

PROJECT TITLE: Should I Stay or Should I Go?	
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CLASSROOM PRACTICE (DOCUMENT #2)

1. HI Overview/Teaching Thesis

The majority of European immigrants to the American colonies arrived as indentured servants. This lesson challenges students to ask why these men and women sacrificed a portion of their freedom to come to America. Did they see the colonies as the “land of opportunity” that would draw immigrant to the United States in later centuries? Were they forced to come because of conditions at home? Placing their decision in the larger context of the social and economic conditions within Great Britain in the 17th century will give students greater insight into their motivations. Furthermore, students will develop a better understanding of the institution that laid the foundation for the slave economy of colonial America and the young United States.

2. Suggested Grade Level and Length of Activities

6th grade U.S. History
 Lesson 1 – 90 minute block
 Lesson 2 – 90 minute block

3. Significance & Relevance:

Virginia Standards of Learning

- USI.1 The student will develop skills for historical and geographical analysis, including the ability to
- a) identify and interpret primary and secondary source documents to increase understanding of events and life in United States history to 1877.
- USI.5 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the factors that shaped colonial America by
- c) describing colonial life in America from the perspective of large landowners, farmers, artisans, women, indentured servants, and slaves.

OAH National History Standards

- 3B Students will demonstrate understanding of economic life and development of labor systems in the colonies by
- comparing the characteristics of free labor, indentured servitude, and chattel slavery.

OAH Historical Inquiry Skills

Historical Analysis and Interpretation

- Students will read and interpret primary sources that deal with indentured servitude. They will use the sources to evaluate indentured servitude as a labor system and compare it to free labor and slavery.

Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

- Students will analyze the motivations that led people to enter indentured servitude in the American colonies and will evaluate their decisions.

4. Lesson Objectives

- Students will be able to explain the motivations that led people to become indentured servants.
- Students will be able to analyze and evaluate individuals' decisions to become indentured servants.
- Students will be able to describe the conditions faced by indentured servants in the colonies.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast indentured servitude, free labor, and slavery.

5. Lesson Plans or Instructional Activities –

- Lesson 1: Should I Stay or Should I Go? – Students will complete a choose-your-own-adventure story in which they become an indentured servant in the American colonies. Through this story, students will learn some of the factors that led people to become indentured servants. They will evaluate their choices and analyze the factors that led many people to become indentured servants in the colonies.
- Lesson 2: Investigating Indentured Servitude – Students will analyze primary sources and use them to evaluate indentured servitude in the colonies. They will compare and contrast indentured servitude, free labor, and slavery.

9. Technology

- Lesson 1 – Each student will use a computer, or students can work in pairs or small groups with one computer each. The choose-your-own-adventure activity uses hyperlinked documents to make the story more interactive. This enables students to play the role of a historical character rather than just reading or talking about the past.

10. Modifications, Differentiation, and Extensions

Lesson 1

- After completing the choose-your-own-adventure story, students can write a sequel that tells the fate of their character. This story should be realistic.
- For more of a challenge, this sequel can have some decision-making points like the original story.
- As an alternative to the online choose-your-own adventure, student with a lower reading level could complete the activity titled “Englishwoman: Should you become an indentured servant in America?” from *Key Decisions in U.S. History, Vol. 1* (J. Weston Walch: 1997).

Lesson 2

- To explore this topic in more depth, students could read *Virginia Bound*, by Amy Butler. This historical fiction novel follows orphan Rob Brackett from London to Virginia, where he becomes an indentured servant.

- Some of these primary sources could be “translated” into easier language for students with lower reading abilities.
- Students could analyze more than one document each.
- Students could be given a set of these documents to make a case for or against indentured servitude in a debate.

11. Annotated list of supplemental resources

- Virtual Jamestown (<http://www.virtualjamestown.org/>) – This site contains archives of indentured servant contracts and indentured servant and slave runaway ads from Virginia’s colonial era. It also contains some firsthand accounts and lots of records from the Virginia Company.
- Menzin, M. (2004). How and why they came: narratives of migration. *OAH Magazine of History*. April 2004, pp. 38-40.
This is a lesson in which students compare two personal narratives of colonists who represent very different experiences: Roger Clap, a young Puritan who moves to Massachusetts Bay Colony, and William Moraley, an indentured servant who moves to Virginia.
- GMU’s History Matters (<http://www.historymatters.org>) – This site contains thousands of primary sources, including numerous firsthand accounts of indentured servitude. Search for “indentured servant” in the search box.

12. Acknowledgements

Thanks to Chris Bunin, Bobbie Ann Davis, and Scott Honaker for reviewing this instructional kit and giving me helpful suggestions to improve it.

Thanks to Hannah Ayers and Karen Grove for pointing me toward several helpful resources used in my research.

APPENDIX (FOLDER)

13. Related Materials & Resources

I have included PDF files of handouts, because some fonts might not open up on all computers in word processing documents. Word processing documents are also included so teachers can modify the handouts.

Lesson 1

- Lesson 1 Plan
- Website: <http://indentureadventure.wikispaces.com/>
- Explain Yourself!
- Indentured Servants notes
- Indentured Servant Demographics

Lesson 2

- Lesson 2 Plan
- Checking the Evidence
- Evaluating Indentured Servitude
- Comparing Labor Systems
- Source A – 1684 indenture contract

- Source B – Elizabeth Sprigs letter
- Source C – John Hammond pamphlet
- Source D – Virginia general court ruling
- Source E – Maryland servant laws
- Source F – Richard Frethorne letter
- Source G – Plymouth court documents
- Source H – George Alsop account
- Source I – Richard Ligon account