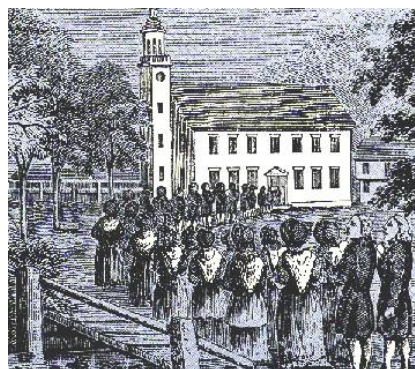
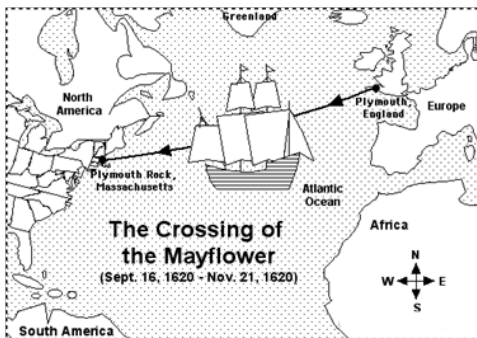
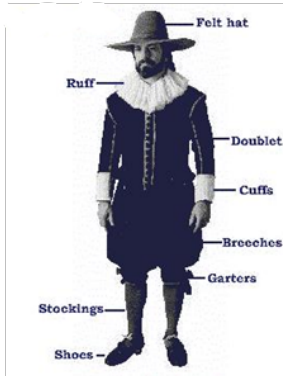


PRE-READING TASK

Look at the pictures. What do they tell you about the first settlers, their journey and their attitude to life?



THE PURITANS AND PURITANISM

In 1620, the Puritans landed at Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts and founded the first permanent settlement in New England. They had left England to escape religious persecution and to establish a New Jerusalem in the New World. This Promised Land, however, contained many new dangers. In the face of a harsh climate, fierce animals, hostile Indians and a vast, godless wilderness, the Puritans drew together in a tightly unified group with extremely strict rules and an autocratic leadership. Through a combination of bitterly hard work, rigid discipline and harsh justice, the Puritans succeeded in taming the land that no one before them could conquer.

The Puritan government was a theocracy; that is, it was completely controlled by the Puritan church. The ministers of the church were also the town officers and administrators. Because the Puritans believed that they were the new Chosen People, they did not permit members of any other religion to corrupt their pure society. Those who did not belong to the church could not hold property or vote. In addition, those who did not attend church regularly or follow the church regulations could be excommunicated, thereby losing all their property and rights.

"God's law" for the Puritans was certainly strict. Anything that distracted them from hard work was part of the Devil's plan to destroy them. There were no celebrations or holidays, no theatres or novels and no children's games or entertainments. Dancing was considered a serious sin. In addition to viewing pleasure as sinful, the Puritans saw sex as a necessary evil, to be practised joylessly only between a man and his wife.

The Puritans believed that everything stated in the Bible was literally true. The Devil was very real to them, always trying to tempt them away from their work and God's laws. Moreover, the Devil was a cunning and extremely powerful opponent. Once he set out to destroy a soul, there was almost nothing the person could do to prevent it. This grim sense of man's powerlessness was also found in other aspects of Puritan life. The Puritans believed in the doctrine of the elect. According to this fatalistic belief, only a few people would be chosen by God to be saved from Hell. There was

nothing a person could do to earn a place among the elect. No amount of good works or righteous living could help. All a person could do was live an upright life in the blind hope that he might be one of the few who were chosen.

A major reason why salvation was so difficult to attain is found in the Puritans' adaptation of the doctrine of original sin. According to the Puritans, each person at birth is already evil and on the verge of eternal damnation. Not only was man born an evil sinner, but his sins could not be washed away. Therefore, every person concealed guilt in his heart from which he could never be free. Although their guilt could never be entirely removed, it was sometimes possible for Puritans who sinned to regain the path of righteousness. First, however, they had to publicly confess their sins and perform some act of penance. This policy of open confession was carried to absurd lengths during the witch hunt. Those accused of witchcraft could either confess to lies or hang. Not surprisingly, most chose to confess.

Because the Puritans' legal system was used to uphold religious laws,



many such absurdities were possible. Over the centuries, Western society has developed "due process of law" so that the truth can be uncovered. This due process uses witnesses and other hard evidence to prove whether a person is innocent or guilty. The accused is also granted certain

rights so that he can defend himself. The Puritans, however, could not rely on due process to get at the truth. Because religious crimes involved magic and invisibility, there could be no witnesses or hard evidence. Witchcraft is an invisible crime. Only the witch and her victim can possibly witness this crime, and the witch would never accuse herself. Therefore, the victim's testimony must always be accurate. As a result of this absurd reasoning, the Puritans had no way of objectively finding out the truth. When the lack of due process was combined with the false confessions, the door was opened to a reign of terror in which rumours, lies and superstitions ruled the courts.

In summary, then, virtually every aspect of a Puritan's life fell under the strict control of the church. Rigid discipline was enforced, and pleasures were forbidden. Personal rights were few and could be suspended at any time.

Personal freedoms were virtually non-existent. Life for the early Puritans was a constant battle against the harsh climate, the vast wilderness and the temptations of Satan. Even for those who won that battle, divine salvation was by no means guaranteed.

By 1692, however, the land had been partly tamed and the surrounding wilderness was no longer so terrifying. The need for rigid discipline, hard work and tight unity was no longer as great as it had been. To the great concern of the church, many Puritans began to feel the need for more personal rights and freedoms. Ultimately, the church's struggle to maintain its authority against ever-increasing opposition erupted into the full-blown hysteria of the Salem witch hunt.

adapted from *COLES NOTES on THE CRUCIBLE* (1983) [pp. 4-7]

COMPREHENSION

1. Describe the Puritans' expectations in the New World and the many challenges they encountered.
2. In how far can one say that the Church controlled every aspect of Puritan society?
3. Explain the "doctrine of the elect". What are the advantages and disadvantages of this fatalistic belief?
4. What was absurd about the witch trials?

ESSAY TOPIC

Could Puritanism work in modern America or does it require too much self-sacrifice? Which aspects of Puritanism are appealing and / or confining?



PROJECT

Use the internet to find information about:

- the connection between the first settlers and Thanksgiving
- the first Thanksgiving compared to

modern Thanksgiving customs

PRE-READING TASK – HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Read through the information box and underline what you see as the key events leading to the Declaration of Independence

The British began passing acts to exert greater control over the American colonies which had been left more or less to themselves until the French and Indian War. In 1764, the Sugar Act increased duties on foreign sugar imported from the West Indies. A Currency Act was also passed that year banning the colonies from issuing paper bills because of the belief that the colonial currency had devalued the British money. Further, in order to continue to support the British soldiers left in America after the war, Great Britain passed the Quartering Act in 1765. This ordered colonists to house and feed British soldiers if there was not enough room for them in the barracks.

The Stamp Act passed in 1765. This required stamps to be purchased or included on many different items and documents such as playing cards, legal papers, newspapers, and more. This was the first direct tax that Britain had imposed on the colonists. The money from it was to be used for defense. The Stamp Act Congress met in New York City. 27 delegates from nine colonies met and wrote a statement of rights and grievances against Great Britain. They imposed non-importation agreements. Sometimes, enforcing these agreements meant tarring and feathering those who still wished to purchase British goods.

Events began to escalate with passage of the Townshend Acts in 1767. These taxes were created to help colonial officials become independent of the colonists by providing them with a source of income. Smuggling of the affected goods meant that the British moved more troops to important ports such as Boston. The increase in troops led to many clashes including the famous Boston Massacre.

In 1773, parliament passed the Tea Act, giving the British East India Company a monopoly to trade tea in America. This led to the Boston Tea Party where a group of colonists dressed as Indians dumped tea from three ships into Boston Harbor. The Intolerable Acts were passed. These placed numerous restrictions on the colonists including the closing of Boston Harbor.

12 of the 13 colonies met in Philadelphia in 1774. The First Continental Congress called for a boycott of British goods. May, 1775 brought the meeting of the Second Continental Congress. All 13 colonies were represented. The majority of delegates were not calling for complete independence at this point so much as changes in British policy. However, with the colonial victory at Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775, King George III proclaimed that the colonies were in a state of rebellion. He hired thousands of mercenaries to fight against the colonists. In January, 1776, Thomas Paine published his famous pamphlet entitled "Common Sense." He argued that America should no longer be a colony to Great Britain but instead should be an independent country.

adapted from http://americanhistory.about.com/od/declarationofindependence/a/declaration_sg_2.htm

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



On June 11, 1776, the Continental Congress appointed a committee of five men to draft the Declaration. Jefferson was given the task of writing the first draft. Once complete, he presented this to the committee. Together they revised the document and submitted it to the Continental Congress. The Congress voted for independence on July 2. They then made some changes to the Declaration of Independence and finally approved it on July 4.

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. --That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. [...] We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by the Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm

reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.



Signatures on the original Declaration of Independence

Extract from *The Declaration of Independence* taken from <http://americanhistory.about.com/library/docs/bldecindependence.htm>

COMPREHENSION

1. Underline the key ideas.
2. Write a paraphrase of Jefferson's text in simple and modern English.

ESSAY

1. The *Declaration of Independence* can be seen as the climax of *political* and *economic protest* against the authority of the far-away British government. Discuss.
2. Is the *Declaration of Independence* a radical document? Explain.
3. The Declaration of Independence is probably the most important document in American history. Discuss.

PRE-READING TASK – HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Read through the Civil War Amendments and the info box about the Civil War.

The Civil War Amendments

In order to ensure that slaves would be free and achieve equal rights, the following amendments to the US Constitution were made between 1865 and 1870.

Amendment 13

I. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

5 Amendment 14

I. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

15 Amendment 15

I. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

from *The American South*, Cornelsen, p 28 (2008)

1. Make a list of the specific rights the former slaves are granted in these Amendments to the Constitution.

2. Look at the info box on the following page and explain why former slaves could not exercise these rights

Infobox

The Civil War

The Civil War between the North (the Union, in blue uniforms) and the South (the Confederacy, in gray uniforms) is often considered inevitable, because the two societies had developed in different directions economically and socially. Whereas the South's agricultural economy was tied to slavery with rich aristocratic plantation owners and a poor white underclass, the North's economy was based on industrial development which expanded rapidly with the arrival of immigrants from Europe who provided cheap labour.

The Civil War broke out due to the desire of anti-slavery forces to prevent the expansion of slavery into territories and new states. In 1860, President Lincoln was elected president without winning a single Southern state. Aware that their political influence was no longer important, the Southern states seceded.

The way the Civil War was fought made it the first modern war: it was the first example of deliberate total war, i.e. it was waged by and against whole societies, and was fought with distant, impersonal rapid-fire weapons and artillery rather than cavalry and hand-to-hand fighting. Approximately 630,000 soldiers died in the war (one tenth of all Union and one quarter of all Confederate soldiers). Thousands of Southern women accompanied their husbands to the front, acting as nurses, cooks, etc. The South also experienced civilian death through murder, pillage, and starvation. The war left a devastated and humiliated South behind, a legacy which left its mark not only on the economy but also on the psyche of southerners for more than a century.

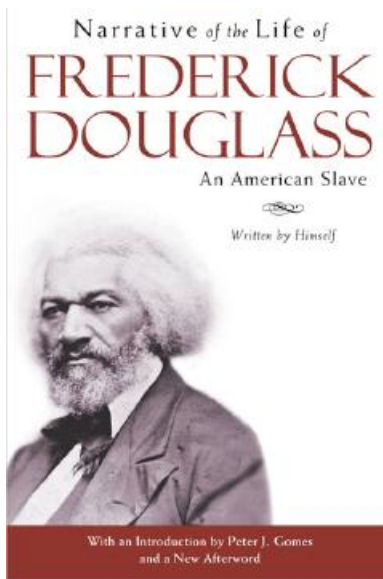
When the Confederacy had finally been defeated, the Civil War Amendments gave former slaves the same rights white citizens had. In reality their liberation was reversed as soon as the Union troops left the South after a short period called Reconstruction. Blacks could be denied their rights due to their economic dependence on white society, which could intimidate and terrorize them through the newly-founded Ku Klux Klan. Southern legislatures enacted the so-called Jim Crow laws to install the practice of racial segregation and ensure white supremacy. This was sanctioned by Supreme Court decisions legalizing the "separate-but-equal" doctrine. Moreover, blacks were kept from voting in elections through property and literacy requirements. Thus racial discrimination was maintained for another century.

Today the Civil War is still omnipresent in the South, e.g. in the Civil War monuments dotting Southern landscapes and in the Civil War battle reenactments. For decades there has been a controversy about the role of the Confederate flag. Some state flags in the South contain elements of the Confederate flag, while some state legislatures in the South fly the Confederate flag below the US flag. This Confederate flag is seen as in a symbol of racism by black Southerners and many white Southerners.



Slavery was at the heart of the causes of the Civil War.

from *The American South*, Cornelsen, p 26 (2008)



NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AN AMERICAN SLAVE

His childhood (pp 48-49)

[...] The opinion was also whispered that my master was my father; but of the correctness of this opinion, I know nothing, the means of knowing was withheld from me. My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant – before I knew her as my mother. It is a common custom, in the part of Maryland from which I ran away, to

part children from their mothers at a very early age. Frequently, before the child has reached its twelfth month, its mother is taken from it, and hired out on some farm a considerable distance off, and the child is placed under the care of an old woman, too old for field labour. For what the separation is done, I do not know, unless it be to hinder the development of the child's affection toward its mother, and to blunt and destroy the natural affection of the mother for the child. This is the inevitable result.

I never saw my mother, to know her as such, more than four or five times in my life; and each of those times was very short in duration, and at night. She was hired by a Mr. Stewart, who lived about twelve miles from my home. She made her journeys to see me in the night, travelling the whole distance on foot, after the performance of her day's work. [...] I



do not recollect of ever seeing my mother by the light of day. She was with me in the night. She would lie down with me, and get me to sleep, but long before I woke she was gone. Very little communication ever took place between us. Death soon ended what little we could have while she lived, and with it her hardship and suffering. She died when I was about seven years old, on one of my master's farms, near Lee's Mill. I was not allowed to be present during her illness, at her death, or burial. She was gone long before I knew anything

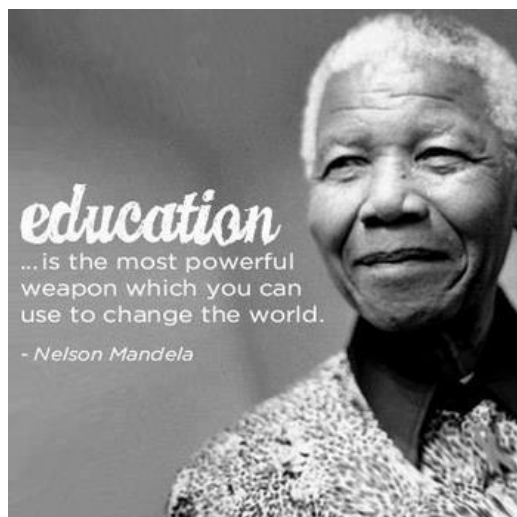
about it. Never having enjoyed, to any considerable extent, her soothing presence, her tender and watchful care, I received the tidings of her death with much the same emotions I should have probably felt at the death of stranger.[...]

Slave songs (pp57-58)

[...]They would sing, as a chorus, to words which to many would seem unmeaning jargon, but which, nevertheless, were full of meaning to themselves. I have sometimes thought that the mere hearing of those songs would do more to impress some minds with the horrible character of slavery, than the reading of whole volumes of philosophy on the subject could do. [...]

[...] Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God. Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy. The songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears. [...]

Literacy



[...] Very soon after I went to live with Mr. And Mrs. Auld, she very kindly commenced to teach me the A,B,C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters. Just at this point of my progress, Mr. Auld found out what was going on and at once forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as

well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read. To use his own words, further, he said , “If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master – to do as he is told to do. Learning would *spoil* the best nigger in the world. Now,” said he, “if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit

him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy.”[...]

[...] I have found that, to make a contented slave, it is necessary to make a thoughtless one. It is necessary to darken his moral and mental vision, and, as far as possible, to annihilate the power of reason. He must be able to detect no inconsistencies in slavery; he must be made to feel that slavery is right; and he can be brought to that only when he ceases to be a man.

From *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave by Frederick Douglass (1845)*

Questions

1. *“For what the separation is done, I do not know.”* Why do you think that mothers were separated from their children?
2. Pick one sentence that shows the cruelty of slavery particularly well. Justify your choice.
3. Explain the sentence *“If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell”*. What is Mr. Auld afraid of?

Essay

1. The way to enslave someone is to keep them from all learning. Discuss!
2. Slavery is theft - theft of a life, theft of work, theft of any property or produce, theft even of the children a slave might have borne. (Kevin Bales, *Understanding Global Slavery*)
3. We say that slavery has vanished from European civilization, but this is not true. Slavery still exists. (VICTOR HUGO, *Les Misérables*)

Project:

1. Research the life of Frederick Douglass. What were his accomplishments after escaping from slavery?
2. Research the history of black people in America from slavery to today

GLOSSARY

ally	
armed forces	
armed conflict	
armistice	
assault	
atomic bomb	
barracks	
battlefield	
bullet	
captivity	
casualty	
to conquer (n. conquest)	
to declare war (n. declaration of war)	
to defeat	
to disarm (n. disarmament)	
to evacuate (n. evacuation)	
evacuee	
to exploit (n. exploitation)	
to explode (n. explosion)	
fleet	
genocide	
headquarter	
human rights	
to invade (n. invasion)	
to meet with resistance	
mercenary	
missile	
to occupy	
to oppress (n. oppression)	
peace talks	
peace treaty	
prisoners' camp	
prisoner of war	
recruit	
refugee	
to (make a) retreat	
to seek refuge	
to shed blood	
to suppress (n. suppression)	
to surrender	
traitor	
trench	
to threaten (n. threat)	
troop	
veteran	
warfare	