

Lesson 5: Town and Country

☐ Getting Started

In this lesson, you'll learn more on life in the country on farms large and small throughout the colony and also about life in colonial towns. You'll learn details about farming practices, discover trades, and consider the reasons why communities might encourage tradesmen with different skills to migrate to their towns.

Stuff You Need

- *Great Colonial America Projects You Can Build Yourself!* by Kris Bordessa

Ideas to Think About

- Why do individuals, families, and communities decide to migrate from one location to another?
- How do religion, culture, government, and economics interact in decisions about whether to remain in one location or migrate to a new place?
- In what ways can the change of place of a physical migration inspire or make possible changes in culture, community, and ways of life?

Things to Know

- Colonial farmers grew **subsistence crops** (crops grown to provide food or other necessary supplies for their own families) and many also grew **cash crops** (crops grown to sell for money). Tobacco and indigo were important cash crops in colonial America.

☐ Reading and Questions

Read Chapters 5 and 6 of *Great Colonial Projects You Can Build Yourself!* by Kris Bordessa and then answer the following questions.

1. How did colonists use milk?

2. How did colonial people store food to keep it safe to eat?

3. Why did colonial tradesmen use pictures on their signs?

4. What were some colonial punishments for breaking laws?

Activities

☐ Activity 1: Farming and Trade

In today's reading, you learned about the lives of farmers (including not only people who grew a garden for their own family's use, but also people who grew indigo or tobacco as cash crops) and also about the lives of colonial tradesmen who made useful or decorative objects and provided services for fellow colonists. In this activity, you'll focus on either farming or trades. Ask a parent which option you should complete.

Option 1: Colonial Farming

Review the sections of Chapter 5 about growing tobacco and growing indigo. Imagine that you are a planter growing one of these cash crops and you're making a list of the things that will need to be done to share with your oldest son, who is learning how to grow the crop properly. Remember that in colonial times, parents often handed down knowledge and skills to their children and taught them trades or agricultural skills that would help their offspring be successful later, and maybe take over the family farm or business someday. Be sure to include the following:

- Anything one would need to know about preparing the soil.
- The amount of labor to expect.
- The specific steps involved in planting, tending, harvesting, and processing the crop.
- Any potential problems (insect pests, weather problems, plant diseases, etc.) that might arise.
- A few comments that indicate the benefits and the pitfalls of growing this particular crop.

Option 2: Colonial Occupations

In the reading, you learned that as a colonial town grew, the demand for skilled craftspeople to provide goods and services for the town's residents grew as well. Towns might even advertise to attract the craftspeople that the town leaders thought would make the most valuable additions to their communities.

In this activity, you'll imagine that you are a leader of a colonial community that has grown from a few farms to a small but growing town. You and other leaders want to encourage people with important skills to come to your town and help it to prosper, and you plan to advertise in other areas, trying to encourage young, ambitious, and energetic workers to bring their skills and their trades to your community. But what kinds of tradesmen would be most helpful to you? See the "Colonial Occupations" activity page for more details!

Optional:

If you have time and would like to create a colonial sign like the ones described on page 73 in today's reading, follow the instructions provided to create a sign for one of the colonial businesses that town leaders might want to encourage to set up shop in their community.

☐ **Activity 2: A Hands-On Colonial Project**

As you've learned, colonists had to make a lot of things themselves. In this activity, you'll have the chance to make something similar to what colonial families might have created and get a feel for what it would have been like to have to make your own playthings, or do the work of a colonial housewife (cooking) or tradesman (tinsmith or tool maker). Read through the possible projects on the "Colonial Crafts" page with a parent and choose an option that appeals to you. You may be able to incorporate what you make into your final project presentation about colonial life later in the unit.

As you choose a project, think about what materials a colonial cook or craftsman would have used and where they came from—grown at home, made locally, or imported? How would making the item help a colonial family, and why might they make it themselves instead of buying it? Discuss these questions with a parent.

Work with a parent to be sure that you have the equipment that you need and that you have parental supervision and assistance where necessary.

Wrapping Up

British colonies were permanently established as early as 1607 and, over several generations, they grew from small settlements to larger and larger towns and cities. Agriculture grew from small subsistence farms to large plantations growing highly profitable cash crops. By the 1750s, America was full of bustling established communities filled with tradespeople and imported European goods. As you'll see in the next lesson, the success of the colonies led to a greater interest in them from the British monarchy.

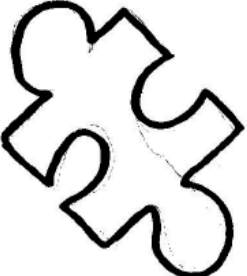
Colonial Occupations

Directions: Imagine that you are a town leader in a growing colonial town, surrounded by successful farms. You are hoping that some enterprising craftsmen from other communities might want to relocate to your town and provide the services that the people in your community need. In the chart below, explain what each occupation did and then rank the occupations from 1 (most valuable) to 10 (least valuable) based on the priority you would place on getting a craftsmen to relocate to your community. Explain your reasons in the space provided.

OCCUPATION	WHAT THEY DID	RANK	REASONS
BLACKSMITH 			
SILVERSMITH 			
CARPENTER 			
APOTHECARY 			
COOPER 			
CHANDLER 			
PRINTER 			
HATTER 			
SHOEMAKER 			
TAVERN KEEPER 			

COLONIAL CRAFTS

Choose a category (foods, puzzles, tinware, or tools) and complete ONE craft activity. Think about the questions provided.

FOODS Choose one of the following: Use the recipes for apple cider (p. 65), johnny cakes (p. 65), or applesauce (p. 66) to create a delicious colonial snack.	PUZZLES Choose one of the following: Make a string & bead puzzler (p. 74) or a Liberty Bell puzzler (p. 75).	TINWARE Choose one of the following: Make a model of a tin plate (p. 77) or tin lantern (p. 78).	TOOLS Choose one of the following: Make a pump drill (pp. 80-81), a weathervane (p. 84), a barometer (p. 85), or a fire rattle (p. 89).
Questions to think about: •Are these foods similar to or different from foods you have eaten? •Where would colonists have gotten the ingredients? •How would the methods of food preparation been similar to or different from what we use today?	Questions to think about: •What would these puzzles have been made out of in colonial times? •Where would colonists have gotten the materials? •What purpose would home made puzzles serve in colonial life? •How are these puzzles similar to or different from the things you do for entertainment today?	Questions to think about: •Are there any objects made of tin in your home today? (Ask a parent if you are not sure.) •What advantages and disadvantages can you think of about eating from a metal plate? •What might a colonial family buy from a tinsmith?	Questions to think about: •How many of these tools could be made at home? Do you make tools at your house today? •How many would require the assistance of a craftsman like a blacksmith or joiner? •How many of the tools listed above are things we still have a use for today? •What are the modern equivalents of these tools?

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✿ Ideas to Think About

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Things to Know

- Colonial farmers grew **subsistence crops** (crops grown to provide food or other necessary supplies for their own families) and many also grew **cash crops** (crops grown to sell for money). Tobacco and indigo were important cash crops in colonial America.

• Skills

- Analyze the important geographic, political, economic, and social aspects of life in the region prior to the Revolutionary Period. (SS)
- Identify geographic and political reasons for the creation of various colonies and evaluate the effects on the government and economics of the colony. (SS)

Introducing the Lesson

In this lesson, your child will learn more on life in the country on farms large and small throughout the colonies and also about life in colonial towns. He'll learn details about farming practices, discover trades, and consider the reasons why communities might encourage tradesmen with different skills to migrate to their towns.

Reading and Questions

1. How did colonists use milk?

To make butter, cheese, or puddings. It wasn't typically used for drinking.

2. How did colonial people store food to keep it safe to eat?

They stored food in a springhouse, which used water from underground springs to chill the air. Some foods were salted or smoked for preservation as well.

3. Why did colonial tradesmen use pictures on their signs?

Since some people couldn't read, images were added to signs to help potential customers find the appropriate shop.

4. What were some colonial punishments for breaking laws?

Punishments could include public humiliation, imprisonment (although that was generally considered cruel and wasteful), being placed in the stocks or pillory, whipping or ducking, paying fines, branding, or death.

Activities

Activity 1: Farming and Trade

In this activity, your child will consider either, in Option 1, the steps and challenges of growing a cash crop (tobacco or indigo) or, in Option 2, the relative value of different trades to a growing colonial community. Option 2 requires more in-depth critical thinking, while Option 1 may involve more imaginative thinking as it asks the student to play the role of a farmer sharing important information with a son who will take over the family farm one day. Choose the option that seems most appropriate for your child.

Option 1: Colonial Farming

In this activity, your child will write out a list of important information that one would need to know about growing a colonial cash crop, either tobacco or indigo. Review the information in Chapter 5 to make sure that your child's list is accurate and relatively complete.

Option 2: Colonial Occupations

In this activity, your child will fill in a chart with details on 10 colonial occupations. He will then rank the occupations from 1 to 10 based on how valuable each might be to a growing colonial community. The explanations of each job are provided in the answer key below, but your child's rankings and reasons for those rankings may vary. He should understand, however, that some jobs provided services that may have been more essential to survival and success than others (for example, a blacksmith who could make iron farming tools might be more immediately valuable to a growing town than a milliner selling finery).

Answer Key	
Occupation	What They Did
<i>Blacksmith</i>	Made iron tools and things like latches, hinges, nails, and horseshoes
<i>Silversmith</i>	Made fine items like silver bowls, silver eating utensils, tea sets, and candlesticks
<i>Woodworker or Cabinetmaker</i>	Made furniture, may have also made wooden tools or farm implements and buildings
<i>Apothecary</i>	Served as a doctor, dentist, pharmacist, and shopkeeper
<i>Cooper</i>	Made wooden tubs and barrels
<i>Chandler</i>	Made candles
<i>Printer</i>	Published newspapers, printed announcements and broadsides, often served as a post office
<i>Hatter</i>	Made hats
<i>Shoemaker</i>	Made shoes and repaired worn or damaged shoes
<i>Tavern Keeper</i>	Provided lodging for guests as well as meals and drinks for local people

Activity 2: A Hands-On Colonial Project

For this activity, your child will create a hands-on colonial project. It may be a food that was eaten in colonial times, a puzzle that would have been played with in the colonies, models of tinware, or models of tools. Your child may be able to use this project as part of his final project for the unit as well.

Some of these activities require the use of knives, tools, or heat sources and so should be completed with parental supervision. Be sure to read over all of the instructions in the book carefully and advise your child on the choice of a project and be available to assist him and supervise his work as necessary.

Your child should think about what materials a colonial cook or craftsman might have used and where those materials might have come from. Would ingredients and supplies have been grown or manufactured at home? Bought from a local producer? Imported from England? How would making each of these things benefit a colonial family? What would be the advantage of making something (like a physical puzzle or a pump drill) over buying something similar from a shop? Talk about these kinds of questions with your child as he works on his craft.

Wrapping Up**Questions to Discuss**

- Do you think you would rather be a colonial farmer or a colonial tradesman? Why?
- Which colonial trades seem most interesting to you? Why?
- Why do you think a tradesman might want to move to a new town? Why not stay in his old home and continue working for the person with whom he apprenticed? (Answers will vary, but your child may offer that tradesmen might have wanted to make more money as a master tradesmen in a new place rather than remaining in a lesser position below an established craftsman. They may also have seen opportunities to make a good living as the only blacksmith or milliner or cooper for miles around in a new place. Some may just have wanted adventure or a change of scene, too!)

Things to Review

- Review your child's answers to the reading questions for this lesson.
- Review your child's activity about either colonial farming or colonial craftsmen.
- Talk to your child about his hands-on craft. Was it fun to make? How might it have been used in colonial times?