



Lesson 11: Massachusetts Bay and Mock Trial of Mary Dyer

Unit 5
Grade 4



In this lesson, you will engage in a scripted mock trial to learn about a famous woman in American history.

You will also draw conclusions about her and the people (Puritans) who settled the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Resource 1: Inferring Vocabulary in Context

Let's read this paragraph and try to determine the meaning of the word **hypocrite** from the context of the paragraph.

Activity: "ReaDiWrite"

1. **Read** the paragraph below.
2. **Discuss** what you think the definition of hypocrite is.
3. **Write** your definition in the space below.

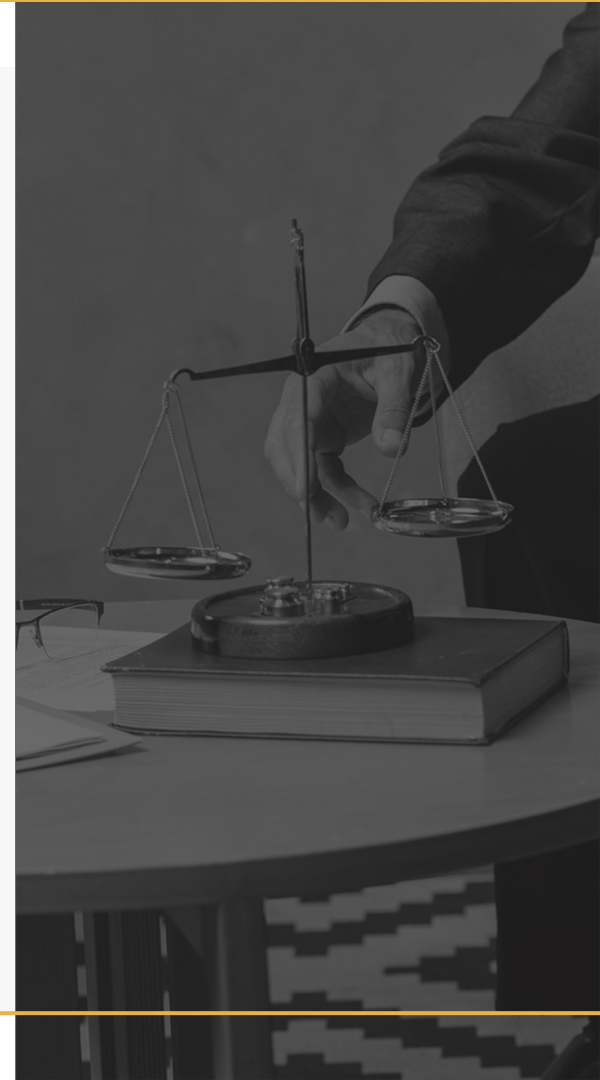
Pat tells everyone that they should be honest. He is a hypocrite. Pat just told his mother that he did his homework, but he did not.

Your Definition of Hypocrite

Hypocrite - a person who does the opposite of what (contradicts) he or she believes

Essential Question:

Were the Puritans of
Massachusetts Bay
hypocrites?



Why Did Puritans Come to America?

Many people left England and came to America to practice their religion freely. People who belonged to the Puritan religion did this.

The Puritans did not think that the Church of England was holy enough. They wanted to “purify” it - make it holier. The name “Puritan” came from the word “purify.”

In England, there was one church that everyone was supposed to belong to. It was the Church of England. The Puritans organized their own religion and criticized the Church of England. As a result, Puritans were insulted, put in jail, and beaten.

In the 1630s, Puritans began leaving England to set up a new colony called Massachusetts Bay. They wanted to practice their religion free from any punishments. Their leader John Winthrop set a goal for the Puritans. That goal was to create “a city upon a hill” - something like a utopia. It would be a community that followed the Bible so closely that all others would look up to that “city.” It would be a holy example for others to admire and follow.



Highlight or underline the sentence that best explains why the Puritans left England.

What Happened When Mary Dyer Traveled to England?

In 1652, Mary Dyer and her husband William traveled to England. Mary met people who belonged to the Quaker religion. Mary came to believe in the ideas of the Quakers and joined that religion.

Puritan leaders disliked the Quakers more than any other religious group. Puritans believed that the only way that a person could know what God wanted people to do was to read the Bible. The Puritans also believed that trained ministers were needed to help people understand the Bible. The Quakers believed that God spoke directly to the hearts of every person. Ministers were not needed.

Since God spoke to every person's heart, Quakers believed that what their conscience told them was right was more important than the laws of a community. So, Quakers could challenge Puritan laws if their conscience told them that the laws were bad.

Puritans considered Quakers to be a real danger to Massachusetts Bay and their "city upon a hill." They were convinced that God would punish the people of Massachusetts Bay.



Highlight or underline the sentence that best explains what Mary Dyer did when she traveled to England.

How Did the Puritans React to Quakers in Massachusetts Bay?

In 1656, lawmakers in Massachusetts Bay passed a law that said any Quaker who entered Massachusetts Bay would be whipped and put in jail until they were removed from the colony. In July 1657, Mary Dyer and another woman arrived in Massachusetts Bay on their way to Rhode Island. Mary did not know about the new law. So, the authorities put Mary in jail until her husband came and took her out of Massachusetts Bay.



Highlight or underline a part of a sentence that best explains what would happen to a Quaker who entered Massachusetts Bay.

Did the Puritan Laws Stop the Quakers?

The Puritans hoped that their new law would stop Quakers from coming to Massachusetts Bay. But some Quakers continued to come to Massachusetts Bay to spread their religious ideas. So, Massachusetts Bay passed a second law in 1657. Under the new law, Quakers who returned to Massachusetts Bay a second time would have their right ear cut off. If they came back a third time, they would have a hole burned in their tongues!

The Puritan leaders became very angry when some Quakers still came back to Massachusetts Bay. So, the Puritans in Massachusetts Bay passed another law. Quakers who returned to Massachusetts Bay after being kicked out would be put to death.



Highlight or underline one sentence that describes how the laws of Massachusetts Bay changed over time.

What Did Mary Dyer Do?

Mary Dyer returned to Massachusetts Bay with two Quaker men to protest the new law. On October 27, 1659 Mary and the two men were taken to Boston to be put to death. The two men were killed first. The authorities wanted Mary to see how serious they were.

Mary's husband William pleaded with the authorities to let his wife go. He was a Puritan, and he knew the Governor well. He promised to take Mary out of Massachusetts Bay and never return if they let her go.

At the last minute, just before they were going to kill Mary, the authorities told Mary that she would not be executed if she returned to Rhode Island within 48 hours. William and Mary returned to Rhode Island.



Highlight or underline the sentence that supports the idea that the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay were good people.

Mary's Conscience Speaks to Her

Over the winter, Mary thought a lot about the cruel laws that punished Quakers in Massachusetts Bay. Without telling her family, she returned to Massachusetts Bay in the spring of 1660 to protest those laws. Authorities in Massachusetts Bay were fed up, and arrested Mary. She will now stand trial for breaking the Massachusetts "Law for the Protection of the Bay Colony" which states that Quakers who are found guilty of returning to Massachusetts Bay after being banished (kicked out) shall be executed (i.e., put to death).



Highlight or underline the sentence that best explains a reason why Mary Dyer would be put on trial.

How Did Puritans Treat People with Other Religious Beliefs?

People in Massachusetts Bay who questioned or criticized the Puritans were viewed as a threat to their efforts to create this holy “city upon a hill.” One big reason was because they believed that God would punish the entire Puritan community if it appeared that the Puritans stopped being a holy city upon a hill.

People like Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson were forced to leave Massachusetts Bay because they questioned the teachings of the Puritan religion. They set up a new colony where people had more religious freedom. That new colony was Rhode Island.

At the meeting where officials from Massachusetts Bay kicked Anne Hutchinson out of Massachusetts Bay, a woman named Mary Dyer showed support for Anne. Mary got up out of her seat, took Anne Hutchinson by the hand, and walked her out of the building. This upset the authorities in Massachusetts Bay.



Highlight or underline the sentence that best explains why people like Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson were forced to leave the Massachusetts Bay colony.

Show me what you know

Resource 3: Checks for Understanding

1- Why was Mary Dyer kicked out of Massachusetts Bay? [*cause*]

- a. because she became a Quaker
- b. because she traveled to England
- c. because she supported Anne Hutchinson
- d. because she wanted to create a "city upon a hill"

2- What did the Puritans believe would happen if people in Massachusetts Bay did not follow the Puritan religion? [*effect*]

- a. Puritans would be whipped
- b. Puritans would be punished by God
- c. Puritans would be forced to return to England
- d. Puritans would be forced to build a city on a hill

3- Which of the following best describes how the laws of Massachusetts Bay *changed over time*?

- a. they treated Quakers more fairly
- b. they punished Quakers more cruelly
- c. they lowered the fines that Quakers had to pay
- d. they allowed Quakers to return to Massachusetts Bay to visit their families

4- Look at the order in which the events in the story of Mary Dyer appear in Columns A, B, and C. If you read them from top to bottom, which one is in correct *chronological* order?

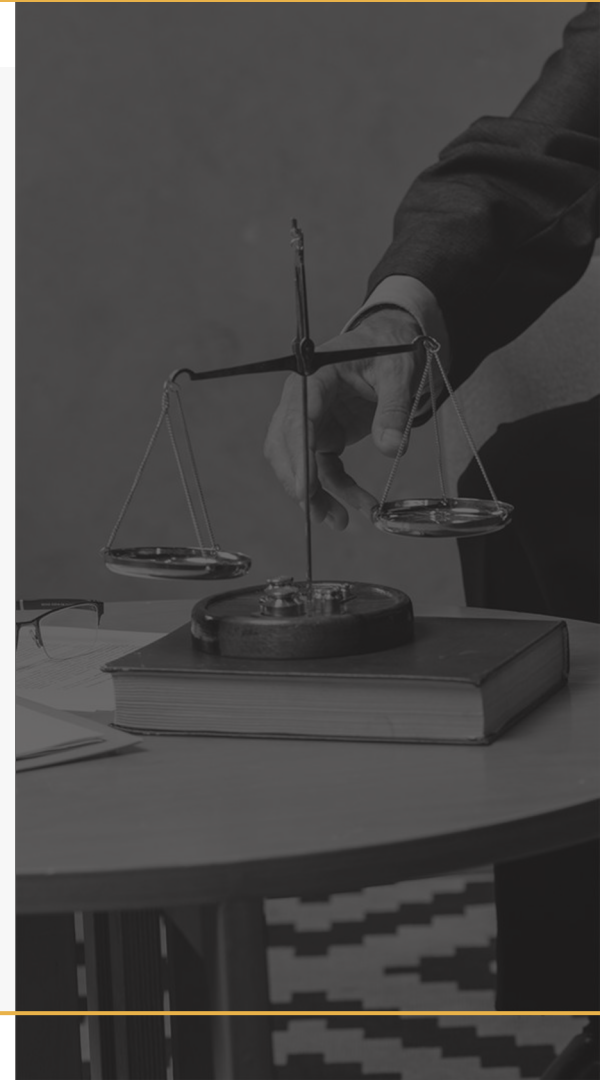
- a. Column A
- b. Column B
- c. Column C

Column A	Column B	Column C
-Mary Dyer traveled to England	-Mary Dyer became a Quaker	-Puritans came to Massachusetts Bay
-Puritans punished Mary Dyer	-Puritans punished Mary Dyer	-Mary Dyer traveled to England
-Mary Dyer became a Quaker	-Puritans came to Massachusetts Bay	-Mary Dyer became a Quaker
-Puritans came to Massachusetts Bay	-Mary Dyer traveled to England	-Puritans punished Mary Dyer

Mock Trial of Mary Dyer

The Charge:

Mary Dyer stands accused of violating the Massachusetts “Law for the Protection of the Bay Colony” (1657). This law states that Quakers who return to Massachusetts Bay after being banished shall be executed.



Opening Statements			
First Name	Last Name	Prosecution or Defense	Role
		Prosecution	Opening statement for prosecution
		Defense	Opening statement for defense
Prosecution Presents it Case			
		Prosecution	direct examination of Governor John Winthrop
		Defense	cross examines Gov. John Winthrop
		Prosecution	direct examination of Rev. Nathaniel Ward
		Defense	cross examines Rev. Nathaniel Ward

Prosecution Rests

Defense Presents its Case

		Prosecution	direct examination of Anne Hutchinson
		Defense	cross examines Anne Hutchinson
		Prosecution	direct examination of William Dyer
		Defense	cross examines William Dyer
		Prosecution	direct examination of Mary Dyer
		Defense	cross examines Mary Dyer
		Witness Prosecution	John Winthrop
		Witness Prosecution	Nathaniel Ward
		Witness Defense	William Dyer
		Witness Defense	Anne Hutchinson
		Witness Defense	Mary Dyer

**Defense Rests
Closing Statements**

		Defense	Closing Statement Defense
		Prosecution	Closing Statement Prosecution
		Bailiff	

Jurors Deliberate

		Juror	
		Juror	
		Juror	
		Juror	
		Juror	

Verdict Announced

Steps in a Mock Trial

1. Bailiff Opens the Trial – “All rise, the Superior Court of Massachusetts Bay is now in session. The sometimes Honorable Judge_____is now in session. God save the King!
2. Judge Presents an Overview of the Case
3. Opening Statement- Prosecution. Briefly summarize the facts that are favorable to your side, explain the important evidence that your side will present, and ask the jury to return the verdict that you are seeking.
4. Opening Statement- Defense. Briefly summarize the facts that are favorable to your side, explain the important evidence that your side will present, and ask the jury to return the verdict that you are seeking.
5. Prosecution Calls Its Witnesses/Defenses Cross-examines each one.
6. Prosecution Rests: after it has called all of its witnesses.
7. Defense calls its witnesses/prosecution cross-examines each one.
8. Defense Rests: after it has called all of its witnesses.
9. Closing Statements- Prosecution then Defense. Prosecution may rebut. Review the evidence that was favorable to your side, remind the jury of the law or the reason why it should not be enforced (“send a message”), and ask them to return a favorable verdict.
10. Jury deliberates and the verdict is announced (Sentencing if necessary).





In this lesson, you will engage in a scripted mock trial to learn about a famous woman in American history.

You will also draw conclusions about her and the people (Puritans) who settled the Massachusetts Bay Colony.



Preparing and Rehearsing

Conducting the Mock Trial

Resource 4

Pages 4-13



Mock Trial Scripts

Direct Examination of Prosecution Witness #1: John Winthrop

Attorney: The prosecution calls John Winthrop to the stand.

Bailiff: John Winthrop, please take the stand. Do you promise to say what you are supposed to say for this mock trial?

Witness: I do.

Attorney: Please state your full name for the court.

Witness: My name is John Winthrop. I am the Governor of Massachusetts Bay.

Attorney: Mr. Winthrop, why did the Puritans come to Massachusetts Bay?

Witness: We came to create a "city upon a hill." It would be a colony where everyone followed what is written in the Bible.

Attorney: What do you think would happen to Massachusetts Bay if people did not follow the Puritan religion's ideas?

Witness: God would punish us.

Attorney: How would God punish you?

Witness: He might cause many of us to become sick. Or, He might ruin our crops. There are many ways God might punish us.

Attorney: Why did you pass the laws that punish Quakers?

Witness: Because the Quakers do not share our religious beliefs. And they come to Massachusetts Bay trying to turn Puritans into Quakers. If we don't stop this, God will punish us.

Attorney: Did Mary Dyer come to Massachusetts Bay to spread her Quaker religion?

Witness: Yes, several times.

Attorney: Did you give Mary chances to escape punishments that are required by the laws of Massachusetts Bay?

Witness: Yes, we tried to give her a fair break.

Draw Conclusions

1. Was Mary Dyer guilty or not guilty?
2. Were the Puritans who settled Massachusetts Bay hypocrites?
3. Jury announce its verdict. Does the class find Mary Dyer guilty or not guilty?
4. Was Mary Dyer guilty?
5. Were the Puritan laws guilty? Or were both guilty?

Resource 6: Drawing Conclusions

Conclusion 1

Was Mary Dyer Guilty or Not Guilty?

Guilty or Not Guilty (circle one)

What evidence supports your conclusion?

Conclusion 2

Were the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay Hypocrites?

Yes or No (circle one)

What evidence supports your conclusion?

What really happened to Mary Dyer?



Resource 7: Post Trial Reading - What Happened to Mary Dyer?

What Happened to Mary Dyer?

On May 31, 1660 the Puritan authorities in Massachusetts Bay sentenced Mary to die. The walk from her jail to the place she was to be put to death was about a mile. Massachusetts Bay's Governor had his soldiers lined along the entire route so that Mary could not preach. He also ordered drummers to follow Mary so that they could stop anyone from hearing what Mary might say. Many begged Mary to reject her Quaker beliefs. Mary refused.

A military officer told Mary that she was responsible for her own punishment because she knowingly broke the law not once, not twice, but three times. Mary replied, "I was only trying to get the Puritans' cruel and unjust laws repealed [canceled]."

On May 31, 1660 Mary Dyer was executed. The man who hung her ran to a pond and vomited. He later told his wife that he quit his job as a hangman and was going to become a Quaker. (see [here](#))



Did the Cruel Punishments of Quakers in Massachusetts Bay Have Any Significant Effects in the Colonies?

When King Charles of England heard about the executions of Quakers in his colony of Massachusetts Bay, he became upset. He was against the executions. He ordered that any Quaker accused of a crime that could result in a death sentence now had to be sent to England for trial. This made it possible for England to check any abuses [bad use] of power by the Puritan authorities.

As a result of the King's new order and many complaints from people in the colonies about the unusual treatment of Quakers, the Puritans repealed their cruel laws.

Have Stories Like Mary Dyer's Had Any Effect on Our Laws Today?

When the American people broke away from England and created their government, they remembered things like the cruel punishments of Mary Dyer and other Quakers. They understood that governments have a lot of power. They wanted to have checks on that power.

So, today, we now have laws in our country called Amendments. The first ten amendments are part of what is known as our "Bill of Rights." The story of Mary Dyer helps us understand why we have two of those amendments.

1st Amendment

**"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion
prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."**

In plain language, this amendment makes it illegal for any government to require people to belong to a certain religion. It also guarantees that people can practice any religion that they want to.

8th Amendment

**"Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed,
nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted."**

In plain language it states that the government cannot punish people who are found guilty of crimes in cruel and unusual ways.

We owe these protections to people like Mary Dyer who lived long ago and did not have the same protections.

Competing Accounts

Account 1

Mary Dyer was a victim of cruel and unjust laws passed by the Puritans. They left England for religious freedom then denied it to people like Mary.

Account 2

Mary Dyer was a victim of her own actions. The Puritans of Massachusetts Bay showed her mercy twice and even let her go after they executed two other Quakers for doing the same thing.

