

# Salem Witch Trials WebQuest

## An Internet WebQuest on Salem Witch Trials

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### **Introduction**

Imagine that you and a team of learners are presented with the task of describing an elephant. You are each blindfolded and guided to an elephant. Each of you touches a different part of the animal. Based upon what each of you explored, each will have a different point of view about elephants. Which is the truth? When we study complex topics, there is usually a lot more to a topic than we learn after a quick exploration.

In the following WebQuest, you will use the power of teamwork to learn all about Salem Witch Trials. Each person on your team will become an expert on some aspect of Salem Witch Trials and then you will come together at the end to share and get a better understanding of the topic as a whole.

You will do the following upon completion of the group's research:

1. Poster on what you learned. Feel free to draw, use cut-outs from magazines, newspapers, information from the internet, etc.
2. Prepare detailed responses to the assigned tasks for your group.
3. Prepare a presentation to deliver to the class.
4. Score yourself and each person in your group using a class generated rubric.

### **Task**

Each team has been assigned a specific role (see handouts). You will be working with your assigned sites. By completing this WebQuest, you should achieve the following goals:

- 1) develop an interest in the study of Salem Witch Trials
- 2) use the power of the Internet for advanced exploration
- 3) learn information about key aspects of Salem Witch Trials
- 4) realize that complex topics can be looked at from various perspectives
- 5) formulate and support an opinion based on your roles; and 6) work with teammates to determine a combined action plan.

### **Process**

You will be working together as a group exploring web sites that your teacher has selected.

You should start with the pages that are labeled 'Background Information' before dividing into groups.

Each group has their Task to complete with the same set of web sites to use. These common websites will support ELLs in that they can ask outside their groups for clarification if necessary.

There is a task organizer and an evaluation rubric will be provided by the teacher after the teacher introduces the activity.

### **Phase 1 - Background Information**

This webquest will be over 3 periods. As an introduction to this activity, we will look at how mass hysteria occurs in society---prejudice, fear, anger, etc. We will access prior knowledge to see what knowledge you already have (or not) and from this jump off point, go into the Salem Witch Trials hysteria webquest.

Remember that every member of your group must be on task.

Remember that every group will be presenting to the class.

Remember that every group will be involved in creating a detailed poster that addresses what the group learned.

Remember that everyone must be ready to speak and answer questions.

Remember that all written work must be proofed before it is submitted.

### **Phase 2 – Roles**

These roles were chosen because they each define the most important elements of Salem Witch Trials.

Each team has been assigned a particular role with links and instructions below. Here are the general instructions for all of you. Please see your specific instructions and questions below.

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Every group will first review the video background on the Salem Witch Trials.

2. Read through the files designated for your group (see your group's handout). You can print out pages and underline the parts that you feel are important or cut and paste from the webpage into a word processor. Print out copies.
3. Remember to include the URL of the page you take information from so you can return to it and use it as a citation.
4. Focus what you've learned into one main opinion that answers the assigned Task.
5. A poster, write up (description of your group's findings), and presentation must be prepared.

### **Video Background:**

- [The Story of the Salem Witch Trials](#)

Every group will start here first to build background information.

### **Background-Myths, Theories, Timelines:**

- [Myths, Historical Theories About Their Origins, Timeline of Events](#)

Use these links to answer your questions.

1. How did the witch hunt start?
2. Using the Timeline of Events, write a detailed paragraph on how events unfurled.
3. Why is it important to expose the myths behind the witch hunt?

### **Interaction--Would you survive? Try the test!**

Use these links to answer the following questions.

- [Would You Have Survived It?](#)
  - [Various Images of Salem Witch Trials](#)
1. How easy was it to become a victim of a witch hunt?
  2. How could you have avoided it?
  3. Why didn't you survive, or if you did survive, how did you manage to do so?
- Use this link to answer the following questions.

### **Museum:**

- [Salem Witch Museum, Salem, Massachusetts](#)
1. Take the class on a tour of the Salem Witch Museum.
  2. How 'fair' were the trials?
  3. Why should people visit this site?

### **Phase 3 - Reaching Consensus**

You have all learned about different parts of Salem Witch Trials. Now group members come back to the larger WebQuest team with expertise gained by searching from one perspective. You must all now complete the Task as a group. Each of you will bring a certain viewpoint to the answer: some of you will agree and others disagree.

Use information, pictures, movies, facts, opinions, etc. from the web sites you explored to convince your teammates that your viewpoint is important and should be part of your team's response.

Your WebQuest team should write out an answer that everyone on the team can live with.

### **Conclusion**

So is an elephant smooth, rough, soft, or hard? Well, when you're blindfolded and only \*looking\* at one part, it's easy to come up with an answer that may not be completely right. It's the same for understanding a topic as broad or complex as Salem Witch Trials: when you only know part of the puzzle can you decide if an elephant is smooth, rough, soft, or hard? Well, when you're blindfolded and only \*looking\* at one part, it's easy to come up with an answer that may not be completely right. It's the same for understanding a topic as broad or complex as Salem Witch Trials: when you only know part of the picture, you only know part of the picture. Now you all know a lot more. Nice work. You should be proud of yourselves! How can you use what you've learned to see beyond the black and white of a topic and into the grayer areas? What other parts of Salem Witch Trials could still be explored? Remember, learning never stops. You only know part of the picture. Now you all know a lot more. Nice work. You should be proud of yourselves!

How can you use what you've learned to see beyond the black and white of a topic and into the grayer areas? What other parts of Salem Witch Trials could still be explored? Remember, learning never stops.