



Salem Witch Trials Daily is presented by [The Thing About Salem](#) and [The Thing About Witch Hunts](#)



Week 1 Standard Edition Workbook

January 1-4, 2026: Setting the Stage for Salem

Your Name: _____

Date Started: _____

This Week's Materials

Daily Videos (Salem Witch Trials Daily YouTube Playlist)

- **January 1:** Introduction to Salem Witch Trials Daily
- **January 2:** Five Contributing Factors
- **January 3:** The History of Massachusetts
- **January 4:** Salem's Founding

Weekly Podcast (Supplemental)

The Thing About Salem: "What harm were Salem's supposed witches actually accused of causing?"

This podcast episode provides deeper context and is recommended but optional for completing the course.

How to Use This Workbook

1. **Watch** each daily video (January 1-4)
2. **Use the transcript** as a study resource (optional but helpful)
3. **Complete** the activities below as you go
4. **Read** the Weekly Blog for deeper synthesis
5. **Engage** with the weekly challenges

DAILY TRANSCRIPT ACTIVITIES



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January 1 - Introduction

Fill-in-the-Blank Summary:

In mid-January 1692, _____ and _____ began behaving strangely in the household of Minister _____. They were _____ like dogs and _____ like ducks. Doctors couldn't _____ what was wrong.

Why this matters:

January 2 - Five Contributing Factors

Pause and Reflect:

After the discussion of King Philip's War, pause the video and answer:

Why would a war that happened in the 1670s (20 years earlier) still affect people's mindset in 1692? What kind of trauma lingers?

Annotation Activity:

In your transcript, circle or highlight all FIVE factors mentioned as contributing to the witch trials. Put a star (★) next to the one you think was most powerful.

List the five factors here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Which factor did you star? Why?



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January 3 - Massachusetts History

Pause and Reflect:

After the mention of the charter revocation in 1684, pause and answer:

How would it feel to have your government's legal authority suddenly taken away? What kind of uncertainty would that create?

January 4 - Salem's Founding

Pause and Reflect:

When Roger Conant surrenders leadership to John Endicott, pause and answer:

The settlement was renamed 'Salem' (peace) after this power transition. Does forcing peace through land grants actually create peace, or just bury conflict?

QUOTE SCAVENGER HUNT (All Four Days)

Your Task: Find 3 examples of LOSS mentioned across this week's transcripts - loss of life, loss of land, loss of authority, loss of faith, etc.

Example 1:

Date: _____

Quote or description:

Example 2:



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Date: _____

Quote or description:

Example 3:

Date: _____

Quote or description:

PODCAST EPISODE ACTIVITIES (Supplemental)

Listening Notes: "What harm were Salem's supposed witches actually accused of causing?"

Key Concept Questions:

1. According to the elaborated theory of witchcraft, where did witches get their powers?

2. What was the "devil's book" and what did signing it represent?

3. What were witch sabbats and what happened at them?

4. List three ways witches were believed to harm people or property:

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____



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5. What was spectral evidence and why did colonists believe shackling accused witches in jail would help?

6. What were "familiar spirits" and how did witches supposedly feed them?

Podcast Vocabulary

Define these terms from the episode:

Maleficium:

Spectral evidence:

Witch's mark/teat:

Poppets:

Sabbat:

Connection & Reflection



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How does understanding what witches were accused of doing help explain why people believed the accusations in 1692?

Think about: the universal belief in Satan, the types of harm described, the "evidence" people looked for.

Quote from Podcast

Find one quote or detail from the podcast that surprised you or changed your understanding:

Why did this stand out to you?

VOCABULARY CHECK

Define these key terms in your own words after encountering them this week:

Massachusetts Bay Colony:

Salem Village:

King William's War:



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Charter:

Naumkeag:

WEEKLY CHALLENGES

Challenge 1: Predict What Happens Next

Based on what you've learned about five of the contributing factors, predict what happens when doctors can't explain Betty and Abigail's symptoms.

Consider: universal belief in witchcraft, war anxiety, economic stress, social divisions, and religious fear.

Your prediction:

Challenge 2: Citation Exercise

Claim: "The Salem Witch Trials were fueled by a perfect storm of crises - not just one factor, but multiple overlapping anxieties."

Your Task: Find supporting evidence in this week's transcripts. Cite the specific day (January 1-4) and quote or paraphrase the evidence.

Evidence 1:

Date: _____

Evidence:



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Evidence 2:

Date: _____

Evidence:

Evidence 3:

Date: _____

Evidence:

Challenge 3: Character Journal

You are a Salem Village resident in early January 1692.

You've heard rumors that Minister Parris's daughter and niece are acting very strangely - barking like dogs, flapping like birds, exhibiting symptoms no doctor can diagnose. You know about the wars, the economic struggles, the debates about whether the colony is losing its faith. You have your own opinion about Minister Parris (either supportive or opposed to him).

Write 5-7 sentences from your perspective: What are you thinking? What are you worried about? What do you think is wrong with the girls?

Challenge 4: Share Your Learning

Take what you've learned this week and share it with your circle. Check the method(s) you used:



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- Explained a surprising fact to a friend or family member
- Posted a key insight on social media with #SalemWitchTrials
- Discussed with book club or community group
- Created my own content inspired by the primary sources
- Connected historical patterns to modern witch hunts

What did you share? How did people respond?

DISCUSSION REFLECTION

After reading this week's blog, respond to the discussion question:

How do the historical conditions of 1692 Massachusetts compare to times of crisis today?

Think about: How do modern communities respond when multiple crises hit at once? Do we still look for scapegoats? What role does universal belief play in modern witch hunts?

Your thoughts:

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3. What were witch sabbats and what happened at them?

4. List three ways witches were believed to harm people or property:

- a) _____
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Sabbat:

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Think about: the universal belief in Satan, the types of harm described, the "evidence" people looked for.

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PROGRESS TRACKER



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<div style="margin: 20px 0;"> <div style="background-color: #e0e0e0; border-radius: 10px; height: 30px; width: 100%; position: relative; overflow: hidden;"> <div style="background: linear-gradient(90deg, #8b4513 0%, #d2691e 100%); height: 100%; width: 0.8%; transition: width 0.3s ease;"></div> </div> <p style="margin-top: 8px; font-size: 14px; color: #666;">Week 1 of ~125 weeks | <1% Complete | January 2026 - May 2027</p> </div>

Timeline Milestone: Setup phase - January 1-4, 1692. All conditions in place but trials haven't started.

Coming Next Week: Salem Village's specific conflicts, Minister Parris's controversial ministry, moving closer to mid-January when symptoms become impossible to ignore.

BADGE TRACKER

Mark the badges you've earned this week:

- #SalemDailyStudent** - Started the course
- #SalemWeek1** - Completed Week 1
- #SalemDescendantPathStudent** - If you have ancestral connection (use alongside other badges)

Did you post using your badges? Where?

Great work this week! You're doing the work of a researcher. See you next week!

Remember to use: **#SalemDailyStudent #SalemWeek1 #ThingAboutSalem #SalemDailyYoutube**

Week 1 Resources & Further Learning

This Week's Videos & Podcast

Salem Witch Trials Daily Playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIz3vKHO9eBqlfjWd4e0mZpuXlxzaE-3>



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This Week's Podcast Episode:

The Thing About Salem: "What harm were Salem's supposed witches actually accused of causing?"

Available on all podcast platforms or at <https://aboutsalem.com>

Helpful Websites

The Thing About Salem: <https://aboutsalem.com>

Weekly podcast dedicated to the Salem Witch Trials

The Thing About Witch Hunts: <https://aboutwitchhunts.com>

Weekly podcast covering historical witch trials and modern witch hunts

People Accused of Witchcraft in 1692: <http://www.17thc.us/primarysources/accused.php>

Primary source database

Recommended Books for Deeper Study

Bernard Rosenthal, ed., *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*

<https://bookshop.org/a/90227/9781107689619>

Emerson W. Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft: The Salem Trials and the American Experience*

<https://bookshop.org/a/90227/9780190627805>

Marilynne K. Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials: A Day-by-Day Chronicle of a Community Under Siege*

<https://bookshop.org/a/90227/9781589791329>

Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692*

<https://bookshop.org/a/90227/9780375706905>

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<https://endwitchhunts.org/donate/>

MA Witch Hunt Justice Project:

Sign the petition for justice and exoneration: www.change.org/witchtrials

Learn more: <https://massachusettswitchtrials.org/>