

Talk of the Town

An Exploration of

Hear ye! Hear ye! This collection of ideas transports students to colonial times and builds their understanding of communities in the process!

ideas contributed by Linda Masternak Justice, Kansas City, MO

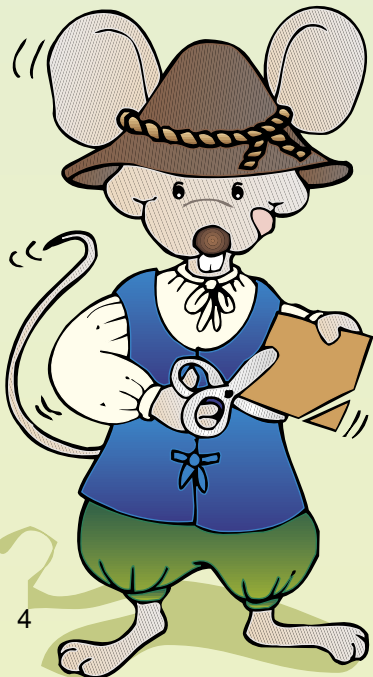


Location, Location, Location!

When the colonists arrived in North America, one of the first things they decided was where to establish their new community. They carefully considered the resources of various locations before selecting a site. Have your students follow suit and put their own decision-making skills to the test. First, tell the class that the selection of a community location was very important to the colonists. Encourage students to share their ideas about the reasons, pointing out that the location directly influenced the colonists' lifestyle and livelihood. Then give each student a copy of page 7.

To complete her sheet, a student writes several advantages and disadvantages of living in each described location. Then she cuts two 9" x 12" sheets of white construction paper in half to 6" x 9". She glues each completed fact sheet on a separate piece of construction paper. She titles and illustrates the remaining construction paper to make a booklet cover. Then she stacks the cover atop the prepared sheets and staples the entire stack along the left edge. Finally, for each fact-filled page, she illustrates a corresponding scene on the facing page. At the completion of the project, invite students to tell the class which location(s) they prefer and why. Then poll the class to determine which location is tops among your students.

There was plenty of seafood to eat!



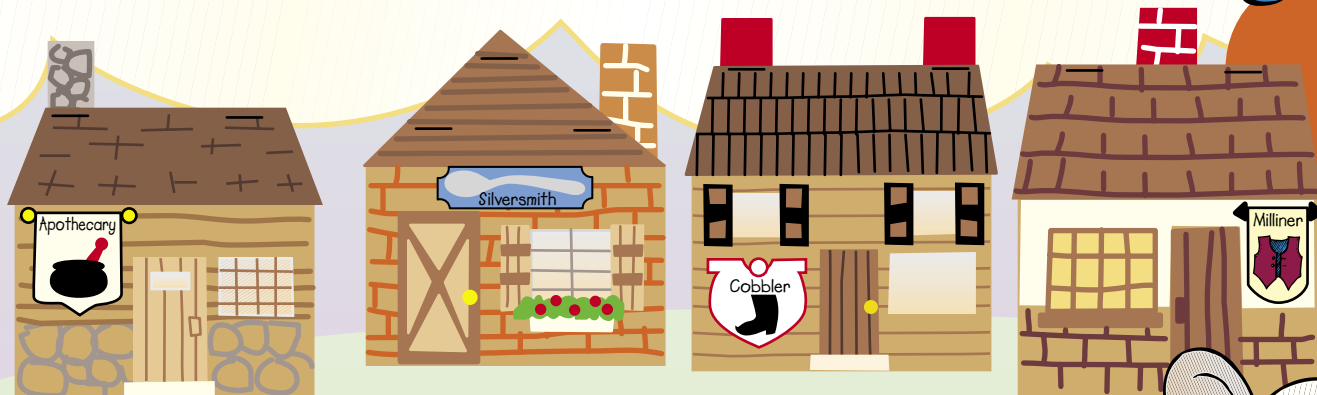
Gather Round!

Once colonists decided where to settle, they quickly set to work building their homesteads. Use this ongoing display idea to help your youngsters "build" their own colonial community. In advance, choose a type of location for the community or use the preferred location from the previous idea on this page. Cover the top portion of a large bulletin board with blue paper to represent the sky. Prepare the rest of the board to reflect the chosen location.

Tell students that many early colonists lived in one-room cabins that had shingled or thatched roofs. Every home had a fireplace that provided light and gave heat for warmth and cooking. Glass was expensive, so many families covered the window openings with oiled paper. Next, give each student a six-inch construction paper square. Instruct him to cut away the corners from one end of the square to make a house shape. Have him use construction paper, waxed paper, crayons, and glue to add desired details. Cluster students' houses on the prepared bulletin board and staple them in place.

After all of your youngsters' houses are displayed, have students share their thoughts about why the colonists grouped their homes. Lead the class to conclude that the closeness offered protection and enabled the colonists to share resources.

a Colonial Community



A Growing Community

Since there were no factories or large stores 400 years ago, it's no surprise that the colonists relied on their collective efforts and skills for needed resources. As tradespeople established businesses, the community grew dramatically. To expand the community your class created (see "Gather Round!" on page 4), duplicate the job descriptions on page 8. Cut the strips apart and then pair students. Give each twosome a strip, a 3" x 5" card, and a 4" x 6" rectangle cut from a brown paper lunch bag. On the card, the students summarize the assigned tradesperson's duties and how the person contributed to the community. To make a building for the corresponding business, the youngsters use crayons and construction paper scraps to add details to the brown paper rectangle. They include a sign that reflects the tradesperson's role. Then they flip the building over. The students place the card facedown on the building so that the bottom edges of the card and building are aligned. They tape the top of the card in place.

Help students reach a consensus about where to place the completed buildings in the community display; staple the top of each building to the board. Ask one student in each pair to read aloud her building's sign. Challenge the class to guess the community role of the corresponding tradesperson. Then have the student reveal the card and read it aloud to check the guesses. Later, arrange for volunteers to use arts-and-crafts materials to complete the display with additional scenery.

Fair Is Fair?

Every community needs laws to guide its citizens, and a colonial community is no exception! Point out that just as class rules help students know what to do, community laws help citizens know what to do. Share the laws listed on this page. Then encourage students to speculate about the reasons for the laws and how the laws might have impacted the community. On provided paper, have each student write a persuasive paragraph that tells whether he does or does not think a chosen law was fair and then sign his paper. Ask him to mount his work on a 9" x 12" sheet of manila paper, roll the paper, and then tie it with a length of ribbon. Collect students' resulting scrolls and place them in a basket.

To share students' opinions, give the news-related role of town crier an editorial twist. Each day of your study, select a desired number of scrolls and provide access to a small handbell. In turn, unroll each scroll and announce the owner's name. Then ask him to ring the bell and read his paragraph aloud. Now that's a newsworthy way to strengthen persuasive-writing skills!



Laws of Selected Communities

- A poor man cannot have clothes that are as fancy as those of a rich man.
- Sledding is against the law.
- Every man must work on the town roads each month.

