps of their colonies.

Setting Up Plymouth Colony *(cont.)*

Historical Background Information



When the Pilgrims landed in Cape Cod, they were in the wrong place. Some wanted to stay in Cape Cod since it was almost winter time. Others did not want to stay. They said that Cape Cod did not have a good shore or enough fresh water.



For several weeks, people lived on the ship and went on shore to explore. Some kept arguing that Cape Cod was not a good place to settle. Finally, a group of men went exploring in a small boat. They found a better area called Plymouth. This place had been discovered by Captain John Smith six years earlier. They went back to Cape Cod and told the settlers what they had found. Everyone got back on board the *Mayflower* and sailed to Plymouth.



They liked the Plymouth location because they found running water in clear streams. They found two rivers and a safe landing place for ships. They even found fields that were ready for planting. They did not realize that they had found an old Wampanoag village. The tribe had moved to another place.



The Pilgrims' first goal was to plan their colony (called a plantation). As you can see from the map, they made one long street that ran through the center of the town to the shore. On the map you can see two areas that look like sunbursts—these are hills. They put their cannons on the top of the hill at the end of the street. That way they could keep watch over the sea and the land around the village.



They built a common house where they stored supplies. This building was also used as a church. They planned to build homes all along the center street. Each family was given a lot to build on. The first winter, just a few houses were built and several families huddled together in each home. Other settlers slept on the ship. Sickness was killing many people and keeping others from working. When spring arrived, half of the settlers and sailors had died. The remaining settlers were sad, but they were determined to make the colony successful.



In April, the *Mayflower* sailed back to England so the ship could no longer be used for sleeping or storage. The colonists went to work building and planting. With the help of their Wampanoag friends, the settlers were able to plant gardens. These are also shown on the map. They built more homes, each with a thatched roof. They worked together to make the community succeed.



Name _____

Studying a Colony Map

Background Information

This is a map of the Plymouth colony in the spring of 1621. The Pilgrims' first goal was to plan their colony. As you can see from the map, they made one long street that ran through the center of the town to the shore. They built a common house where they stored supplies. This building was also used as a church. They planned to build homes all along the center street.

Activity

Directions: After studying the map, complete these activities.

1. How many homes had been built when this map was drawn?

2. By this time, how many vacant lots were outlined?

3. Find the names of the American Indian tribes listed on the map. Which tribe became the settlers' friends?

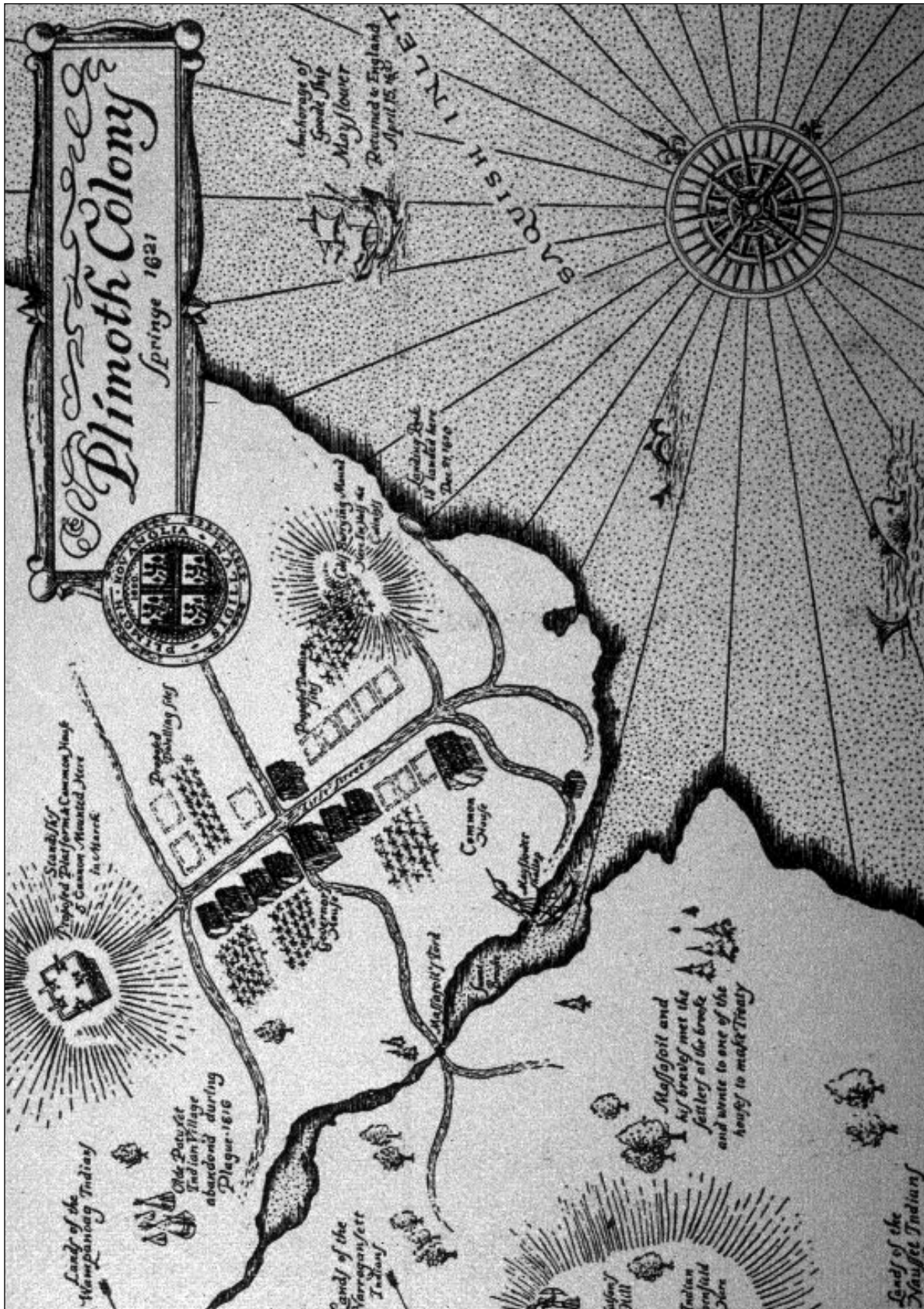
4. How were the two hill areas used?

5. Find the section of the map that tells about the treaty with Massasoit and his tribe. Why would the mapmaker include this information?

Challenge

Pretend that you lived in Plymouth. Which lot would you have chosen for building your house? Tell three reasons why you think that lot would be best. You can choose a lot that is finished or unfinished.

Map of Plymouth Colony



Instructional Resources Corporation

Name _____

Puritan Education

Puritan Law Dated 1647

It is therefore ordered, that every township in this jurisdiction, after the Lord has increased its number of 50 householders, shall then forthwith appoint one within their town to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read, whose wages shall be paid either by the parent or master of such children, or by the inhabitants in general.

Directions: Puritans believed in education. They passed a law that parents must make sure their children learned to read and write. They wanted to be sure everyone could read and study the Bible. Read the passage above then answer the following questions:

1. How many houses must be built in a town before they have to appoint a teacher?

2. What subjects must the teacher cover with the students?

3. Who pays the teacher?
