

A Colonist's Journal – A Super-Fun Project for US History

Mr. Kersey's 8th Grade History Class

Introduction: You are British subject and a colonist about to make your way to the New World in search of a better life, or perhaps just a little adventure. What better way to record your experiences for all to know than in a journal that you can pass down to future generations?

For this project you will create a journal of your thoughts and experiences as you make your way to the New World to share with all those who care to read it.

Objectives:

- To see the world through the eyes of people who chose to live life to the fullest and risk it all in an English colony, and to learn about their experiences.
- To sharpen your research skills.
- To have a little fun!

Directions:

Create an authentic looking historical document - in this case a diary or journal – that belonged to an English colonist. The journal must have at least **four** separate entries that tell us what your world is like and what your thoughts and feelings are at **four** different points in your grand adventure.

- You should write about the point just before your departure on the great ship that will take you to your new home, or you may record your thoughts and experiences for a period of time spent on board the ocean-going vessel as you make your way to your colony.
- You should have an entry describing your first day or two in the New World. What are your thoughts or concerns? What do you see? What are the people around you like?
- You must tell us about an experience or two that occurs during your first month in the colony.
- Finally, you need to tell us about your life after you have been in the colony at least a year, after the “seasoning,” and whether or not you will stay, and why.

Your journal entries should be at least **two paragraphs** each. They should be rich with **historically accurate** details of your life. You should imagine you are really living in the colonial period. Think about what your life might be like. You can be anybody or anyone you like, from any walk of life, as long as it is historically realistic. Remember to give us the details. Do you own land? Are you an indentured servant? Are you a slave? Do you plan to stay in the New World, or are you just seeking your fortune before you return to the comforts of King and Country?

In your journal you must tell us to which English colony you are going. It may be a New England colony, a middle colony, a Southern colony - perhaps Jamestown itself. You decide, but remember to include relevant, accurate details for the colony you visit.

Your journal must also have at least **one illustration** that depicts an aspect of your life during this exciting time.

Your journal should look authentic, so try to stay away from typing it. A colonist in the mid-1600's didn't have a typewriter or a computer. Be creative with this and have a little fun! Imagine what a 300 year old journal or notebook might look like today.

You will use books and the World Wide Web as your primary sources of information. Feel free to use other sources as necessary, including other books, videos, or reference materials. You must have at least **three (3) sources**. One must be a book, and one must be a web site. You must include a **bibliography** on a separate sheet of paper, typed.

Due Date:

You must turn in your journal by Friday, _____. You will have two or three class periods to work on your journal, but the majority of this project will be completed outside of class. This gives you a little over two weeks to complete this project. Budget your time well.

Rubric:

A: Your journal is awesome. It shows that you have really spent some time thinking about what life as a colonist must have been like. Your journal also shows that you have used resources to make sure your writing is historically accurate. It is neat, and looks "authentic". It meets or exceeds all of the above requirements.

B: Your journal is really well done. It basically meets all of the requirements mentioned above. It shows that you have a real grasp of a colonist's experience. You have clearly used resources to help you make sure it is historically accurate. It may have one or two minor errors such as spelling or grammar.

C: Your journal is acceptable. It meets all or most of the requirements mentioned above. It may be missing an element or have a few minor errors, but basically shows that you have an understanding of what a colonist's voyage across the sea might have been like.

D/F: Your journal is missing one or more major elements or fails to meet the requirements mentioned above. You'll need to redo your project.