

Life in Colonial Boston by Jennifer Blizin Gillis. Chicago: Heinemann Library, 2003. ISBN 140344284-3

Literature Annotation: This book describes life in colonial Boston, Massachusetts from 1760-1773. The drawings and colored photos give a glimpse into the life of people during this time. It shows some clothes they wore, food they ate, and types of homes common to the colony.

Grade Level: Grade 5

Duration: 1 class period or 50 minutes

Economic Concepts: Production and Specialized work; Scarcity and Decision-making; Government and Economic Systems

Maryland State Curriculum

Economics Standard: Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.

- 4.A.2.a. Describe how limited resources and unlimited economic wants caused colonists to choose certain goods and services (Grade 5)
- 4.A.2.b. Describe how available resources affected specialization and trade (Grade 5)
- 4.B.1.a. Identify examples of tradition, such as the economic roles of men and women (Grade 5)
- 4.A.4.a. Analyze examples of regional specialization and how it contributed to economic growth through the colonies (Grade 5)
- 4.B.1.c. Summarize a market economy and give examples of how the colonial economy exhibited these characteristics such as private ownership and consumer choice (Grade 5)

College and Career Ready Standards for Reading Informational Texts

- RI1** Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RI2** Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.
- RI3** Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical text based on specific information in the text.
- RI4** Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 5 topic.

Lesson Objectives: Students will...

- analyze how economic resources were used to satisfy economic wants in colonial Boston.
- describe how available natural, capital, and human resources affected specialization and trade in colonial Boston.
- provide examples of tradition, such as the economic roles of men and women in colonial Boston.

Economic Vocabulary

Production: the act of creating goods and services by combining economic resources.

economic resources: the natural, human, and capital resources that are used to produce goods and services: also call factors of production.

natural resources: the renewable, and nonrenewable gifts of nature that can be used to produce goods and services, including but not limited to land, water, animals, minerals, tress, climate, soil, fire, seeds, grain and fruits.

human resources: the health, strength, talents, education and skills that humans can use to produce goods and services.

capital resources: the goods that are manufactured and constructed by people and used to produce other goods and services, including but not limited to factories, warehouses, roads, bridges, machinery, ports, dams, and tools. (money is not a capital resource)

specialized work: the narrower range of defined skills or labor used to produce a part of a product; involves the division of tasks and dependence on other workers to complete the production of the good or service.

Teacher Materials

- Transparencies of Resource 1: *Life in Colonial Boston*

Materials for each student

- One copy of *Life in Colonial Boston* by Jennifer Blizin Gillis
- One copy of Resource 1: *Life in Colonial Boston*
- One copy of Resource 2: *Economic Resources in Colonial Boston*

Development

1. On a world map have students locate Boston, Massachusetts of the colonies. Then have them locate London, England (England is part of Great Britain). Ask students how long they thought it would take to sail from London to Boston (about two months, depending on the weather).
2. Discuss the types of trade that might have occurred between the people of Boston and London (natural resources like wood, iron ore, and grain from the colonies, and manufactured goods such as cloth and furniture, and exotic items like silk, sugar, and tea).
3. Have students look at the time line and map on pp. 4-5 of *Life in Colonial Boston*. Discuss the importance of Boston as a port in the New England colonies. Have students read p. 4 of the text. Have students note that in 1686 the colony became a royal colony and that the King sent a royal governor to govern it. (This fact is not on the timeline.)

4. If needed, review economic vocabulary terms, producer, economic resources, natural resources, capital resources, and human resources. Have students give some examples of each term. For example, a producer is a human resource and an example might be a shipbuilder or a rope maker, a natural resource would be lumber for the ship or hemp fibers for rope, capital resources would be tools like saws or knives.
5. Display a transparency of “Life in Colonial Boston,” Resource 1, p. 1. Preview the information needed to complete Part A.
6. Have students read pp. 6-7 and complete Part A of “Life in Colonial Boston,” Resource Sheet 1, p. 1. After students have completed Part A, discuss the types of goods that were being traded and the economic resources that were needed to produce these goods. Ask students if other places in the colonies would have the same goods to trade. Why or why not?
7. Review the economic term **specialized work**. Discuss how workers have become more and more specialized, and that one person does not usually do all the work to build a house, or make a car. In the colonial time, workers also specialized in a few skilled areas. As more and more people moved to the colonies, families no longer had to make or do everything themselves. They could specialize in a certain product and then trade their product with other people who wanted the good or service that they had.
8. Have students preview the information needed to complete Part B of “Life in Colonial Boston,” Resource 1, p. 2. Then have students read about Jobs, pp. 10-11 in the book to complete Part B on specialized workers and craftspeople. After completing this section, have students discuss some of the specialized jobs that were done by women and the specialized jobs of men. Explain that this is an example of tradition in an economic system, and that there were certain jobs men specialized in and others that were for women.
9. Discuss the roles of apprentices and indentured servants in the business. Have students read p. 15 about a craftsman teaching the apprentices to read, write, and do arithmetic. Have students discuss why it would be important for the apprentices to learn to these skills.

Assessment:

Have students complete “Economic Resources in Colonial Boston,” Resource Sheet 2.

Additional Activities and Resources: Revolutionary War Period:

- 4.A.2.c. Analyze how changing from a British colony to an independent nation affected economic resources, production, and economic wants. (Grade 5)

Objective: Students will analyze the effects of the British taxes on the available goods and services in colonial Boston.

Activities

1. When studying the Revolutionary War period, have students read pp. 16-29. Discuss the changes that are occurring in Boston as the colonies move away from Great Britain to independence.
2. On “Limited Resources Cause People to Make Choices,” Resource 3. Have students list some of the goods and services that were available before the taxes, and then they cross out the products that were no longer available.

Life in Colonial Boston

Part A: Busy Port

1. List some of the goods that were traded between Boston and England.

Exports to Great Britain	Imports to Boston

2. On the chart below, list some economic resources needed to produce the goods that were being exported through the port of Boston.

Natural Resources	Capital Resources

3. _____ had to pay _____ as a tax to _____ for goods transported through the harbor.

4. One way to avoid paying taxes was to _____.

5. Stores along the harbor sold _____, _____, _____, and _____.

6. The people of Boston had to obey the British officials because _____.

Life in Colonial Boston: Answer Key

Part A: Busy Port

1. List some of the goods that were traded between Boston and England.

Exports to Great Britain	Imports to Boston
Lumber Dried fish Dried beef	Silk stockings Candlesticks Table silver Razors Eyeglasses cookbooks

2. On the chart below, list some economic resources needed to produce the goods that were being exported through the port of Boston.

Natural Resources	Capital Resources
<i>Possible answers include:</i> Wood/trees Fish Cattle for beef meat Water/ocean/river Soil/land Horses to pull wagons	<i>Possible answers include:</i> Saws Nets Fishing equipment Ships/boats Wagons ropes

3. **Colonists** had to pay gold as a tax to Great Britain for goods transported through the harbor.
4. One way to avoid paying taxes was to smuggle and secretly ship goods to other countries.
5. Stores along the harbor sold rope, candles, lanterns, and other goods needed for ocean voyages.
6. The people of Boston had to obey the British officials because they were a royal colony.

Part B: Specialized Work

1. Two very important craftspeople in the colonies who were specialized workers were the barrel maker and the tinsmith.

2. List some other specialized workers in the colonies.

Carpenters

Furniture makers

Cabinetmakers

Papermakers

Printers

Bricklayers

Builders

Silversmith

Printer

Goldsmith

Tavernkeeper

Dressmaker

Hatmaker

3. Circle the specialized jobs that were usually done by a woman.

Tavernkeeper

Dressmaker

Hatmaker

4. It usually took more than one person to produce a product, so craftspeople also had other workers who helped them. Name two of these other human resources.

apprentices and indentured servants.

Economic Resources in Colonial Boston

Word Box				
sailing	taxed	hunting	United States	servants
trees	beef	Great Britain	apprentices	silversmith
barrel maker	fish	dressmaker	smuggled	whales

1. List 3 natural resources that colonial craftspeople used to produce goods or services in colonial Boston.

2. Great Britain _____ all goods transported through Boston Harbor.

3. To avoid paying gold to Great Britain, many merchants _____.

4. Shops along the harbor sold goods needed for _____.

5. One very important craftspeople in the colony was the _____.

6. Colonial Boston traded with _____.

7. Craftspeople had to teach _____ how to read and write and do arithmetic.

8. Some women were specialized workers as a _____.

9. On the lines below, explain how colonists depended on each other to meet their economic wants.

Economic Resources in Colonial Boston: Answer Key

Word Box				
sailing	taxed	hunting	United States	servants
trees	beef	Great Britain	apprentices	silversmith
barrel maker	fish	dressmaker	smuggled	whales

1. List 3 natural resources that colonial craftspeople used to produce goods or services in colonial Boston.

fish trees beef

2. Great Britain taxed all goods transported through Boston Harbor.
3. To avoid paying gold to Great Britain, many merchants smuggled.
4. Shops along the harbor sold goods needed for sailing.
5. One very important craftspeople in the colony was the barrel maker.
6. Colonial Boston traded with Great Britain.
7. Craftspeople had to teach apprentices how to read and write and do arithmetic.
8. Some women were specialized workers as a dressmaker.
9. On the lines below, explain how colonists depended on each other to meet their economic wants.

Possible answers include:

- *colonists were specialized workers and had to depend on other specialized workers to make goods or perform services that they wanted*
- *specialized workers traded their goods and services*
- *trading their products allowed them to meet the economic wants of their families*

Limited Resources Cause People to Make Choices: Answer Key

Goods and Services Before the Taxes	
wealthy merchants	craftspeople and poor people
<p>latest fashions from Great Britain expensive cloth from other countries silver buttons and buckles lace cloth in bright colors like red and blue</p> <p>food from Britain and other countries chocolate, lemons, almonds, raisins, olives tea,</p> <p>homes made with brick and stone clear glass windows</p>	<p>local clothing homespun cloth woven from plant fibers dyed with nutshells or plants buckles and buttons carved from wood</p> <p>local foods molasses, maple sugar, apple butter, pickles, Johnny cakes</p> <p>wooden homes</p>

Explain how the British taxation laws limited resources and caused the people of colonial Boston to make choices.

Some possible explanations include:

When the British taxed tea, people had to decide whether they would pay the tax and buy tea or not drink tea. When the port was closed and there was no tea, then the people had to find other things to drink instead of tea.

When the British closed the port and the wealthy could not buy silk and expensive cloth from England. The people had to make homespun cloth or buy homespun cloth from local craftspeople.