



Early Colonial American Gender Roles

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Subject: History

Topic: Integrated

Grade Levels: Elementary; grade 5

Overview

This lesson seeks to introduce students to gender roles, stereotypes and family roles in pre-colonial and early colonial time periods. Students will also explore current gender systems and examine how gender roles have changed over time.

Time: 50 minutes

Recommended pre-lesson: To allow students to better understand the term “gender roles”

<https://www.common sense.org/education/system/files/uploads/classroom-curriculum/6-8-unit2-genderstereotypesonline.pdf?x=1>

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- Become familiar with the terms *gender roles*, *gender stereotypes*, and *family roles*
- Examine pre-colonial, and early colonial gender systems and explore similarities and differences with in them
- Discuss current gender systems and how they think they will change in the future

Essential Questions:

What is gender? What are gender roles?

How do gender and family roles change over time? How does society influence gender roles?

Standards:

CCSS WS 5.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS WS 5.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly

HSS 5.1. Students describe the major pre-Columbian settlements, including the cliff dwellers and pueblo people of the desert Southwest, the American Indians of the Pacific Northwest, the nomadic nations of the Great Plains, and the woodland peoples east of the Mississippi River.

HSS 5.4. Students understand the political, religious, social, and economic institutions that evolved in the colonial era.

Vocabulary:

Stereotypes: an often unfair and untrue belief that many people have about all people or things with a particular characteristic

Pre-colonial: existing before colonial rule - before Europeans came to this land

Indigenous: living or existing naturally in a particular region - native to a place

Colony: a group of people who live in a distant territory under the control of another nation

Patriarchy: a family, group, or government controlled by a man or a group of men

Gender: how you feel - your internal felt sense of being a girl, boy, both or neither

Gender roles: a set of social beliefs or expectations about how men/boys or women/girls should behave

Teacher Background: Teacher must have an understanding of gender roles throughout American history and how they have influenced our culture today. Teacher must understand that gender expectations affects all of their students.

Materials:

- Projector
- Computer
- Storyboard [worksheet](#)
- Colored pencils/crayons

Instruction:

1. Icebreaker questions (5 minutes)
 - a. Using the projector introduce the topic on “Early American Gender Roles” by opening up the [slideshow](#) and asking the class primer questions (on the first slide). Allow students to answer, and debate. Come up with basic definitions of gender and gender roles, write on whiteboard.
2. Powerpoint (20 minutes)
 - a. The teacher will show the Early American Gender Roles PowerPoint. During the presentation the teacher can ask general questions about the time period to gauge interest and see where students are.

- i. Examples are “where did colonists come from?” , “why did they come to the Americas?” , “what was life like for these early colonists?”
3. Storyboard Activity (15 minutes)
 - a. Have students count off by three until every student has a number. Group 1 will be assigned Virginia Powhatan Tribe, Group 2 will be assigned Virginia Algonquian Tribe, and Group 3 will be assigned Early English Colonies.
 - b. Hand out a storyboard worksheet (see Materials) to each student, and let them know that they should use crayons/colored pencils to draw and make a short story about a day in the life of either a man or woman in the society that they are assigned to. Ask them to think about these questions while making their stories:
 - i. How did this group of people think about gender?
 - ii. What was expected of men? What was expected of women?
4. Jigsaw Activity (10 minutes)
 - a. Have students “jigsaw” into groups of three. Each group of three should have one person from each group. Have students share their day in the life stories with their group members.
 - b. After students have finished sharing their stories, they should discuss in their small groups how their stories were different and similar from each others’, and how gender is different today. Utilize the slides to project the questions:
 - i. How were your stories different? How were they similar?
 - ii. What are some gender stereotypes we see today?
 - iii. What does a family look like today?
 - iv. How are these different than early Colonial America?
 - v. Why do gender roles change?

Relevant Resources:

“Gender and Sexuality in Colonial America.” *The Columbian Exchange*, <http://public.gettysburg.edu/~tshannon/341/sites/Gender%20and%20Sexuality/Gender%20Roles.htm>

Kenduck, Michael. “Anne Hutchinson.” *YouTube*, YouTube, 7 Jan. 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0zEEMMxQT8>

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