

# New England Illustrated

## Background

The New England Colonies included Connecticut, settled for religious reasons in 1626; Massachusetts, settled for both religious and political reasons in 1630; Rhode Island, settled for religious freedom in 1636

In the New England Colonies most people lived on small farms growing barely enough for the family to live on. People in seaport towns worked as shipbuilders, fishermen, whalers, or traders.



## Assignment:

Pretend that you are an illustrator for the make-believe newspaper “New England Illustrated” in the late 1600's. Your editor is planning to publish a special report on New England colonial life. You have been assigned to draw 8 illustrations to go along with the article. The editor has given you a brief portion of the article on each topic to be illustrated. Read each summary and draw an illustration that has something to do with the description of New England colonial life, when you are completed answer the questions at the end of the readings.

## Laws:

There are strict laws against card playing, mixed dancing, drunkenness, swearing missing church and cooking on Sunday. These laws are enforced by the local sheriff or constable.

A trial is held with a jury of 12 men determining guilt or innocence. Punishments include a fine, a whipping or public ridicule in the pillory, stock or dunking stool. The pillory is a wooden frame with holes to lock in a person's head and hands. The stock is a similar devise to lock in their feet and hands.

The dunking stool is a long pole with a set attached to dunk a person in water. The punishment for serious crime, such as murder, robbery, treason or piracy is death by hanging.

## Recreation:

New Englanders combine their work with play. Neighbors get together to build a new house or barn. When the work is done, they eat, drink, sing and exchange new. Competitions include corn husking, plowing, foot races, spelling bees, shooting and seek, hopscotch, leap frog and London Bridges. They like simple inexpensive toys like balls, dolls, jump ropes, kites, marbles, tops and toy soldiers.



## Schools:

Wealthy parents send their children to private schools or hire tutor who live in their homes. New England private schools called “dame schools”, teach the alphabet, spelling, writing and arithmetic. Since 1647, Massachusetts town over 50 families must have a public school. College students are trained as ministers. Harvard, the first college in America, was found in 1636. Poor parents teach their children at home. Fathers teach sons how to farm, raise livestock and use firearms. Mothers show daughters how to cook, sew, spin, weave and preserve food. Some boys, called “apprentices”, learn a skill from a master craftsman in return for food, lodging and hard work. Some girls are “bound out” doing household chores in another home.

## Communication:

News is spread by word of mouth. There are newspapers in every colony, but they are available only in the larger cities. Letters are sent with friends or by colonial mailmen called “postriders”. They carry letters or messages by horseback from town to town. Along the way, they pass on the latest news at taverns or post offices. In large cities, a “town crier” walks through the streets reading official messages.

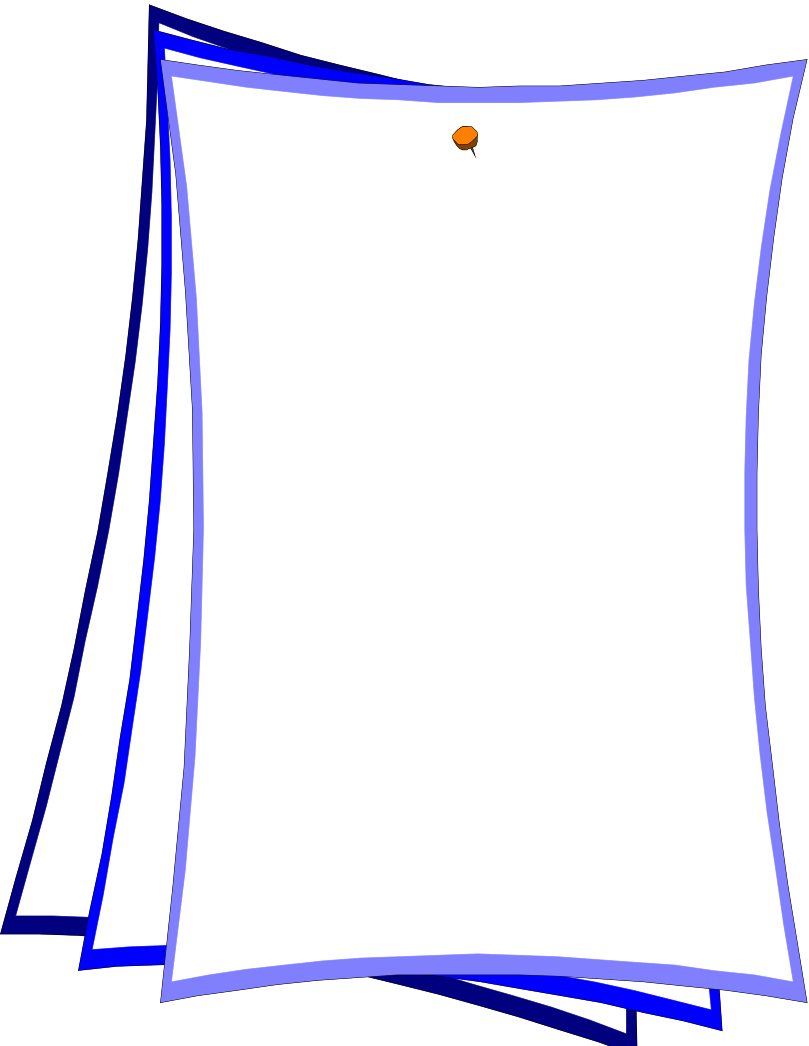


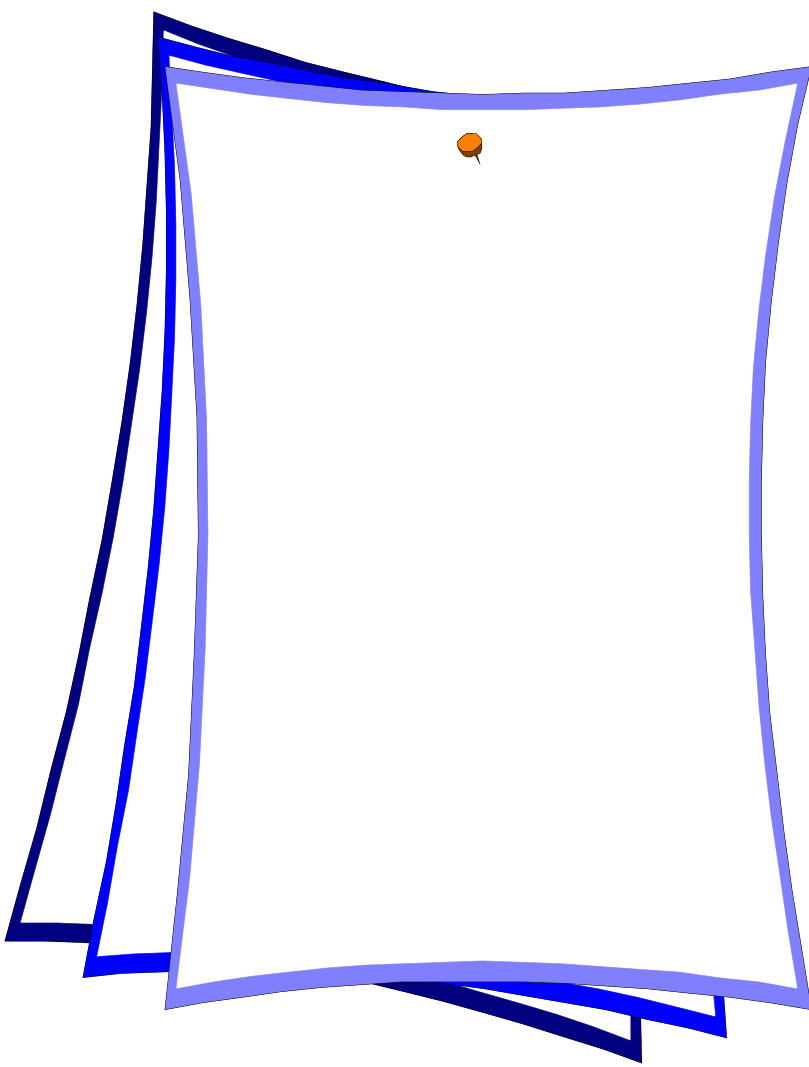
## Money:

Most colonists use the “barter” system in which goods are traded for goods. Crops such as grain or fruits are used as money. The governing body of England, called “Parliament” forbids the colonies to print paper money or mint coins. Some coins come into the colonies through trade with the West Indies. Merchants must weigh the coins on scales since it is common to shave edges of coins to get slivers of gold or silver.

## Travel

Colonists rarely travel far from home except merchants, planters and traders. Travel over land is difficult since there are few roads or bridges. Most routes follow the Indian paths. Some paths have been widened to allow for travel by horse and wagon or cart. The few bridges are only wide enough to be crossed on foot. Some larger rivers have “ferries” to take travelers and their goods across. Taverns along the way provide food and lodging.





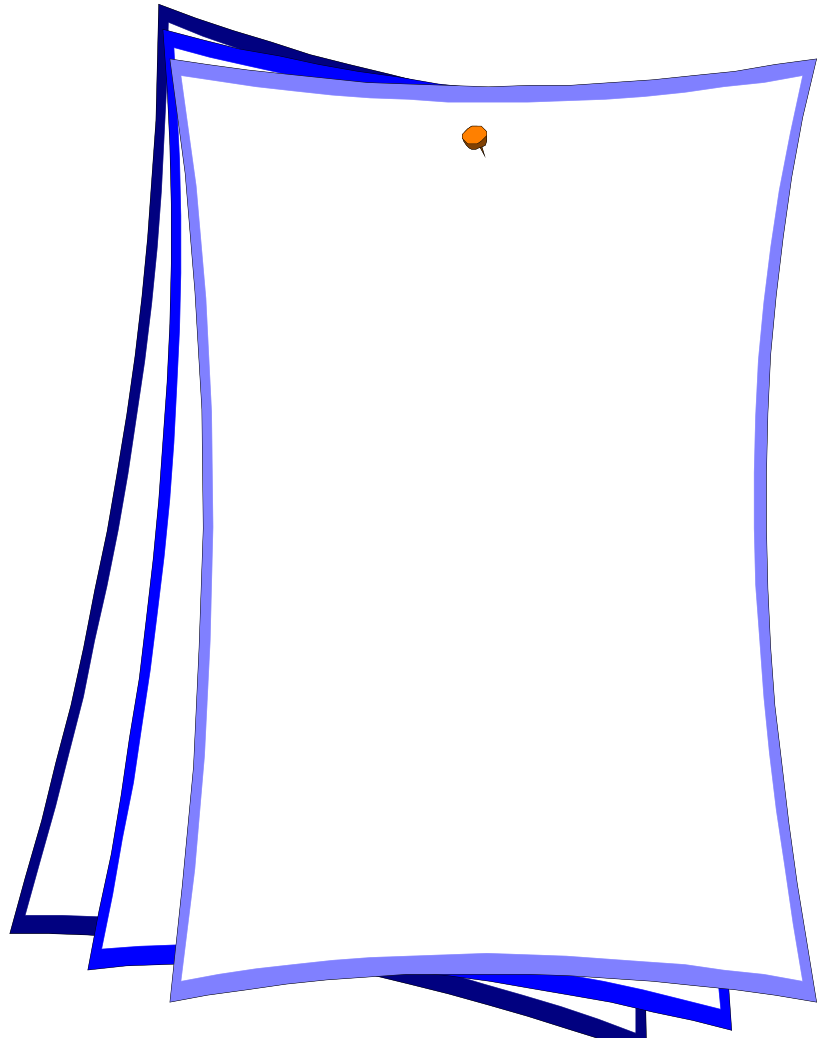
## Religions

Religion is very important to most colonists. Many people came to America to worship in their own way. Many groups in the Northeast had left England to escape religious persecution and viewed their way of life as a “purer”, more correct form of religion based on the Bible. Churches serve as the town social center for courtship, visiting and hearing the latest news. Churches keep important records of births, marriages and deaths. Ministers supervise education and care for the poor, sick and needy. There are strict rules on proper behavior. Sunday is a day of rest where no work can be performed including cooking, housework, shaving or cutting hair. Church services last 3-4

hours with Sunday afternoons spent in prayer or Bible study.

## Fashion

Wealthy colonists wear the latest fashions direct from London. Business men along the coast wear white linen shirts with ruffles around the neck and wrists. A long, colorful waistcoat is worn over the shirt with a three-quarter length topcoat. Their breeches are made of silk or velvet with silk hose fastened at the knees with silver buckles. It is fashionable to wear a white powdered wig under a top hat. Wealthy woman wear a single undergarment called a “shift”, with a petticoat and a colorful dress made of linen or wool. A cape or hooded cloak completes the outfit. Religious men and women frown on the practice of wearing fancy or colorful clothing; they consider it vain and prideful. These men and women often dress in subdued colors.



Using the articles you have read answer the following questions:

Short Answer

1. What is a punishment device in which a person's head and hands are locked?
2. From where did wealthy colonists import the latest fashions?
3. How was most colonial news exchanged?
4. What was the first college in America (established in 1636)?
5. How long were the typical colonial worship services?
6. What are twelve men who decide the guilt or innocence in colonial trials called?
7. What is the governing body of England called?
8. What are colonial mailmen called?
9. What is the practice of trading goods for goods?
10. On what day could no work be performed by the Colonists?
11. Where did poorer families teach their children?
12. What was the name of a colonist who read official messages in large cities?
13. Why did most people attend a colonial college?
14. Who supervised education and cared for the poor, sick and needy?
15. What was a young man called who worked for a master craftsman to learn a skill?
16. What were colonial private schools called?

Short Essay

Would you have like to have lived during colonial times? Explain your answer

What do you think was the most interesting part of colonial life? Explain your answer

What would you miss most about modern life if you traveled in a time machine to colonial times and could not return? Explain your answer.