Standard 8.12 Lesson

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8.12 Compare and contrast the day-to-day colonial life for men, women, and children in different regions and of different ethnicities, including the system of indentured servitude, as well as their connection to the land.

The following link is from the Colonial Williamsburg site. It explains the differences in the social classes of the colonies.

http://www.history.org/Almanack/life/classes.cfm

The following link provides extensive information with different links to life in Colonial America.


Day to day colonial life for men, women and children/ Different regions ethnicities

Life in colonial times was much different than today. The whole family must help with chores, farming and household duties for the family to survive. Many families had extended family members living with them; a family might include parents and children and grandparents or maybe even aunts, uncles and cousins. All were expected to help with typical chores such as gardening or farming, feeding animals, planting and harvesting crops.
Many homes only had a couple of rooms and maybe a loft. The kitchen was generally in the main room. Generally there was also a fireplace, so family members must help keep wood chopped for the fire and the stove.

The father was the head authority of the family and took care of the family finances. Besides farming he might have a trade such as a: tanner, carpenter, blacksmith, shoemaker or furniture maker. The men were allowed to vote so he would represent the family in that capacity too.

Women had a different role from men. She might make soap or take in sewing. She was responsible for the care of the children and the cooking. She did the laundry and in many cases sewed clothes, by hand, for the family. Her
outside chores might include taking care of the animals, milking cows, collecting eggs and preserving food for the winter months. She was expected to support her husband in his decisions.

(Pictured Above: Most colonial women would not own a gown as fancy as this, but if they did, it might be made by a professional seamstress.)

(Pictured Above: Typical colonial women attire.)

Women’s roles varied depending on where they lived. Women in cities might have a job, whereas women out on the frontier might work right beside their husbands plowing or planting. If a family had money they might have servants to help with the chores. Women did not have a say in government as they were not allowed to vote at this time.

Colonial Life in Williamsburg, VA

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCU_jxgZ1B0&index=13&list=PLI0KxqyjFmfrkPlxy53A0aRTMZpId9mrN
Colonial children

Colonial children were expected to help with chores as soon as they were old enough. Younger children might help with watering the garden or carrying wood, while older children might help with bigger chores. Young boys might work in the fields right beside their fathers, while older girls would work in the kitchen and learn how to care for children and run a household. Some young boys might learn a trade, such as printing, blacksmith, or even surveying by being an apprentice. An apprentice would learn a trade by working beside someone who knows the trade. They would live with the person teaching them for a period of time until they could work independently.

Being a Child in Colonial Days

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVxad8R4Nig

Colonial children did play many games that children play today. Games such as hopscotch, marbles and leapfrog helped pass away idle time. Girls might pass the time making homemade dolls. Wealthier families had toys brought over from Europe.

African Americans

Many African Americans were not free so they were never considered part of the colonial society. A few African Americans that were free were allowed to own land, but many of them lost this privilege when slavery increased. African Americans that were free were still not allowed to vote or have a say in government.
(Pictured Above: Colonial dolls made from corn husks)

(Pictured Above: Colonial game of marbles)

Indentured Servitude - Indentured Servants

Mr. Zoller’s Indentured Servants Podcast

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Il7_0dPzGiE

(Pictured Above: This picture, Industry and Idleness, shows 2 apprentices starting in identical circumstances, one is the industrious Francis Goodchild and the other is the unsuccessful Thomas Idlefrom.)
The growth of tobacco, rice, and indigo and the plantation economy created a tremendous need for labor in Southern English America. Without the aid of modern machinery, human sweat and blood was necessary for the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of these cash crops. While slaves existed in the English colonies throughout the 1600s, indentured servitude was the method of choice employed by many planters before the 1680s. This system provided incentives for both the master and servant to increase the working population of the Chesapeake colonies.

Virginia and Maryland operated under what was known as the "HEADRIGHT SYSTEM." The leaders of each colony knew that labor was essential for economic survival, so they provided incentives for planters to import workers. For each laborer brought across the Atlantic, the master was rewarded with 50 acres of land. This system was used by wealthy plantation aristocrats to increase their land holdings dramatically. In addition, of course, they received the services of the workers for the duration of the indenture.
This system seemed to benefit the servant as well. Each INDENTURED SERVANT would have their fare across the Atlantic paid in full by their master. A contract was written that stipulated the length of service — typically five years. The servant would be supplied room and board while working in the master’s fields. Upon completion of the contract, the servant would receive "freedom dues," a pre-arranged termination bonus. This might include land, money, a gun, clothes or food. On the surface it seemed like a terrific way for the luckless English poor to make their way to prosperity in a new land. Beneath the surface, this was not often the case.

Only about 40 percent of indentured servants lived to complete the terms of their contracts. Female servants were often the subject of harassment from their masters. A woman who became pregnant while a servant often had years tacked on to the end of her service time. Early in the century, some servants were able to gain their own land as free men. But by 1660, much of the best land was claimed by the large landowners. The former servants were pushed westward, where the mountainous land was less suited for farming and the threat from Indians constant. A class of angry, impoverished pioneer farmers began to emerge as the 1600s grew old. After BACON’S REBELLION in 1676, planters began to prefer permanent African slavery to the headright system that had previously enabled them to prosper.