

STORYPATH®

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Series: **Storypath Library**

Title: **The First Thanksgiving: The Wampanoags**

ISBN: **978-1-56004-601-1**

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Code: **STP530**

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Native American Advisor

I am grateful to Linda Coombs, Director of the Wampanoag Indian Program of Plimoth Plantation. Ms. Coombs is Aquinnah Wampanoag, and served as the Native American advisor for both the Handbook and the Content Cards for this unit. I appreciate her candid and thorough suggestions.

Class Test Sites

I am grateful to the following teachers who piloted *The First Thanksgiving* in their classrooms. My thanks to them for their ideas and suggestions in the development of the unit.

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STP530 v1.1.1

978-1-56004-601-1

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Published by Storypath

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The
First Thanksgiving
The Wampanoags

by Margit E. McGuire, Ph.D.

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ABOUT STORYPATH

THE STORYPATH STRATEGY

Storypath offers both a structure for organizing the social studies curriculum and an instructional strategy for teaching. The structure is a familiar one: the story. The strategy is grounded in a belief that students learn best when they are active participants in their own learning, and places students' own efforts to understand at the center of the educational enterprise. Together, the structure and the teaching strategy ensure that students feel strongly motivated and have meaningful and memorable learning experiences.

Originally developed in Scotland during the 1960s, Storypath draws support from decades of experience with teachers and students. The approach has its roots in these beliefs about students and learning:

- The world is complex and presents many layers of information. Students know a good deal about how the world works and have a reservoir of knowledge that is often untapped in the classroom.
- When students build on that knowledge through activities such as questioning and researching, new understandings are acquired. Because students construct their own knowledge and understanding of their world, their learning is more meaningful and memorable.
- Problem solving is a natural and powerful human endeavor. When students are engaged in problem-solving, they take ownership for their learning.
- The story form integrates content and skills from many disciplines and provides a context for students to gain a deeper, more complex understanding of major concepts.

AN INQUIRY APPROACH

Questioning, by both teacher and students, is a key component of Storypath. Through the story structure and the discourse it creates, the teacher guides students in their search for meaning and understanding as they acquire new knowledge and skills. Your questions, and the discussions they engender, cause students to:

- ask their own questions and think critically about what they know;
- use their prior knowledge to make sense of new information;
- connect personally to important social studies concepts.

The story structure and inquiry guided by unit goals provide the framework for students to integrate skills and complex content through problems they encounter. As they do so, their understanding of important concepts is extended and key connections are made.

THE STORY STRUCTURE

For thousands of years, stories have helped us create order and make connections between events. Storypath’s narrative structure helps students understand concepts that they often find difficult to comprehend in the traditional social studies curriculum.

Each Storypath unit centers on a unique and engaging story that provides a concrete context for understanding the social science content. This story may be based on actual historical events, as developed in *Struggle for Independence*. Or the story might instead be based on typical community or business structures, as developed in *Families in Their Neighborhoods* or in *Understanding the Marketplace*. From all of these structures, students develop a meaningful context for developing understanding of the topic.

Typical structure of a Storypath unit

CREATING THE SETTING

Students create the setting by completing a frieze or mural of the place.

CREATING THE CHARACTERS

Students create characters for the story whose roles they will play during subsequent episodes.

BUILDING CONTEXT

Students are involved in activities such as reading and writing to stimulate them to think more deeply about the people and the place they have created.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Characters confront problems typical of those faced by people of that time and place.

CONCLUDING EVENT

Students plan and participate in an activity that brings closure to the story.

PLANNING THE UNIT

THE WAMPANOAGS

MAKE KEY DECISIONS

Make Classroom Space for the Storypath. You will need ample wall space for displaying the setting and characters that students create. You will want to attach objects with blue tack or masking tape so they can be easily moved as the setting changes with the seasons. Additionally, you will need space to display various lists, artifacts, and other materials that students create. A table set in front of the frieze allows three-dimensional homes, fields, and other features to be displayed and serves as an extension of the frieze.

Organize Students. Beginning in Episode 2, students are organized into groups that represent extended families. Each student will create one character. You may want to consider how large to make the groups. Groups of four to six students are recommended. Students will role-play the characters they have developed. At different points throughout the unit, group members will work together as a family.

Set the Date for the Thanksgiving Celebration. Making the Thanksgiving celebration of this unit coincide with the actual holiday builds understanding of this American tradition. Begin this unit six to eight weeks before Thanksgiving. The timing will depend on a number of factors, such as

- the amount of time spent each day on the unit;
- students' ability to develop the setting, characters, village, and seasons;
- how you integrate the Storypath with the other subjects.

Weave in Historical Information. As you introduce students to this unit, it will be important to let them “figure out” how the Wampanoags lived long ago in their environment. Students will be guided by key questions that you ask as the Storypath develops. At times, you will also provide historical information to move the story forward. Although you may be tempted to simply tell students all of the information before they begin an episode, doing so will jeopardize the problem-solving and critical-thinking strategies that are so central to the Storypath approach.

Use the Student Portfolio to Gather Evidence of Student Learning. The Student Portfolio provides evidence of student understanding of Wampanoag families, their way of life, and historical events of the time. In the Portfolio, students apply reading and writing skills to demonstrate learning. While much of the students' work is displayed to enrich the learning environment, you will want to add it to the Portfolios when the Storypath concludes as a record of their performance.

Create a Learning Community. An open and supportive atmosphere is essential for students to engage in the discourse that is basic to the learning process of the Storypath approach. Students should understand the value of reflective discussions and the importance of collaborative work to deepen their understanding of complex ideas. Consequently, students should be expected to listen carefully and respond thoughtfully and respectfully to one another's ideas.



WRITING: SENSE POEM

Write a sense poem to describe your setting. Complete each of the lines below with at least one describing word (adjective) and a word that names a thing (noun). You can use words from the word bank or any other words you can think of that will give your readers a clear picture of the winter setting.

I see _____

I hear _____

I touch _____

I smell _____

I feel _____

On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite your poem using only the words you wrote on the lines. Use your best handwriting and check for correct spelling.

Your finished poem might look something like this:

Snow-covered trees

Marsh grasses whispering

Sandy cold rocks

Salty damp air

Soft cold snow

Assessment: Beginning: The class poem is copied accurately and read correctly.

Advanced: The poem includes objects from the environment. It uses appropriate describing words for the objects.

It successfully follows the form of a sense poem, and it shows evidence of care in construction and correct spelling.



WORD BANK: FAMILIES

In the column on the left, make a list of the roles in a family. In the other column, write words that tell about families.

Family roles	Other words about family
mother	caring

What special skills do your family members have?



DATE _____

FAMILY MEMBERS

Students in the group:

Write the names of your family members below.

_____ (first name) (last name) (family role) (age)

Assessment: Names and family roles are complete; ages are realistic for the roles.

CUSTOMIZE THE UNIT

Adapt the Unit. There may be many times in this unit when you want to modify the curriculum to suit the needs of your own class and follow the logical progression of the story. Alternative activities or special arrangements are suggested at various points to assist you in adapting the unit to meet your unique curriculum goals.

Frequently, students will provide an unanticipated twist to the Storypath, or important learning opportunities will arise. The Storypath allows for the accommodation of those special circumstances.

This unit was created so that students with a broad range of reading and writing skills can all participate. There are many opportunities for reading and writing, but other activities can easily be substituted and levels of scaffolding can vary. This unit is ideal to use when you want to establish or sustain a positive classroom climate and lay the groundwork for cooperative group skills.

Use Students' Experiences. At times, students will role-play the characters in the story to understand particular viewpoints. At other times, students will reflect on the events of this unit out of role so that the situations can be examined and understood from students' own perspectives. These are good opportunities to help students connect their own experiences to those of the Storypath and to deepen their understanding of an American Indian culture of long ago.

INVOLVE OTHERS

Involve Other Classrooms. You may find that another class is celebrating Thanksgiving from the Pilgrims' point of view. The feast could be celebrated by taking your class to the other class's room for the concluding event in Episode 7.

Involve Families. Parents and other family members can participate in the Thanksgiving feast. They can play the roles of Pilgrims or extended family members.

Some students' families may have Wampanoag ancestry from the eastern woodlands. Invite these family members to share their knowledge, traditions, and philosophy.

Involve Adults or Older Students. In Episodes 5 and 6, arrange for an adult or older student to role-play Squanto. Teaching Masters are provided to prepare the participant for these episodes.

Involve the Community. Guest speakers and field trips to museums can enrich students' understanding of this time and place. Museums often have artifact boxes that they will ship to schools. Be sure that you are getting artifacts that represent the Wampanoags or American Indians of the eastern woodlands. Visits by guest speakers and field trips should occur at the end of the unit when students can knowledgeably compare and contrast their experiences with the new information. Such comparisons make for a more powerful and memorable learning experience.

CREATING THE CHARACTERS THE FAMILIES

2

EPISODE

INTRODUCING THE CHARACTERS

page 20

Students discuss the extended families who lived in their eastern woodlands setting.

Materials Portfolio 6, *Word Bank: Families*, p. 9
Content Slide Set 2

Grouping Whole class

Schedule Approximately 30 minutes

CREATING THE FAMILIES

page 20

Students create the family members and their biographies.

Materials Teaching Master 2, *Outline for the Character Figure*, TH p. 47
Teaching Master 3, *Character Biography*, TH p. 48
Portfolio 7, *Family Members*, p. 10
Content Slide Sets 2–6

For the characters:

- various colors of construction and tissue paper
- yarn, fabric scraps such as felt or burlap, cotton balls
- colored markers, crayons, colored chalk, glue, tape, scissors
- large sheet of paper, poster board for characters and biographies

For the word bank: index cards, thick black marker

Grouping 4 or 6 per group to make families; individually to make characters

Schedule 2 hours spread over several days

CONCLUDING EPISODE 2

page 23

Students reflect on their progress and introduce their families.

Materials Materials for characters' name tags

Grouping Whole class

Schedule 1–2 hours spread over a few days

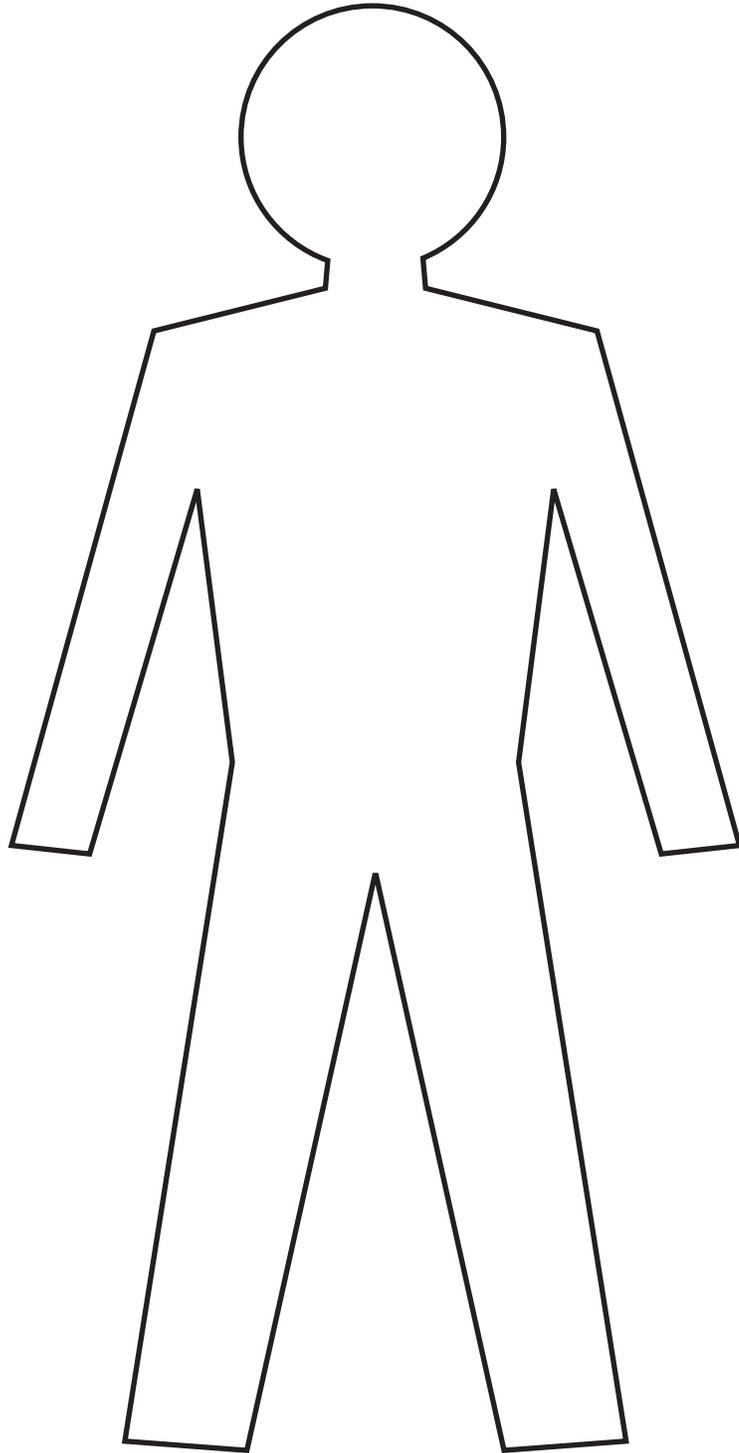
EPISODE OBJECTIVES



- **Culture/Social Interaction** *Create a community of families based on the physical environment and the understanding of family.*
- **Culture/Social Interaction** *Identify how extended families affected the individuals in Wampanoag society.*
- **History** *Understand the extended family system used by the people of the eastern woodlands.*
- **Social Skills** *Organize, plan, and make decisions while creating characters.*
- **Critical Thinking** *Organize ideas from class discussion in new ways to create unique characters.*
- **Literacy** *Create a vocabulary word bank based on family.*
- **Literacy** *Write a character biography; introduce the character to the class.*

Name _____ Date _____

OUTLINE FOR THE CHARACTER FIGURE



Name _____ Date _____

CHARACTER BIOGRAPHY

1. Name of Character:

2. Age: _____

3. Family Role: _____

4. Personality: _____

5. Special Skills: _____

1. Tell about the Massachusetts woods in winter.

(main idea/supporting details)

2. How is the winter scene like the one you created?

(comparing and contrasting)



SET 1

Slide 2



Birch trees lose their leaves in winter. The leaves grow back in spring.

Deer stay deep in the forest, away from the winds.

Pine trees have needles, which stay on the trees all year long.

Raccoons catch small fish along the river.

Beavers repair their lodges made of sticks, grass, and mud.



sparrow



eastern bluebird





How did families work together?

Many years ago, the Wampanoag Indians were the only people living in the area around Massachusetts. They lived in extended families. Extended families included parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Family members learned from each other and worked together.



1. What jobs are people doing in this picture?

(understanding visuals)

2. How are these families like yours? How are they different?

(connecting)

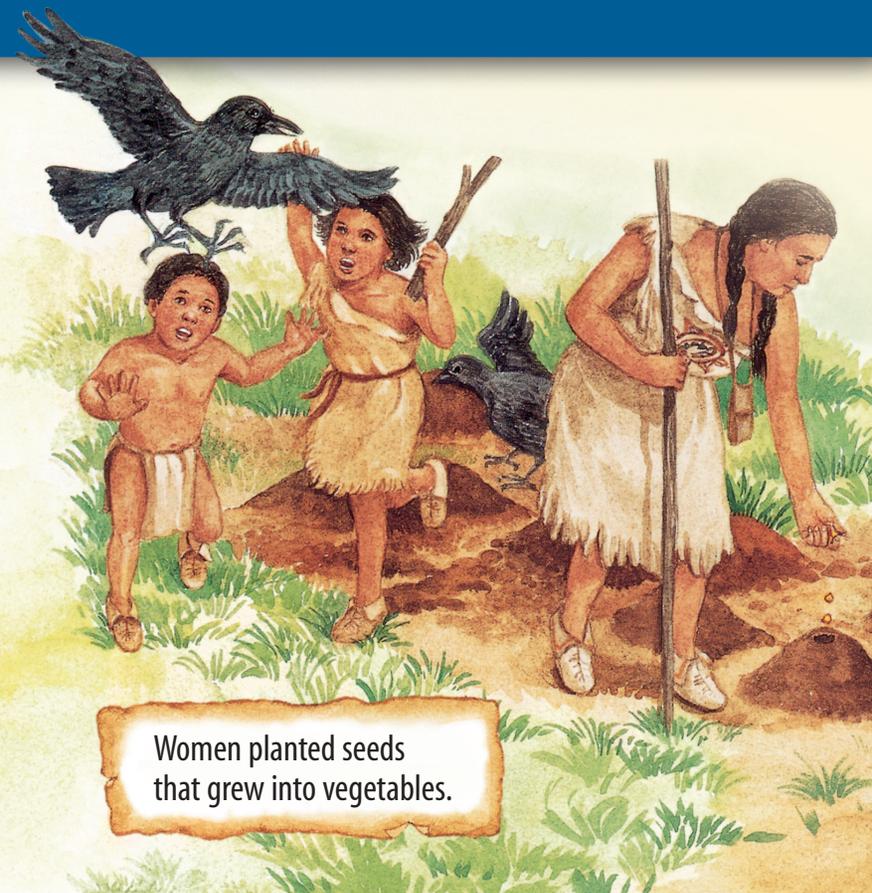
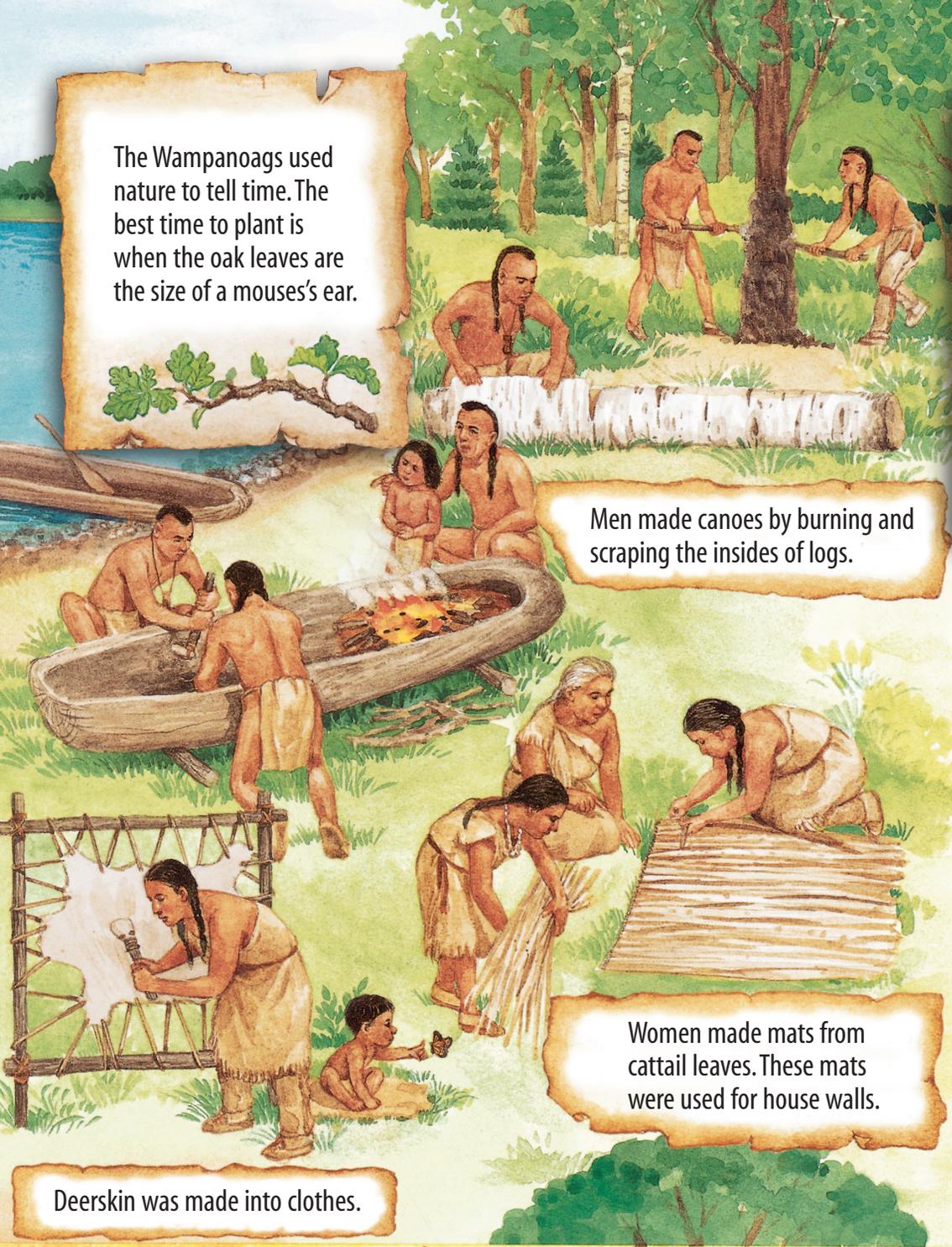
The Wampanoags used nature to tell time. The best time to plant is when the oak leaves are the size of a mouse's ear.

Men made canoes by burning and scraping the insides of logs.

Women made mats from cattail leaves. These mats were used for house walls.

Deerskin was made into clothes.

Women planted seeds that grew into vegetables.



hoe



spade



scraper



ax



cattails





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