Standard 8.4 Lesson

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8.4 Analyze the reasons for the settlement of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the events and key figures of the colonies, including: non separatists/Puritans, John Winthrop, theocracy, town meetings, Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams (Rhode Island), Thomas Hooker (Connecticut), Salem Witch Trials.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ScZh2-QLOE   Mr. Zoller’s Podcast about the New England Colonies
Read from [www.ducksters.com](http://www.ducksters.com) an overview of the Pilgrims and the Plymouth Colony.


Massachusetts Bay — "The City Upon a Hill"
The New England Pilgrims and Puritans

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ei0YRv57el

Why Did the Puritans Come to New England?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGP_Y12P6pI

The passengers of the Arbella who left England in 1630 with their new charter had a great vision. They were to be an example for the rest of the world in rightful living. Future governor JOHN WINTHROP stated their purpose quite clearly: "We shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us."

The Arbella was one of eleven ships carrying over a thousand Puritans to Massachusetts that year. It was the largest original venture ever attempted in the English New World. The passengers were determined to be a beacon for the rest of Europe, "A Modell of Christian Charity," in the words of the governor.
It could be said that the Puritans set up a **theocracy** in the New England Colonies. The term theocracy signifies belief in governance by divine guidance, a form of regime in which religion or faith plays the dominant role.

With the Puritan migration to **New England** during the 1630s, theocratic governments were established in what became Massachusetts and Connecticut. For the New England Puritans, theocracy was considered the best form of government in a Christian commonwealth because only this type of government acknowledged Christ as a sole ruler over the people.

Puritans believed in **PREDESTINATION**. This doctrine holds that God is all-powerful and all-knowing; therefore, the fate of each individual soul is known to God at birth. Nothing an individual can do or say could change their ultimate fate. Puritans believed that those chosen by God to be saved — the elect — would experience "CONVERSION." In this process, God would reveal to the individual His grace, and the person would know he was saved.
Only the elect could serve as Church members. If a person were truly saved, he would only be capable of behavior endorsed by God. These "living saints" would serve as an example to the rest of the world. During the early years, ministers such as John Cotton carefully screened individuals claiming to have experienced conversion.

The colony needed more than a fervent church to survive. Many DISSENTERS — Christian men and women who were not converted — also lived within the ranks of Massachusetts Bay. Towns such as MARBLEHEAD were founded by non-Puritan settlers. The Puritans allowed this for the sake of commerce. Many skills were necessary for a vibrant economy.

The Puritans

http://www.ducksters.com/history/colonial_america/puritans.php

( Pictured Above: This engraving shows the Harvard campus as it looked during the 18th century.)

An elected legislature was established, echoing the desire for self-government already seen in other English colonies. Although ministers were prohibited from holding political office, many of the most important decisions were made by the clergy. In 1636, HARVARD COLLEGE was instituted for the purpose of training Puritan ministers.
By the end of the 1630s, as part of a "GREAT MIGRATION" of Puritans out of England, nearly 14,000 more Puritan settlers came to Massachusetts, and the colony began to spread. In 1691, Plymouth colony, still without a charter, was absorbed by their expanding neighbor to the West.

The great experiment seemed to be a smashing success for the first few decades. In the end however, worldly concerns led to a decline in religious fervor as the 1600s grew old.

_Puritan Life_

**Pictured Above:** As minister of Boston’s Old North Church, Cotton Mather was a popular voice in Puritan New England. His involvement in the witch trials of the 1680s would bring him even more notoriety.)

New England life seemed to burst with possibilities. The life expectancy of its citizens became longer than that of Old England, and much longer than the Southern English colonies. Children were born at nearly twice the rate in Maryland and Virginia. It is often said that New England invented grandparents, for it was here that people in great numbers first grew old enough to see their children bear children.

Literacy rates were high as well. Massachusetts law required a tax-supported school for every community that could boast 50 or more families. Puritans wanted their children to be able to read the Bible, of course.

Massachusetts Bay Colony was a man’s world. Women did not participate in town meetings and were excluded from decision making in the church. Puritan ministers furthered male supremacy in their writings and sermons. They preached that the soul had two parts, the immortal masculine half, and the mortal feminine half.

Puritan law was extremely strict; men and women were severely punished for a variety of crimes. Even a child could be put to death for cursing his parents.

It was believed that women who were pregnant with a male child had a rosy complexion and that women carrying a female child were pale. Names of women found in census reports of Massachusetts Bay include Patience, Silence, Fear, Prudence, Comfort, Hopestill, and Be Fruitful. This list reflects Puritan views on women quite clearly.

**Women’s roles in the New England Colonies - www.ducksters.com**

http://www.ducksters.com/history/colonial_america/womens_roles.php
Church attendance was mandatory. Those that missed church regularly were subject to a fine. The sermon became a means of addressing town problems or concerns. The church was sometimes patrolled by a man who held a long pole. On one end was a collection of feathers to tickle the chins of old men who fell asleep. On the other was a hard wooden knob to alert children who giggled or slept. Church was serious business indeed.

The Puritans believed they were doing God’s work. Hence, there was little room for compromise. Harsh punishment was inflicted on those who were seen as straying from God’s work. There were cases when individuals of differing faiths were hanged in Boston Common.

Puritans met in their meeting hall for both religious services and town meetings. A town meeting is a form of direct democratic rule, used primarily in portions of the United States – principally in New England – since the 17th century, in which most or all the members of a community come together to legislate policy and budgets for local government.
Adulterers might have been forced to wear a scarlet "A" if they were lucky. At least two known adulterers were executed in Massachusetts Bay Colony. Public whippings were commonplace. The STOCKADE forced the humiliated guilty person to sit in the public square, while onlookers spat or laughed at them. Puritans felt no remorse about administering punishment. They believed in Old Testament methods. Surely God's correction would be far worse to the individual than any earthly penalty.

Contrary to myth, the Puritans did have fun. There were celebrations and festivals. People sang and told stories. Children were allowed to play games with their parents’ permission. Wine and beer drinking were common place. Puritans did not all dress in black as many believe. The fundamental rule was to follow God’s law. Those that did lived in peace in the Bible commonwealth.

**Dissent in Massachusetts Bay**

There was not too much room for religious disagreement in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Puritans defended their DOGMA with uncommon fury. Their devotion to principle was God’s work; to ignore God’s work was unfathomable. When free-thinkers speak their minds in such a society, conflict inevitably results. Such was the case in Massachusetts Bay when Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams spoke their minds.
A Covenant of Courage - Anne Hutchinson

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ve36Isvarg8

ANNE HUTCHINSON was a deeply religious woman. In her understanding of Biblical law, the ministers of Massachusetts had lost their way. She thought the enforcement of proper behavior from church members conflicted with the doctrine of predestination. She asked simply: "If God has predetermined for me salvation or damnation, how could any behavior of mine change my fate?"

Pictured Above: Mary Dyer was the first woman executed for her religious beliefs in Massachusetts Bay Colony.)
This sort of thinking was seen as extremely dangerous. If the public ignored church authority, surely there would be anarchy. The power of the ministers would decrease. Soon over eighty community members were gathering in her parlor to hear her comments on the weekly sermon. Her leadership position as a woman made her seem all the more dangerous to the Puritan order.

The clergy felt that Anne Hutchinson was a threat to the entire Puritan experiment. They decided to arrest her for HERESY. In her trial she argued intelligently with John Winthrop, but the court found her guilty and banished her from Massachusetts Bay in 1637. ROGER WILLIAMS was a similar threat.

The Colony of Rhode Island

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTS66iG-bCQ

(Pictured Above: The ideas of religious freedom and fair dealings with the Native Americans resulted in Roger Williams’ exile from the Massachusetts colony. This 1936 postage stamp commemorates his founding of Rhode Island.)

Two ideas got him into big trouble in Massachusetts Bay. First, he preached separation of church and state. He believed in complete RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, so no single church should be supported by tax dollars. Massachusetts Puritans believed they had the one true faith; therefore such talk was intolerable. Second, Williams claimed taking land from the Native Americans without proper payment was unfair. Massachusetts wasted no time in banishing the minister.

In 1636, he purchased land from the NARRAGANSETT Indians and founded the colony of RHODE ISLAND. Here there would be complete religious freedom. Dissenters from the English New World came here seeking refuge. Anne Hutchinson herself moved to Rhode Island before her fatal relocation to New York.

America has long been a land where people have reserved the right to say, "I disagree." Many early settlers left England in the first place because they disagreed with English practice. Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson were two brave souls who reminded everyone at their own great peril of that most sacred right.
Reaching to Connecticut

( Pictured Above:  Upon his taking the throne, King James II demanded that Connecticut give up the charter granted by Charles II in 1662. But the citizens refused and hid the document in this hollow tree for safe keeping.)

Connecticut Colony

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQNJ-yUGt3k

Despite a few internal problems, Massachusetts Bay Colony was thriving by the mid-1630s. It would only be a matter of time before individuals within the colony would consider expansion.

There were obstacles to consider. Establishing a new colony was never easy. Pequot Indian settlements west of the Connecticut River were an important consideration. Nevertheless, the Puritan experiment pushed forward, creating new colonies in the likeness of Massachusetts Bay.

THOMAS HOOKER was a devout Puritan minister. He had no quarrels with the religious teachings of the church. He did, however, object to linking VOTING RIGHTS with church membership, which had been the practice in Massachusetts Bay.
In 1636, his family led a group of followers west and built a town known as HARTFORD. This would become the center of Connecticut colony. In religious practices CONNECTICUT mirrored Massachusetts Bay. Politically, it allowed more access to non-church members.

In 1639, the citizens of Connecticut enacted the first written CONSTITUTION in the western hemisphere. The FUNDAMENTAL ORDERS OF CONNECTICUT called for an elected governor and a two-house legislature. It served as a model for other colonial charters and even future state constitutions after independence was achieved.

In 1637, under the leadership of JOHN DAVENPORT, a second colony was formed in the Connecticut River Valley, revolved around the port of NEW HAVEN. Unlike the citizens in Hartford, the citizens were very strict about church membership and the political process. They even abolished juries because there was no mention of them in the Bible. Most citizens accused of a crime simply reported to the magistrate for their punishment, without even furnishing a defense. New Haven was merged into its more democratic neighbor by King Charles II in 1662.

Connecticut provides a great example of the strictness of colonial society. Laws based on scripture, called BLUE LAWS, were applied to Connecticut residents. Examples include the death penalty for crimes that seem minor by modern standards. Blue laws condemned to death any citizen who was convicted of blaspheming the name of God or cursing their natural father or mother. These laws were in effect at least as late as 1672 in colonial Connecticut.
Witchcraft in Salem

http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/salem.htm

(Pictured Above: George Jacobs Sr. and his granddaughter Margaret were both accused of witchcraft, but Margaret managed to escape harm by claiming that Grandpa was indeed a witch. He was convicted and hanged in August 1692.)
Salem Witch Trials

**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdX1vK03hRw**

Surely the Devil had come to SALEM in 1692. Young girls screaming and barking like a dog? Strange dances in the woods? This was behavior hardly becoming of virtuous teenage maidens. The town doctor was called onto the scene. After a thorough examination, he concluded quite simply — the girls were bewitched. Now the task was clear. Whomever was responsible for this outrage must be brought to justice.

The ordeal originated in the home of Salem’s REVEREND SAMUEL PARRIS. Parris had a slave from the Caribbean named TITUBA. Several of the town’s teenage girls began to gather in the kitchen with Tituba early in 1692. As winter turned to spring the townspeople were aghast at the behaviors exhibited by Tituba’s young followers. They were believed to have danced a black magic dance in the nearby woods. Several of the girls would fall to the floor and scream hysterically. Soon this behavior began to spread across Salem. Ministers from nearby communities came to Salem to lend their sage advice. The talk turned to identifying the parties responsible for this mess.

Puritans believed that to become bewitched a WITCH must draw an individual under a spell. The girls could not have possibly brought this condition onto themselves. Soon they were questioned and forced to name their tormentors. Three townspeople, including Tituba, were named as witches. The famous Salem witchcraft trials began as the girls began to name more and more community members.

Evidence admitted in such trials was of five types. First, the accused might be asked to pass a test, like reciting the Lord’s Prayer. This seems simple enough. But the young girls who attended the trial were known to scream and writhe on the floor in the middle of the test. It is easy to understand why some could not pass.

Second, physical evidence was considered. Any birthmarks, warts, moles, or other blemishes were seen as possible portals through which SATAN could enter a body.

Witness testimony was a third consideration. Anyone who could attribute their misfortune to the SORCERY of an accused person might help get a conviction.

Fourth was spectral evidence. Puritans believed that Satan could not take the form of any unwilling person. Therefore, if anyone saw a ghost or spirit in the form of the accused, the person in question must be a witch.
What Caused the Salem Witch Trials?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MmV42tUjfs
Last was the CONFESSION. Confession seems foolhardy to a defendant who is certain of his or her innocence. In many cases, it was the only way out. A confessor would tearfully throw himself or herself on the mercy of the town and court and promise repentance. None of the confessors were executed. Part of repentance might of course include helping to convict others.

As 1692 passed into 1693, the hysteria began to lose steam. The governor of the colony, upon hearing that his own wife was accused of witchcraft ordered an end to the trials. However, 20 people and 2 dogs were executed for the crime of witchcraft in Salem. One person was pressed to death under a pile of stones for refusing to testify.

No one knows the truth behind what happened in Salem. Once witchcraft is ruled out, other important factors come to light. Salem had suffered greatly in recent years from Indian attacks. As the town became more populated, land became harder and harder to acquire. A SMALLPOX epidemic had broken out at the beginning of the decade. Massachusetts was experiencing some of the worst winters in memory. The motives of the young girls themselves
can be questioned. In a society where women had no power, particularly young women, is it not understandable how a few adolescent girls, drunk with unforeseen attention, allowed their imaginations to run wild? Historians make educated guesses, but the real answers lie with the ages.

The following article explains an overview of the Salem Witch Trials.

http://www.ducksters.com/history/colonial_america/salem_witch_trials.php