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## Religion in Colonial America

This sample task contains a set of primary and authentic sources about Puritans and the role religion played in the Puritan society of colonial America.

### Alignment

The questions in this task align to the following social studies grade-level expectations.

- 5.3.4 Compare and contrast religious groups that settled colonial America and examine the role of religion in colonial communities
- 5.3.5 Evaluate the motives that led to the establishment of the thirteen colonies

### Contents

This sample task contains the following sections:

- [Primary and Authentic Sources](#)
- [Assessment Items](#)
- [Extended-Response Task](#)
- [Scoring Rubric](#)
- [Scoring Notes](#)
- [Printable Student Version](#)

### Task Directions

- Teachers may choose to use or modify this sample as part of an instructional lesson or as a formative or summative assessment.
- Teachers should provide students access to the printable student version of the task items, which excludes GLE alignment, answer keys, and scoring information.
- Students should then read or review the sources and answer the questions.
- For additional specifications about the task, please see the [Assessment Guidance](#) for grade 5.

**Primary and Authentic Sources**

Read and study Sources 1 through 4 about religion in Colonial America. As you read, you may take notes in the space next to the sources or on page 5 in this answer document. Then use the sources to answer questions 1 through 6.

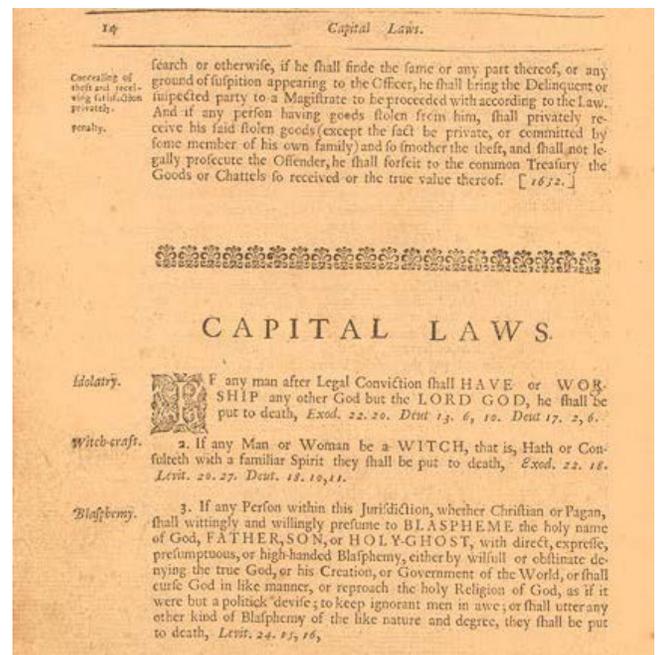
**Source 1:** First Freedom: "[A City Upon a Hill](#)" video

**Source 2:** [Explore More with Facts for Now: Puritans](#)

**Source 3:** The General Laws and Liberties of the Massachusetts Colony

Capital Laws	
Idolatry.	If any man after Legal conviction shall HAVE or WORSHIP any other God but the LORD GOD, he shall be put to death, Exod. 22.20 Deut 13.6, 10. Deut 17.2, 6.
Witch-craft.	If any Man or Woman be a WITCH, that is, Hath or Consulteth with a familiar Spirit they shall be put to death, EXOD. 22.18. Levit. 20.27. Deut. 18.10, 11
Blasphemy.	If any Person within this Jurisdiction, whether Christian or Pagan, shall wittingly and willingly presume to BLASPHEME the holy name of God, FATHER, SON, or HOLY GHOST, with direct expresse, presumptuous, or high-handed blasphemy, either by willful or obstinate denying the true God, or his Creation, or Government of the World, or shall curse God in like manner, or reproach the holy religion of God, as if it were but a politick devise; to keep ignorant men in awe; or shall utter any other kind of Blasphemy of the like nature and degree, they shall be put to death, Levit. 24.15, 16

*The General Laws and Liberties of the Massachusetts Colony: Revised and Reprinted* [left page], Cambridge, Massachusetts: Samuel Green, 1672. [Law Library Rare Book Collection](#), Library of Congress



Source 4: [Mary Dyer biography](#) and [color engraving of Mary Dyer being led to execution](#)



**Item 1: Multiple Choice**

Based on the video in Source 1, which conclusion can **best** be reached?

- A. Puritans came to the Massachusetts Bay Colony to freely practice their religion.
- B. Puritans came to the Massachusetts Bay Colony to control new lands.
- C. Puritans came to the Massachusetts Bay Colony to find new economic opportunities.
- D. Puritans came to the Massachusetts Bay Colony to experience new adventures.

**Item 2: Multiple Choice**

Which statement is a correct interpretation of the Winthrop's reference to "a city upon a hill" in Source 1?

- A. The Massachusetts Bay Colony would be located in an elevated area.
- B. The Massachusetts Bay Colony would be built like a fortress.
- C. The Massachusetts Bay Colony would be an example for others.
- D. The Massachusetts Bay Colony would be the first colony in North America.

**Item 3: Multiple Choice**

Which statement **best** summarizes the beliefs of the Puritans?

- A. The Puritans believed that church sermons should be conducted in formal, elevated language.
- B. The Puritans believed that the teachings of the Bible should shape every aspect of people's lives.
- C. The Puritans believed that religious beliefs should not influence society.
- D. The Puritans believed that beautiful, elaborate churches helped people feel closer to God.

**Item 4: Multiple Choice**

According to Source 4, why was Mary Dyer banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony and later hanged?

- A. She was not a good enough mother by Puritan standards.
- B. She expressed beliefs different than the Puritans.
- C. She was tried and found to be a witch.
- D. She believed Native Americans should convert to Christianity.

**Item 5: Multiple Select**

Based on Source 3, which statement **best** represents the laws of the Massachusetts Bay Colony?

- A. The laws of the Massachusetts Bay Colony were very strict.
- B. The laws of the Massachusetts Bay Colony applied only to women.
- C. The laws of the Massachusetts Bay Colony protected the rights of the colonists.
- D. The laws of the Massachusetts Bay Colony had harsh punishments if broken.
- E. The laws of the Massachusetts Bay Colony reflected Puritan religious beliefs.
- F. The laws of the Massachusetts Bay Colony limited the power of Puritan leaders.

**Item 6: Extended-Response Task**

Write a well-organized response on the lines provided on page 6 in this answer document.

**Why did the Puritans emigrate from England? How did their beliefs impact the political and social decisions they made in the colonies?**

**As you write, follow the directions below.**

- Address all parts of the prompt.
- Include information and examples from your own knowledge of social studies.
- Use evidence from the sources to support your response.
- Follow the steps on the Checklist as you write your response.

Use page 5 in this answer document for notes and planning. Write your **final response** on page 6 and 7 in this answer document.

**Remember: The prewriting activities on page 5 will not be scored. Only your response on pages 6 and 7 will be scored.**

### Scoring Rubric

The response should be scored **holistically** on its adherence to two dimensions: Content and Claims. Each response should be given the score that corresponds to the set of bulleted descriptors that **best** describes the response.

<b>Dimension: Content</b>	
<b>Score</b>	<b>Description</b>
4	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects <b>thorough</b> knowledge of the reasons for the immigration of the Puritans and the impact of the Puritan religion on the political and social decisions they made in the colonies by incorporating ample, focused factual information from prior knowledge and the sources;</li> <li>• Contains accurate understandings with no errors significant enough to detract from the overall content of the response;</li> <li>• Fully addresses all parts of the prompt.</li> </ul>
3	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects <b>general</b> knowledge of the reasons for the immigration of the Puritans and the impact of the Puritan religion on the political and social decisions they made in the colonies by incorporating adequate factual information from prior knowledge and the sources;</li> <li>• Contains mostly accurate understandings with minimal errors that do not substantially detract from the overall content of the response;</li> <li>• Addresses all parts of the prompt.</li> </ul>
2	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects <b>limited</b> knowledge of the reasons for the immigration of the Puritans and the impact of the Puritan religion on the political and social decisions they made in the colonies by incorporating some factual information from prior knowledge and the sources;</li> <li>• Contains some accurate understandings with a few errors that detract from the overall content of the response;</li> <li>• Addresses part of the prompt.</li> </ul>
1	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects <b>minimal</b> knowledge of the reasons for the immigration of the Puritans and the impact of the Puritan religion on the political and social decisions they made in the colonies by incorporating little or no factual information from prior knowledge and the sources;</li> <li>• Contains few accurate understandings with several errors that detract from the overall content of the response;</li> <li>• Minimally addresses part of the prompt.</li> </ul>
0	<p>The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.</p>

Dimension: Claims	
Score	Description
4	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops a <b>valid</b> claim that effectively expresses a solid understanding of the topic;</li> <li>Thoroughly supports the claim with well-chosen evidence from the sources;</li> <li>Provides a logically organized, cohesive, and in-depth explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.</li> </ul>
3	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops a <b>relevant</b> claim that expresses a general understanding of the topic;</li> <li>Supports the claim with sufficient evidence from the sources;</li> <li>Provides an organized explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.</li> </ul>
2	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presents an <b>inadequate</b> claim which expresses a limited understanding of the topic.</li> <li>Includes insufficient support for the claim but does use some evidence from the sources;</li> <li>Provides a weak explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.</li> </ul>
1	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not develop a claim but provides evidence that relates to the topic; <b>OR</b> develops a substantially flawed claim with little or no evidence from the sources;</li> <li>Provides a vague, unclear, or illogical explanation of the connections among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.</li> </ul>
0	The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.

### Scoring Notes for Claims Rubric

A response that develops a **valid** claim expresses a **solid** understanding of the social studies topic. The response is supported by **ample and well-chosen** evidence from the sources. The explanation is logical, organized, and cohesive, as demonstrated by connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. A **valid** claim shows a deep understanding of the complexity of social studies themes that is supported by convincing evidence. The analysis may include the ability to discuss cause-and-effect relationships; analyze the importance of and connection between source documents; classify patterns of continuity and change; evaluate differing perspectives; provide in-depth interpretations of historical events, etc.

A response that develops a **relevant** claim expresses a **general** understanding of the social studies topic. The response is supported by **sufficient** evidence from the sources. The explanation is organized and includes connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place but fails to reach the valid level. A **relevant** claim shows an accurate understanding of social studies themes but is less complex and includes more generalized evidence. The explanation may identify cause-and-effect relationships; describe patterns of continuity or change; recognize perspectives on a single topic or theme; identify the importance of or connection between source documents; provide general interpretations of historical events, etc.

A response that includes an **inadequate** claim expresses a **limited** understanding of the social studies topic and uses insufficient evidence from the sources to develop the claim. The explanation includes weak connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. An **inadequate** claim shows some understanding of social studies themes but is limited in its analysis and evidence. The explanation may include insufficient understanding of cause and effect relationships; little recognition of patterns of continuity or change; limited knowledge of perspectives on a single topic or theme; misconceptions regarding the importance of or connections between source documents; limited interpretation of historical events, etc.

A response that develops a **substantially flawed** claim expresses **little** understanding of the social studies topic. The explanation, if present, may include vague or illogical connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. It fails to reach the inadequate level for a variety of reasons. For example, the response may provide some evidence that relates to the topic, but is ineffective in supporting a claim, if one is made.

### Characteristics of a Strong Response

A strong response is logically organized into several paragraphs. Any errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or capitalization do not interfere with the ability of the reader to understand the ideas presented.

A strong response may develop one or more lines of reasoning to support the claim. Here are some examples.

- Puritans saw the new colony as an opportunity to create a Utopia where they could practice their religion without interference from others. They believed that the structure of the colony should be centered on the Bible. They believed that religion should be at the core of the community. They also believed that the colony should be a model for others around the world. They believed that God was watching them, but they also believed that others around the world were watching them. Because they saw themselves as a model for others and believed that they were doing God's work, their beliefs shaped every aspect of their strict, moral society.
- Puritans sought religious freedom in the colony. Their religious beliefs shaped every aspect of their lives. Despite their quest for religious freedom, they did not allow anyone to go against Puritan beliefs. Laws in their community were based on their religious beliefs, and the punishments for breaking these laws were harsh such as public humiliation, whippings, banishment, and even death.

A strong response shows understanding of the topic by analyzing the required sources and including well-chosen evidence from the sources, such as:

- The Puritans were being persecuted by the Church of England because they did not agree with many of the practices of the Church. To escape persecution in England, thousands of Puritans traveled to the New World to settle. (Source 1)
- Puritans had very strict rules about how to live and attending church; these rules became laws in some of the colonies. The punishment for not following the laws could, in some cases, include banishment or even death. (Source 1 and Source 2)
- Mary Dyer was one woman who was put to death for her beliefs. Mary Dyer was executed in 1660, in Massachusetts, for her conversion to the Quaker religion and her refusal to follow the Puritan beliefs. (Source 3 and Source 4)

A strong response also includes important information beyond what is presented in the sources, such as:

- Describing the role and impact of Puritan leaders, such as John Winthrop. Before they had even landed in Massachusetts Bay, John Winthrop had been elected governor of the colony. Winthrop was a natural leader who had strong ideas about how the colony should operate. Winthrop is known for his sermon known as “A City Upon A Hill.” In this sermon, he told his followers that they needed to follow the laws of God if they wanted their colony to be successful. He believed that if they held to their beliefs they would be a model for nations to strive to become. In order to achieve this, Winthrop didn’t allow people to go against the laws of the colony. Those who did faced harsh punishments.
- Describing the extremely limited role of women in Puritan society. Women were not allowed to participate in town meetings. They were not part of any decision-making in the church. They had very traditional roles of being a wife and mother. Before they were married, they were expected to obey their fathers; after they married, they were expected to obey their husbands. If women stepped outside of their roles, such as Anne Hutchinson and Mary Dryer, they were punished.
- Identifying the extreme punishments that were imposed on people who broke the law. Those who broke the law were seen as a threat to society. Public humiliations were a common punishment; people were placed in the stockades in the public square. They were put on display as a reminder to others of what would happen if they broke the laws. While people were in the stockades, other colonists could yell at them, throw things at them, or spit on them. Public whippings were also a common punishment. People who were considered serious threats to the colony could be banished from the colony or even put to death.
- Describing the Salem Witch Trials as an example of intolerance. The Salem Witch Trials were a series of cases brought before local magistrates in a settlement called Salem in the Massachusetts Bay colony. During this time, approximately 200 were accused of witchcraft and 20 were even put to death. The Puritans’ fear of the workings of the devil caused paranoia. Anyone who spoke out against Puritan beliefs or violated and laws could be labeled as a witch and tried.

**Printable  
Student Version**

**\*Note: Some sources are available only in digital format. A link is provided and will require the use of a computer to view the source.**

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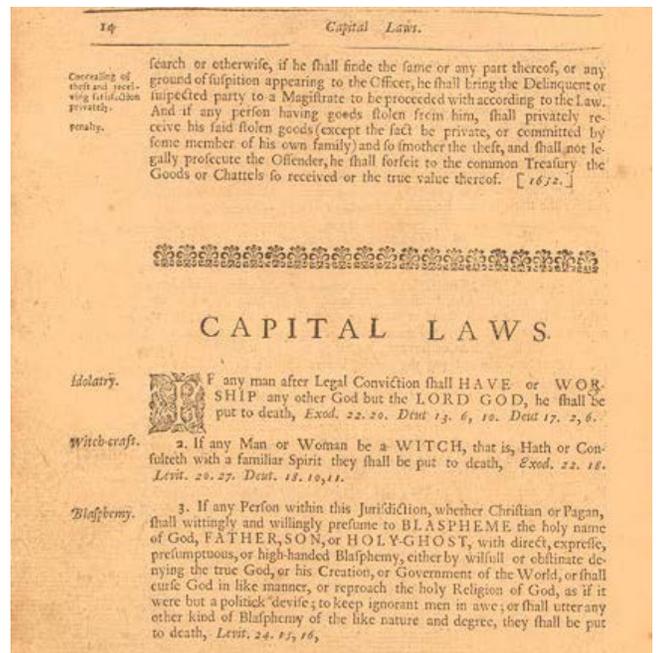
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**Use for notes and planning your response.**

(This page will not be scored.)



