

Using Colonial Account Books As A Window Into The Lives of African-Americans in Colonial New England

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Objective:

- I can use primary sources to infer about the lives of African-Americans in Colonial New England.
- I can write in first person narrative basing content on primary source material.
- I can keep an account book.

Pre-Assessment

Have students take this Kahoot before beginning the lesson.

<https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/78ed6a13-a065-4ff3-b7f9-357e01b0ec77>

Post-Assessment:

Complete Graph

First person paragraph about the life of a slave using the historical account books to infer more about their life.

Create a fictitious account book.

Instructional Procedures:

Start the lesson by having students take the following Kahoot in class. <https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/78ed6a13-a065-4ff3-b7f9-357e01b0ec77> This reviews triangular trade and you will see if students even recognize that slavery was in New England in the colonial period.

Next, pair students up with an advanced and basic reader. Project up the links to the colonial account books and provide the links on your classroom webpage.

[Account Book of Elijah Williams, Ledger B, Vol. 3](#)

[Account Book of Elijah Williams, Ledger C, Vol. 4](#)

[Pages from Rev. Jonathan Ashley's account book - Page 11](#)

[Pages from Rev. Jonathan Ashley's account book - Page 15](#)

[Pages from Rev. Jonathan Ashley's account book - Page 19](#)

[Pages from Rev. Jonathan Ashley's account book - Page 19](#)

[Pages from Rev. Jonathan Ashley's account book - Page 36](#)

[Pages from Elijah Williams \(Old Soldier's\) account book, Vol. 2](#)

[Account Book Transcriptions](#)

Have students read the account books in their pairs and answer the following questions in their interactive notebook.

1. What are these documents?
2. Why would these documents be used?
3. Where do these people live?

Allow time for the class to discuss each question, guiding them to self discovery. Before revealing the people are from Deerfield, Massachusetts, ask students to think of triangular trade, what was transported on each leg of the trip, and what evidence from the documents might support where the people live. After

revealing the individuals are from Deerfield, Massachusetts, discuss why they may not have thought it was from New England prior. Ask students, “how is slavery in New England evident through these primary sources?” [*18th Century Slaves in Deerfield, Massachusetts Listed by Owner*](#)

Discuss currency and pounds, shillings, and pence. This short video can help with the explanations.

https://youtu.be/p7o8oNFO7_U

Denominations of Colonial Money

4 farthings = 1 pence (abbreviated as “d”)

12 pence = 1 shilling (abbreviated as “s”)

5 shillings = 1 crown

20 shillings = 1 pound (abbreviated as “£”)

240 pence = 1 pound

21 shillings = 1 guinea Shilling was an English coin worth one-twentieth of a pound.

In eighteenth-century writing, values of money appear as follows: 7d = seven pence 6/5 = six shillings, five pence 3..4..8 = three pounds, four shillings, eight pence

Have students go through the account books and make graphs of their choice in a shared Google sheet to show purchasing trends. Allow time for students to work in their pairs. Then project some of the graphs in front of the room and have groups talk about their charts.

Review the language arts term infer. Ask students make a list of five inferences made about the slave owner, the slave, and the lives they lead.

Have students write a first person narrative of at least one paragraph using information from the account books and inferring the life of the slave. Use a peer evaluation method to examine the first person narrative.

As students finish, each student can create a fictitious account book using legal paper. Have students set up the accounts as they saw in the primary sources. Use a black pen or for more challenging option create quill pens. Have students fill in the account page complete with pounds, shillings, and pence. Make sure their denominations of money makes sense. Once complete, each student can make a cup of tea. Make sure the water is not too hot. Place the the account book page on a tarp. Use the tea bag to blot over the account page to make it look aged. Let the paper dry in place.

Real world connection:

Using spreadsheets to assist in budgeting and accounting

Interconnected and interdependent economies from around the world

Differentiated Instructional Support/Learning Styles:

Scaffolded graphs/account books/paragraphs available

Pairings with strong and weak students

Small groups - interpersonal learners

ESL - typing info on google docs - translating with google translate for notes

ESL - Spanish Textbook - listening

ESL and G/T - paired together to assist in activity

Graphs- logic learners

Narrative - linguistic learners/intrapersonal learners
Account book - artistic learners/intrapersonal learners

Extension:

Research why Triangular Trade and slavery drove the New England economy
Make a flail for students to thrash wheat by hand
Exchange rates from currency then to now

Homework Options and Home Connection:

Graphs could be completed as homework as could completing the paragraph and or mock account book

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Art - creating the fictitious account book
Economics - basic accounting
LA - first person narrative and public speaking

Materials/Resources Needed:

Kahoot and projector
Online account books
Chromebooks/Google Account
Legal Sized Paper
Black pens and or quills with ink
Tea bags
Warm water in cups
Plastic tarp

Key Vocabulary:

Account books
Slave
Servant
Indenture
Economy
Pound
Shilling
Pence

Technology Connections:

Researching the account books on computer
Creating the digital graph using Google spreadsheets
Keyboarding skills as students complete their paragraph