



# Lesson Plan: Salem Witch Trials

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**Lesson Origin: (web site, modified from, original)**

Hybrid self-made web quest and DBQ from the “DBQ Project” resources

**Georgia Performance Standard:**

**SSUSH1 The student will describe European settlement in North America during the 17th century**

b. Describe the settlement of New England; include religious reasons, relations with Native Americans (e.g., King Phillip’s War), the establishment of town meetings and development of a legislature, religious tensions that led to the founding of Rhode Island, the half-way covenant, **Salem Witch Trials**, and the loss of the Massachusetts charter and the transition to a royal colony.

**Essential Question: (Learning Question)**

**What caused the Salem witch trial hysteria of 1692?**

**Materials: (include at least one primary source)**

**Hook PowerPoint**

**Student Activity Guide for Web Quest and DBQ  
DBQ Packet; includes 14 documents**

**Instructions for class activities with suggested time (30 min., 60 min., 90 min., more)**

**Introduction, warm up/hook:**

**PowerPoint presentation of Salem Witch Trial visuals. Accompanying music:  
Night on Bald Mountain.**

**Step by step instructions:**

**Follow Student Activity Guide for step by step instructions.**

**Timing: Day One**

Hook and introduction – 15 minutes

Web Quest – 60 minutes

Cluster team discussion of Longfellow poem/Class discussion – 15 minutes

**Timing – Day Two**

Hook and brainstorming discussion – 10 minutes

Individual and Cluster team DBQ analysis – 60 minutes

Whole Class categorization of theories/reasons – 20 minutes

**Closure:**

Whole class categorization of theories/reasons

**Assessment:**

**Formative – class discussions on vocabulary, PowerPoint visuals, document analysis via “thumbs up/down”**

**Summative – provided in Student Activity Guide; choice of written essay or storyboard**

**Technology use (include I-Respond file if used):**

PowerPoint introduction  
Lab/Laptop Web Quest

**Suggestions for differentiation/modification:**

Differentiation is included via the various activities and the choice of assessment

**Extensions (advanced students):**

Students may do both essay and storyboard

**Depth of Knowledge level: 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. X \_\_\_\_\_ (rationale)**

The two-part process of learning the story (who/what) on day one, followed by the extensive analysis of documents of day two (why) provides for a very deep understanding of the witch trial phenomenon in 1692, providing a great foundation for comparison of McCarthyism in the 1950s

**Modeling/Guided Practice/Independent Practice elements:**

All of these are included via teacher close reading of background essay, guided questions in the web quest, and individual and group analysis of documents.

**Elements of Teaching American History Grant activities incorporated into the lesson:**

**Sourcing**

Is required in the individual and group analysis of DBQ documents

**Contextualization**

**I think the visualization through the PowerPoint introduction provides an emotional foundation for learning what societal hysteria can do to a community.**

**Also, the students will be able to draw sharp distinctions between the Salem Witch Trials and how the Bill of Rights protects the rights of the accused once we became the United States of America, with our own constitution and government.**

### **Corroboration**

**I think the DBQ provides a great way for students to think about the idea of corroboration, and why evidence and point of view can be such a “tricky thing” sometimes because the documents provided can be categorized by theory/reason for the event. What then are students to think when there are conflicting theories/reasons? Now that’s a great discussion.**

### **Close Reading**

**My reading of the background essay, after the students have pre-scanned it, gives me the opportunity to talk about what the author is claiming about the event, as well as introducing students to new vocabulary and why those particular words matter in learning about the Salem Witch Trials.**

## **Salem Witch Trial – Student Instruction and Investigation Guide**

### **Day One**

#### **Opening: Examination & Exploration of The Salem Witch Trials**

1. View the PowerPoint and make note of your reactions to the pictures and photographs you see. Mentally ask yourself, “What is happening in these visuals? What story do I anticipate unfolding in this investigation?”
2. After viewing the PowerPoint slides one time through, scan the background essay on the Salem Witch Trials. Don’t worry about reading for deep understanding, I will read this with you and we will discuss the background information, as well as talk through some of the unfamiliar vocabulary. You may look up at the slides from time to time to reinforce some of the information you are picking up.

#### **Lab/Laptop Mini-Quest Activity**

1. Login and go to: <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/SALEM.HTM>
2. Go to the “Biographies” link; proceed to investigate the following people and answer the following questions:

##### Samuel Parris

1. What was Parris’s career prior to coming to Salem?
2. What conflict did Parris have with the Salem Village community?
3. How did the witchcraft hysteria begin in the Parris home? How did Parris respond?

##### Tituba

1. Who is Tituba, and how did the witchcraft hysteria begin with her?
2. How does she respond to the accusations surrounding her?

Scan the other biographies and answer the following additional questions. **PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO “1711.”**

1. How is Rebecca Nurse different from the other “accused?”
2. Why was Giles Corey “pressed” to death?
3. How did Philip and Mary English evade trial and execution?
4. Why did Governor William Phips ultimately bring about the end of the trials?
5. For many of the families affected by the witchcraft hysteria and trials, what is the significance of “1711?”

### **Day One Closing**

3. Return to the classroom, and in your cluster teams, analyze the following written by William Wadsworth Longfellow on the “Case of Giles Corey.”

**I will not plead.  
If I deny, I am condemned already,  
In courts where ghosts appear as witnesses  
And swear men’s lives away. If I confess,  
Then I confess a lie, to buy a life,  
Which is not a life, but only death in life.**

How does this reflect the trial and execution of Giles Corey?

### **Day Two**

#### **Opening: Taking Another Look**

1. Review yesterday’s PowerPoint and make note of what these visuals mean to you today, in light of our preliminary investigation.
2. In the space provided below, brainstorm and list one word descriptors that explain what you know and feel about the information you saw and learned about the Salem Witch Trials yesterday. This should also include new vocabulary.

## **DBQ Activity: We know the what, now let's find out WHY?**

### **Cluster Teams**

Refer to the "DBQ Student Guide Sheet," and quickly read the directions.

1. Using the "forming and educated opinion" section as a GROUP guidelines, divide the documents between the team; three to four each.
2. Read your documents and complete tasks "#2 and #3" individually.
3. Each team member will then "teach" their documents to the rest of the cluster team.
4. Refer to "forming and educated opinion," and as a group, complete tasks #4, 5, and 6.

### **Whole Class**

Discuss theories/reasons and organize documents on the board. Prioritize theories/reasons. You may, as an individual or group, disagree with the whole class organization – just be ready to defend your position in the final assessment/assignment.

## **Assessment Question: What caused the Salem Witch Trial hysteria of 1692?**

### **Assessment #1**

Write an essay that answers the question, incorporating the documents that support your thesis.

1. Final draft only
2. Blue/black ink/typed
3. Identifiable thesis
4. Identifiable reference to the documents that support your thesis.
5. Thoughtful writing.

### **Assessment #2**

Complete a six-block storyboard


1. Identifiable "thesis" at the top of the storyboard
2. Identify and visually explain theories/reasons for the witchcraft hysteria in the six blocks provided. I'm not looking for the "who" or "what". I'm looking for the WHY.
3. Must be completed in color, with neat artwork.
4. Each block should represent a theory/reason.
5. On back, site the documents that support each block's depiction of a theory/reason.



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# The Salem Witch Trials

Examination & Exploration  
of Religious Hysteria in  
Colonial New England



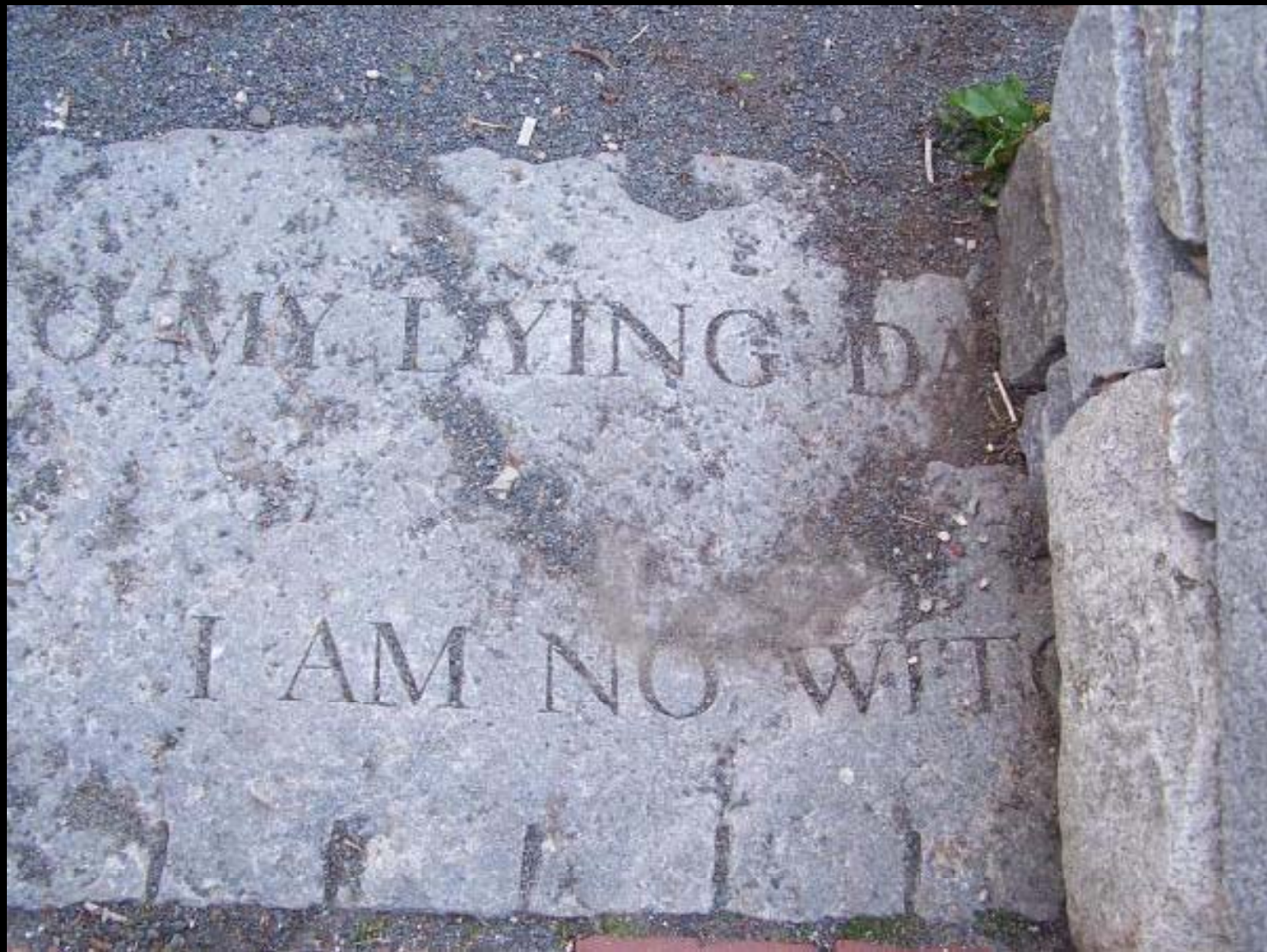






WITCHCRAFT AT SALEM VILLAGE.







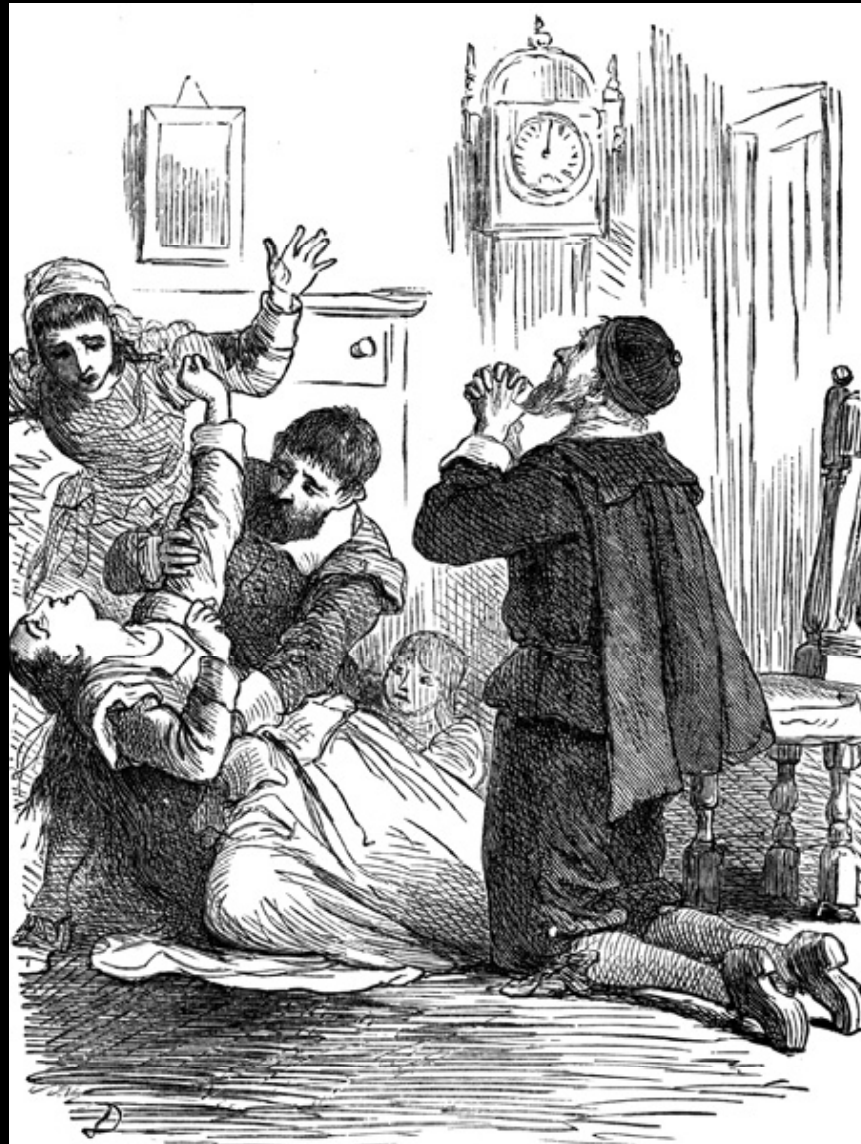


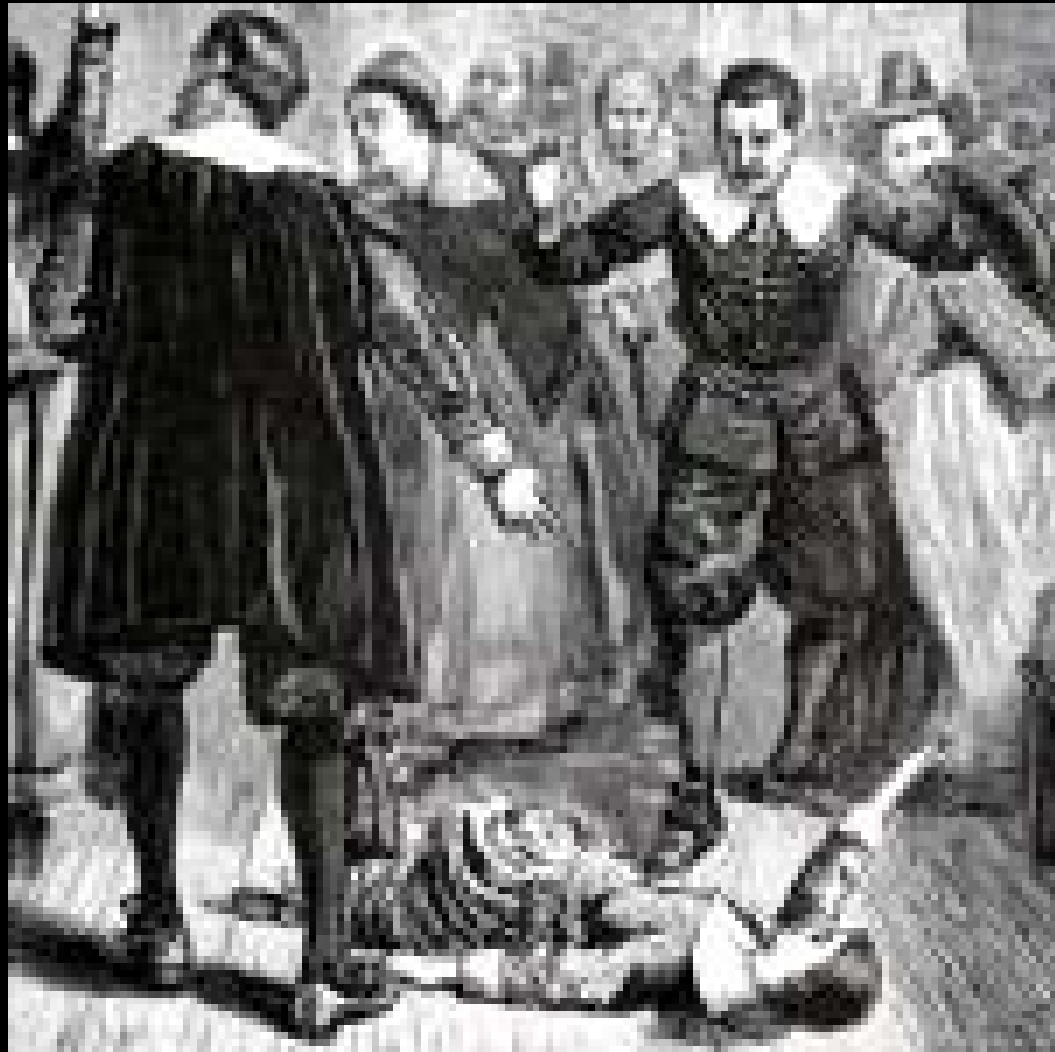












NEARLY OPPOSITE THIS SPOT  
STOOD, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET,  
A BUILDING DEVOTED, FROM 1677 UNTIL 1718,  
TO MUNICIPAL AND JUDICIAL USES.  
IN IT, IN 1692,  
WERE TRIED AND CONDEMNED FOR WITCHCRAFT  
MOST OF THE NINETEEN PERSONS  
WHO SUFFERED DEATH ON THE GALLOWES.  
GILES COREY WAS HERE PUT TO TRIAL  
ON THE SAME CHARGE, AND, REFUSING TO PLEAD,  
WAS TAKEN AWAY AND PRESSED TO DEATH.  
IN JANUARY 1693, TWENTY ONE PERSONS  
WERE TRIED HERE FOR WITCHCRAFT,  
OF WHOM EIGHTEEN WERE ACQUITTED AND  
THREE CONDEMNED, BUT LATER SET FREE.  
TOGETHER WITH ABOUT 150 ACCUSED PERSONS,  
IN A GENERAL DELIVERY WHICH OCCURRED IN MAY