

Names: Amy Gaines & Ashley Noe

Date: October 2020

PA2 DBQ Lesson Title: Indentured Servitude: Would you be willing to be an indentured servant to come to America?

Grade Level: 8

Course Name: U.S. History

Unit Name: Colonial America

KASS Standards Addressed in this Lesson: 8.H.CH.1, 8.H.CH.2, 8.I.U.E.1, 8.I.U.E.2, 8.I.U.E.3

Indentured Servitude - Would you be willing to be an indentured servant for a voyage to America?

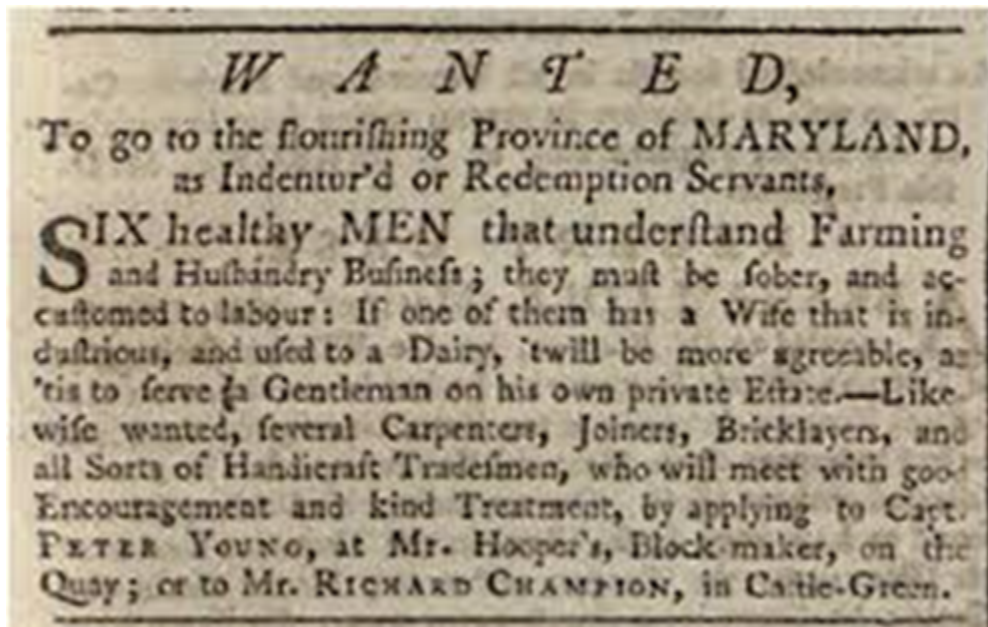


More labor was needed in the early colonies in North America. It was also expensive to move to the colonies and start a new life. Many immigrants, therefore, came over as indentured servants. A landowner in the colonies paid for their ocean passage and their living expenses in exchange for their labor on a farm or in a shop. The primary sources below show different perspectives on this practice.

Examine the following documents and make the decision about indentured servitude - Would you be willing to do be an indentured servant for a voyage to America?

HOOK EXERCISE

The year is 1647 and you are a poor, 23 year-old male in Great Britain. Because you were poor and your family needed you to work to help support them, you did not get to attend school and you can not read or write. There is a shortage of land and you fear that you will never be successful in Great Britain. You see the following ad in the local newspaper:



Would you be willing to be indentured to pay for the voyage to the New World?

What are the benefits?

What are the drawbacks?

Background Essay

Indentured Servants: Would you be willing to be one?

People from all social classes flocked to the newly established 13 British colonies. Many came for wealth or religious freedom, but a large group desired land. Land was scarce in England. In the New World one could obtain land by simply claiming it. One group that desired land was the low class, yet they could not afford to finance the voyage to America. One way they could pay for the trip was to sign up as an indentured servant. An indentured servant is a laborer who agreed to work without pay in exchange for a trip to America.

As an indentured servant, men and women were enslaved to the owner for an amount of time, usually 5 to 7 years. Often they were not treated well during their time of service. Once the time expired, they were given their freedom plus some goods and land, sometimes up to 15 acres, on which to start up their lives.

Indentured Servants first reached America in the 1610's in the newly formed colony of Jamestown. The men that first established the Jamestown colony faced many hardships which can be attributed to the fact that a majority of them were classified as "gentlemen" and not accustomed to working. Indentured Servants within the colony could provide the much needed labor and specialized skills that were necessary.

How did slaves differ from indentured servants? Slavery was involuntary unpaid labor. At first, there were far less slaves in the colonies than indentured servants. These amounts shifted over time as more and more slaves were imported across the Middle Passage from Africa to the New World. These people were captured, put on ships and sent to the New World to work on the plantations. Although many died on the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, the ones that survived were sold to the highest bidder and forced to work for life. These slaves had no rights granted to them by their owners. They were not even considered citizens.

1. What did Indentured Servants hope to gain in the New World?
2. How long was the typical time for an indentured servant to be in bondage?
3. When did indentured servitude become common in the America's?
4. Use context clues to define or explain each of the following:

Indentured servant –

Slavery-

Middle Passage –

5. What happened when the time was fulfilled for the Indentured Servants?

Document A

This is to give Notice,
THAT the Ship ESTHER, Capt. John Wills, will be ready to sail for Maryland, some time in February, next: Any Person that hath a mind to go over as a Servant, will have necessary Lodging and Clothes as usual, to go by Indenture for a Term of Years; and any Tradesmen, who have a mind to go over, may go on the same Terms, or Wages by the Year: If any Husbandman hath a mind to go over with his Family, will have very good Encouragement; a Cooper that is a Work-man, may have good Wages by the Year, for a Term of Years, and to be employ'd in the Service of Capt. John Colvill; as likewise any Person who understands Brewing, and making Malt. All Persons, Men or Women, that have a mind to go over, may apply to Mr. Matthias Giles, in Love-lane, near Sandgate; or to Capt. Wills, who may be met with on board the said Ship, now at Newcastle, who will treat with any Person, &c.

An ad for indentured servants, and more, published in the *Newcastle Courant*, 12 January 1739. [Read the full page.](#)

1. What type of document is this?
2. Where is the ship sailing to?
3. What occupations are most desired for indentured servants, according to this document?
4. What are those who become indentured servants promised?
5. How could this document convince you to become an indentured servant?

Document B

George Alsop's Account As An Indentured Servant

Excerpted and adapted by Actively Learn staff

They whose cannot afford to purchase their own transportation over into *Mary-Land*, can live pleniously well if they give up four years of sordid liberty. And what's a four year's servitude to advantage a man all the remainder of his days, making his predecessors happy in his abilities, which he attained in such a small a time?

Now those that commit themselves unto the care of the Merchant to carry them over, they need not trouble themselves with any inquiries about their voyage; for there is such an honest care and provision made for them all the time they remain aboard the ship while they are sailing over. They will want for nothing that is necessary and convenient during the journey.

Some are always breathing forth filthy dregs of abusive lies, saying that those which are transported over here, are sold in open market for slaves. This is an untruth, for I so confidently believe they could not find one to parallel this. The servants here in *Mary-Land* have the least cause to complain, either for strictness of servitude, want of Provisions, or need of apparel.

For two months, when the Sun is hottest, they claim an ancient and customary privilege, to rest themselves three hours in the day within the house. This is undeniably granted to them that work in the fields. In the Winter time, which lasts three months (*viz.*) *December, January, and February*, they do little or no work or employment, save cutting of wood to make good fires to sit by. Unless their Ingenuity will prompt them to hunt the Deer, or Boar, or recreate themselves in Fowling, to slaughter the Swans.

He that's a Tradesman here in *Mary-Land* (though a Servant), lives as well as most common Handicrafts do in *London*, though they may want something of that Liberty which Freemen have, to go and come at their pleasure.

He that lives as a servant in this Province, must only serve four years, and when his time expires, his Master must give him fifty acres of land, corn for a full year, and three suits of apparel, and the tools to work. Not only are they free, but they are ready to set up for themselves, and when once entered, they live passingly well.

The Women that go over into this Province as Servants, have the best luck here as in any place of the world besides; for as soon as they land, they are courted for marriage, and a lot faster than would have happened back in London.

In short, touching the Servants of this Province, they live well in the time of their Service, and by their restraintment in that time, they are made capable of living much better when they come to be free.

1. **Is this a primary or secondary source?**
2. **Why did George Alsop agree to indentured servitude and for how long will be "indentured"?**

3. How does he describe the trip to America?
4. How does he view the life of an indentured servant?
5. How can this document be used to persuade someone to become an indentured servant?

Document C

THIS *Indenture* Witnesseth, that John Reid of freedhold in the County of Monnmouth Jersey by and with the Consent of his father John Riad of Sd place hath put himself, and by these Presents doth voluntarily, and of his own free Will and Accord put himself an Apprentice to Robert Livingston Jun of New York with him to live, and (after the Manner of an Apprentice) to Serve from the first Day of Novembr: *Anno Domini*, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Forty two till the full Term of five years be compleat and ended. During all which Term the said Apprentice his said Master faithfully shall serve, his Secrets keep, his lawfull Commands gladly every where obey: he shall do no Damage to His said Master nor see to be done by others without letting or giving Notice to his said master he shall not waste his said Masters Goods, nor lend them unlawfully to any, he shall not commit Fornication, nor contract Matrimony within the said Term. At Cards, Dice or any other unlawful Game, he shall not play, whereby his said Master may have Damage with his own Goods, nor the Goods of others within the said Term, without Lisence [*sic*] from his said Master, he shall neither buy nor [*sic*] sell, he shall not absent himself Day nor Night from his said Masters Service without his Leave, nor haunt Ale-Houses, Taverns or Play-Houses; but in all Things as a faithful Apprentice he shall behave himself to his said Master and all his during the said Term. And the said Master during the said Term shall by the best Means or Method that he can, Teach or cause the said Apprentice to be Taught the Art and Mystery of a Marchent [*sic*] And also shall find an provide unto the said Apprentice sufficient meat Drink and Lodging

For the true Perfomance of all and every the said Covenants and Agreements, either of the said Parties bind themselves unto the other by these Presents. *In Witness* whereof they have hereunto interchangeably put their Hands and Seals this first Day of Novembr. in the Sixteenth Year of His Majesty's Reign *Annoq*; [*sic*] *Domini*, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Forty Two,

Sealed and delivered in

the Presence of

John Reid

John Carpenter

John Reid Jnr:

Richd Smith

1. What is the purpose of this document?
2. What dates will the service begin and end?
3. What rules must the servant abide by?
4. What are the requirements of the Master?

5. Would this document convince you to become an indentured servant?

Document D

The Indenture Contract of Roger Jones (1688)

Roger Jones, servant to Mr. William Churchill, comes and acknowledges that he is freely willing to serve his Master Seven Years from his arrival in Virginia, the said Churchill promising that he will employ his said servant in the store and other areas and not employ him in common working in the ground [no tobacco planting]. At the time of his freedom, said Churchill will give to said Jones a new suit, shoes, and hat [but no land].

1. Why is Roger Jones agreeing to become an indentured servant?
2. What work will he do?
3. Why do you think he will not be planting tobacco?
4. What will he receive when his contract is terminated? What will he not receive?
5. Does this document persuade you to become an indentured servant?

BUCKETING - Getting Ready to Write

Bucketing

Look over all the documents and organize them into your final buckets. Write final bucket labels under each bucket and place the letters of the documents in the buckets where they belong. It is okay to put a document in more than one bucket. Remember, your buckets are going to become your body paragraphs.



Thesis Development and Roadmap

On the chickenfoot below, write your thesis and your roadmap. Your thesis is always an opinion and answers the question. The roadmap is created from your bucket labels and lists the topic areas you will examine in order to prove your thesis.

