7th Grade Pilgrims and Wampanoag Inquiry

Why Did the Pilgrim–Wampanoag Friendship Go So Wrong?

Charles De Wolf Brownell, illustration of Samoset meeting the Pilgrims, in *The Indian Races of North and South America*, 1822. Public domain.

Supporting Questions

1. What was the early contact like between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoags?
2. How did the Pilgrims and the Wampanoags cooperate in the early years after first contact?
3. How did the Pilgrims and the Wampanoags move from cooperation to conflict?
### Why Did the Pilgrim–Wampanoag Friendship Go So Wrong?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>New York State Social Studies Framework Key Idea &amp; Practices</th>
<th>Supporting Question 1</th>
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<td>7.2 COLONIAL DEVELOPMENTS: European exploration of the New World resulted in various interactions with Native Americans and in colonization. The American colonies were established for a variety of reasons and developed differently based on economic, social, and geographic factors. Colonial America had a variety of social structures under which not all people were treated equally.</td>
<td>What was the early contact like between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoags?</td>
<td>How did the Pilgrims and the Wampanoags cooperate in the early years after first contact?</td>
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| Gathering, Using, and Interpreting Evidence  
Comparison and Contextualization | Formative Performance Task  
Write a first-person account from the perspective of a Pilgrim and/or a Wampanoag man or woman about their early contact in 1621. | Formative Performance Task  
Create an annotated illustration that highlights how the Pilgrims and the Wampanoags cooperated in the early years after their first contact. | Formative Performance Task  
Make a claim supported by evidence about whether or not the conflicts could have been avoided from the perspective of the Pilgrims and/or the Wampanoags. |
| Staging the Question  
Using a painting to spark interest, record prior knowledge about the Pilgrims, the Wampanoag, and the positive and negative Pilgrim–Wampanoag interactions. | Timeline Task  
List events in 1621 and 1622 that represent the first contact between the Pilgrims and Wampanoags. | Timeline Task  
List events from 1622 through the 1630s that reflect cooperation between the Pilgrims and Wampanoags. | Timeline Task  
List events from the 1640s to the 1670s that illustrate how conflict emerged between the Pilgrims and Wampanoags. |
| Featured Sources | Featured Sources | Featured Sources | Featured Sources |
| Source A: Image bank: Maps and illustrations of “Pilgrim Village”  
Source B: Excerpts from Mourt’s Relation: A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth  
Source C: Illustrations of Samoset meeting the Pilgrims | Source A: Excerpt from Mourt’s Relation: A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth  
Source B: Excerpt from Of Plymouth Plantation  
Source C: Excerpt from Of Plymouth Plantation | Source A: Chart of population of the New England Colonies, 1620–1750  
Source B: Image bank: Maps of 17th-century Plymouth settlements  
Source C: Excerpts from A Relation of the Indian War  
Source D: Map of King Philip’s War | **ARGUMENT** Why did the Pilgrim–Wampanoag friendship go so wrong? Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that discusses the deteriorating relationship between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoags using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources while acknowledging competing views.|
| **EXTENSION** Create a graphic short story that illustrates an argument for how and why the Pilgrim and Wampanoag relationship deteriorated over time, including supporting and counterevidence from a variety of sources. | **UNDERSTAND** Research (e.g. examine online sources, interview an expert, contact someone from a Native American group) the point of view of a modern indigenous group that is fighting for its rights.  
**ASSESS** Explore whether or not conflict can be avoided in the situation you examined.  
**ACT** Create a video, Facebook page, or website that argues for or against the merits of the group’s struggle and present the product at a classroom or community event. |
### Staging the Compelling Question

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Featured Source</th>
<th><strong>Source A</strong>: J. L. G. Ferris, painting of relations between the Pilgrims and Wampanoags, <em>The First Thanksgiving 1621, 1919</em></th>
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Supporting Question 1

**Featured Source**

Source A: Image bank: Maps and illustrations of “Pilgrim Village”

Image 1: Map view of the location of the “Pilgrim Village,” Plimoth Plantation Museum, no date.

Courtesy of the Plymouth Archive Project, [http://www.histarch.illinois.edu/plymouth/fortplan.html](http://www.histarch.illinois.edu/plymouth/fortplan.html)

Plimouth Plantation Museum. Used with permission. Available at the Plymouth Colony Archive Project, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: http://www.histarch.illinois.edu/plymouth/images/Plimsketch.html.

Courtesy of the Plymouth Archive Project, [http://www.histarch.illinois.edu/plymouth/fortplan.html](http://www.histarch.illinois.edu/plymouth/fortplan.html).
### Supporting Question 1

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<td><strong>Source B:</strong> Edward Winslow, description of the first encounter between the Pilgrims and Wampanoag, <em>Mourt's Relation: A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth</em> (transcribed by Caleb Johnson, excerpts), 1622</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**NOTE:** *Mourt's Relation* was an early Pilgrim booklet written mainly by Edward Winslow with significant contributions from William Bradford. Published in England (likely by George Morton), it provides a firsthand account of the early struggles of Pilgrims in exploring Cape Cod and then settling at Plymouth as well as early interactions with Native inhabitants. The excerpt here describes the first very brief encounter between Pilgrim settlers and Native Americans on November 15, 1620.

**Text from Mourt's Relation Transcribed by Caleb Johnson**

Wednesday, the 15th of November, they were set ashore, and when they had ordered themselves in the order of a single file and marched about the space of a mile, by the sea they espied five or six people with a dog, coming towards them, who were savages, who when they saw them, ran into the wood and whistled the dog after them, etc. First they supposed them to be Master Jones, the master, and some of his men, for they were ashore and knew of their coming, but after they knew them to be Indians they marched after them into the woods, lest other of the Indians should lie in ambush; but when the Indians saw our men following them, they ran away with might and main and our men turned out of the wood after them, for it was the way they intended to go, but they could not come near them. They followed them that night about ten miles by the trace of their footings, and saw how they had come the same way they went, and at a turning perceived how they ran up a hill, to see whether they followed them. At length night came upon them, and they were constrained to take up their lodging, so they set forth three sentinels, and the rest, some kindled a fire, and others fetched wood, and there held our rendezvous that night.

**NOTE:** The following excerpt describes the first extended encounter of Pilgrim settlers and Native Americans in March of 1621.

**Text from Mourt's Relation Transcribed by Caleb Johnson**

Friday, the 16th [of March], a fair warm day; towards this morning we determined to conclude of the military orders, which we had begun to consider of before but were interrupted by the savages, as we mentioned formerly. And whilst we were busied hereabout, we were interrupted again, for there presented himself a savage, which caused an alarm. He very boldly came all alone and along the houses straight to the rendezvous, where we intercepted him, not suffering him to go in, as undoubtedly he would, out of his boldness. He saluted us in English, and bade us welcome, for he had learned some broken English among the Englishmen that came to fish at Monchiggon, and knew by name the most of the captains, commanders, and masters that usually came. He was a man free in speech, so far as he could express his mind, and of a seemly carriage. We questioned him of many things; he was the first savage we could meet withal.....The wind being to rise a little, we cast a horseman’s coat about him, for he was stark naked, only a leather about his waist, with a fringe about a span long, or little more; he had a bow and two arrows, the one headed, and the other unheaded. He was a tall straight man, the hair of his head black, long behind, only short before, none on his face at all; he asked some beer, but we gave him strong water and biscuit, and butter, and cheese, and pudding, and a piece of mallard, all which he liked well, and had been acquainted with such amongst the English. He told us the place where we now live is called Patuxet, and that about four years ago all the inhabitants died of an extraordinary plague, and there is neither man, woman, nor child remaining, as indeed we have found none, so as there is none to hinder our possession, or to lay claim unto it. ...
Saturday and Sunday, reasonable fair days. On this day came again the savage, and brought with him five other tall proper men; they had every man a deer’s skin on him, and the principal of them had a wild cat’s skin, or such like on the one arm. They had most of them long hosen up to their groins, close made; and above their groins to their waist another leather, they were altogether like the Irish-trousers. They are of a complexion like our English gypsies, no hair or very little on their faces, on the heads long hair to their shoulders, only cut before, some trussed up before with a feather, broad-wise, like a fan, another a fox tail hanging out. These left (according to our charge given him before) their bows and arrows a quarter of a mile from our town. We gave them entertainment as we thought was fitting them; they did eat liberally of our English victuals. They made semblance unto us of friendship and amity; they sang and danced after their manner, like antics. They brought with them in a thing like a bow-case (which the principal of them had about his waist) a little of their corn pounded to powder, which, put to a little water, they eat. He had a little tobacco in a bag, but none of them drank but when he listed.


**TIMELINE TASK** - List events in 1621 and 1622 that represent the first contact between the Pilgrims and Wampanoags.

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Summarize – What Happened on each date? Include important details about each encounter between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag.</th>
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Supporting Question 1

**Featured Source**

**Source C:** Image bank: Illustrations of Samoset meeting the Pilgrims

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Image 1: Charles De Wolf Brownell, illustration of Samoset meeting the Pilgrims, in *The Indian Races of North and South America*, 1822.  
Public domain.
Image 2: Artist unknown, illustration of visit of Samoset to the Plymouth colony, *Popular History of the United States, from the First Discovery of the Western Hemisphere by the Northmen to the End of the Civil War*, 1876.

Public domain. Available from the New York Public Library Digital Collections: [http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e0-f382-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99](http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e0-f382-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99).
NOTE: Mourt’s Relation was an early Pilgrim booklet written mainly by Edward Winslow with significant contributions from William Bradford. Published in England (likely by George Morton), it provides a firsthand account of the early struggles of Pilgrims in exploring Cape Cod and then settling at Plymouth, as well as in early interactions with native inhabitants. In a later 1841 edition, an editor’s note became the first ever reference to the 1621 Wampanoag–Pilgrim feast as “the First Thanksgiving.” The excerpt below recounts the story of this “First Thanksgiving.”

*Mourt’s Relation*, Part VI Transcribed by Caleb Johnson

Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after have a special manner to rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors; they four in one day killed as much fowl, as with a little help beside, served the company almost a week, at which time amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest King Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed on our governor, and upon the captain, and others. And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.

We have found the Indians very faithful in their covenant of peace with us; very loving and ready to pleasure us; we often go to them, and they come to us; some of us have been fifty miles by land in the country with them, the occasions and relations whereof you shall understand by our general and more full declaration of such things as are worth the noting, yea, it has pleased God so to possess the Indians with a fear of us, and love unto us, that not only the greatest king amongst them, called Massasoit, but also all the princes and peoples round about us, have either made suit unto us, or been glad of any occasion to make peace with us, so that seven of them at once have sent their messengers to us to that end. Yea, an Isle at sea, which we never saw, hath also, together with the former, yielded willingly to be under the protection, and subjects to our sovereign lord King James, so that there is now great peace amongst the Indians themselves, which was not formerly, neither would have been but for us; and we for our parts walk as peaceably and safely in the wood as in the highways in England. We entertain them familiarly in our houses, and they as friendly bestowing their venison on us. They are a people without any religion or knowledge of God, yet very trusty, quick of apprehension, ripe-witted, just.

Supporting Question 2

**Featured Source**

**Source B:** William Bradford, treaty with Massasoit, *Of Plymouth Plantation* (excerpt), 1651

**NOTE:** The treaty with Massasoit was included in the record of activities in the Plymouth colony kept by William Bradford called *Of Plymouth Plantation*.

**Text of the treaty**

Their great Sachem[chief], called Massasoiet. who, about four or five days after, came with the chief of his friends and other attendance, with the aforesaid Squanto. With whom, after friendly entertainment and some gifts given him, they made a peace with him (which hath now continued this 24 years) in these terms:

I. That neither he nor any of his, should injure or do hurt to any of their people.

II. That if any of his did any hurt to any of theirs, he should send the offender that they might punish him.

III. That if any thing were taken away from any of theirs, he should cause it to be restored; and they should do the like to his.

IV. That if any did unjustly war against him, they would aid him; and if any did war against them, he should aid them.

V. That he should send to his neighbours confederates to certify them of this, that they might not wrong them, but might be likewise comprised in the conditions of peace.

VI. That when their men came to them, they should leave their bows and arrows behind them.

**Supporting Question 2**

**Featured Source**

**Source C:** William Bradford, description of an outbreak of smallpox among the Wampanoag, *Of Plymouth Plantation* (excerpt), 1651

**NOTE:** Disease for which they had no immunities tore through Native Americans communities soon after their first extended contact with Europeans. William Bradford describes one such outbreak in *Of Plymouth Plantation*, his record of activities written over a three decades from 1621 to 1651

**William Bradford on Sickness among the Natives (1634)**

This spring, also, those Indians that lived about their trading house there fell sick of the smallpox, and died most miserably; for a sorer disease cannot befall them; they fear it more than the plague, for usually they that have this disease have them in abundance, and for want of bedding and linen and other helps, they fall into a lamentable condition, as they lie on their hard mats, the pox breaking and mattering, and running one into another, their skin cleaving (by reason thereof) to the mats they lie on; when they turn them a whole side will flay off at once, (as it were) and they will be all of a gore blood, most fearful to behold; and then being very sore, what with cold and other distempers, they die like rotten sheep. The condition of this people was so lamentable, and they fell down so generally of this disease, as they were (in the end) not able to help one another; no, not to make a fire, nor to fetch a little water to drink, nor any to bury the dead; but would strive as long as they could, and when they could procure no other means to make fire, they would burn the wooden trays and dishes they ate their meat in, and their very bows and arrows, and some would crawl out on all fours to get a little water, and sometimes die by the way, and not be able to get in again. But those of the English house (though at first they were afraid of the infection) yet seeing their woeful and sad condition, and hearing their pitiful cries and lamentations, they had compassion of them, and daily fetched them wood and water, and made them fires, got them victuals whilst they lived, and buried them when they died. For very few of them escaped, notwithstanding they did what they could for them, to the hazard of themselves. The chief Sachem himself now died, and almost all his friends and kindred. But by the marvelous goodness and providence of God not one of the English was so much as sick, or in the least measure tainted with this disease though they daily did these offices for them for many weeks together. And this mercy which they showed them was kindly taken, and thankfully acknowledged of all the Indians that knew or heard of the same; and their ministers here did much commend and reward them for the same....

Supporting Question 3

**Featured Source**

**Source A:** United States Census Bureau, chart depicting the population of the New England colonies, 1620–1750, 2015

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Supporting Question 3

Featured Source

Source B: Image bank: Maps of 17th-century Plymouth settlements

Image 1: Map of Wampanoag areas in modern-day Massachusetts, “Territory of the Wampanoag.” © 2007 National Geographic. Used with permission.
Image 2: Map depicting Plymouth colony locations in modern-day Massachusetts, “Map of the Plymouth Colony Showing Town Locations,” 1620–1691.

Map by Hoodinski. 2011. Creative Commons ShareAlike 3.0 license.
Supporting Question 3

| Featured Source | Source C: John Easton, an account of Metacom describing Native American complaints about the English Settlers, A Relation of the Indian War (excerpts), 1675 |

NOTE: Metacom, also known as King Philip, leader of the Wampanoag near Plymouth colony, led many other Native Americans into a widespread revolt against the colonists of southern New England in 1675. The conflict had been brewing for some time over a set of longstanding grievances between Europeans and Native Americans. In that tense atmosphere, John Easton, attorney general of the Rhode Island colony, met King Philip in June 1675 in an effort to negotiate a settlement. Easton recorded King Philip’s complaints, including the steady loss of Wampanoag land to the Europeans, the English colonists’ growing herds of cattle and their destruction of Native American crops, and the unequal justice Native Americans received in the English courts. This meeting between Easton and Metacom proved futile, however, and the war (which became the bloodiest in US history relative to the size of the population) began late that month.

Easton text

In the winter in the year 1674 an Indian was found dead, and by a Coroner’s inquest of Plymouth Colony judged murdered. He was found dead in a hole through ice broken in a pond, with his gun and some fowl by him. Some English supposed him thrown in. Some Indians that I judged intelligible and impartial in that case did think he fell in, and was so drowned and that the ice did hurt his throat, as the English said it was cut; but they acknowledged that sometimes naughty Indians would kill others but not, as ever they heard, to obscure it, as if the dead Indian was not murdered....And the report came, that the three Indians had confessed and accused Philip so to employ them, and that the English would hang Philip, so the Indians were afraid, and reported that the English had flattered them (or by threats) to belie Philip that they might kill him to have his Land; and that if Philip had done it, it was their Law so to execute whomever their kings judged deserved it, and that he had no cause to hide it. ...

Then to endeavor to prevent [war], we sent a man to Philip to say that if he would come to the ferry, we would come over to speak with him,...Philip called his council and agreed to come to us; he came himself unarmed and about 40 of his men armed....The Indians owned that fighting was the worst way; then they propounded how right might take place ...

...Another grievance was that the English cattle and horses still increased so that when they removed 30 miles from where the English had anything to do, they could not keep their corn from being spoiled, they never being used to fence, and thought that when the English bought land of them that they would have kept their cattle upon their own land. Another grievance was that the English were so eager to sell the Indians liquors that most of the Indians spent all in drunkenness and then ravened upon the sober Indians and, they did believe, often did hurt the English cattle, and their kings could not prevent it....In this time some Indians fell to pilfering some houses that the English had left, and an old man and a lad going to one of those houses did see 3...
Indians run out thereof. The old man bid the young man shoot, so he did, and an Indian fell down but got away again. It is reported that then some Indians came to the garrison and asked why they shot the Indian. They asked whether he was dead. The Indians said yea. An English lad said it was no matter. The men endeavored to inform them it was but an idle lad’s words, but the Indians in haste went away and did not harken to them. The next day the lad that shot the Indian and his father and five more English were killed; so the war began with Philip....But I am confident it would be best for English and Indians that a peace were made upon honest terms for each to have a due propriety and to enjoy it without oppression or usurpation by one to the other. But the English dare not trust the Indians’ promises; neither the Indians to the English’s promises; and each has great cause therefore.

Supporting Question 3

**Featured Source**

**Source D:** Knowledge Quest, map of King Philip’s War, 1675–1676, no date