

Week 4 Youth Edition Workbook

January 19-25, 2026: The Machinery of Death

Your Name: _____ Date Started: _____ Grade/Age: _____

This Week's Videos & Podcast

Daily Videos (Salem Witch Trials Daily YouTube Playlist)

- January 19: European Witch Trials
- January 20: European Witch Trials 2
- January 21: Witch Trials in England and New England
- January 22: North American Witch Trials
- January 23: Familiars
- January 24: Contemporary Accounts
- January 25: Governor Sir William Phips

Weekly Podcast (Extra Credit!) The Thing About Salem: "Who Wrote the First Book on the Salem Witch Trials?"

This podcast shows you how people documented the trials from terror to regret. It's optional but super interesting!

How to Use This Workbook

- Watch each daily video (they're short!)
- Check out the transcript if you want to review something
- Complete the activities below
- Read the weekly blog to see the big picture
- Do the weekly challenges

DAILY VIDEO ACTIVITIES

January 19: European Witch Trials

Quick Recap:

Mass witch hunts didn't exist in Europe until specific ideas came together in the _____ in the 1430s-1440s. The new theory said witches made pacts with the _____, attended sabbats, and formed an organized conspiracy. In 1486, a book called _____ standardized these beliefs and spread them everywhere through the printing press. About _____ people were tried for witchcraft in Europe over 350 years, and between _____ and _____ were executed.

Why does this matter?

January 20: European Witch Trials 2

Stop and Think:

After learning courts suspended normal legal protections for witchcraft because it was "impossible to prove":

They used torture, searched bodies for the devil's mark, did swimming tests, and accepted ghost stories as evidence. If you call something an "exceptional crime," does that make it okay to throw out all the rules designed to protect innocent people?

How It Ended:

What finally made witch trials stop in Europe? List three reasons:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

January 21: Witch Trials in England and New England

Stop and Think:

After learning about Matthew Hopkins keeping people awake for days:

He called it "watching and walking" to look for familiars. Really it was sleep deprivation torture that made people hallucinate and confess. How is this different from just torturing someone directly? How is it the same?

Three Important Facts:

The first execution for witchcraft in America happened in _____ on _____ when _____ was hanged.

Connecticut had a _____% conviction rate between 1647-1654.

In 1669, Connecticut said _____ wasn't enough to convict someone without multiple witnesses to the same physical act.

January 22: North American Witch Trials

Stop and Think:

After learning about witch trials across different colonies:

Some colonies executed people, some didn't. What made the difference?

Colony Tracker:

Check off which colonies executed people for witchcraft: Connecticut Massachusetts New York Pennsylvania Maryland Virginia New Mexico Bermuda

Which one surprises you most? Why?

January 23: Familiars

Stop and Think:

After learning about invasive body searches for the devil's mark:

Legal writers created detailed guides for where to search people's bodies, including private areas. Robert Calef pointed out NONE of this was in the Bible. Men just made it up. If the "evidence" was invented by people and not based on scripture or actual crime, what does that tell you?

The Examinations:

What happened when they examined Rebecca Nurse, Bridget Bishop, and Elizabeth Proctor on June 2, 1692?

What happened to 4-year-old Dorothy Good?

January 24: Contemporary Accounts

Fill It In:

Reverend Deodat Lawson published _____ in April 1692, which was the first book about Salem. Meanwhile, a guy named _____ wrote a secret dialogue between someone defending the trials and someone saying they were wrong. In October, _____ wrote an angry letter exposing torture and hypocrisy. Cotton Mather published _____ defending the trials. His dad, Increase Mather, basically ended them with _____, which said the devil could appear as innocent people and it's better for _____ suspected witches to escape than one innocent person to die.

Why does this matter?

January 25: Governor Sir William Phips

Stop and Think:

After learning Phips didn't write to England about the witch panic until October (5 months after arriving):

By October, 20 people were dead. He'd created the emergency court, approved Cotton Mather's book defending it, and arrested a minister for questioning the court. What does waiting 5 months to tell England tell you about him?

Timeline Detective:

When did Phips arrive in Boston? _____

When did he create the Court of Oyer and Terminer? _____

When did he shut it down? _____

When did he stop the final execution? _____

DETECTIVE WORK: Find the Methods

Your Mission: Find 3 examples of methods or precedents imported from Europe or used in earlier colonial trials.

Example 1: Date: _____ What you found:

Example 2: Date: _____ What you found:

Example 3: Date: _____ What you found:

VOCAB CHECK

Define these in your own words (no copying!):

Cumulative Theory:

Crimen Exceptum:

Malleus Maleficarum:

Watching and Walking:

Witch's Mark/Teat:

Familiar Spirits:

Court of Oyer and Terminer:

Spectral Evidence:

Cases of Conscience:

WEEKLY CHALLENGES

Challenge 1: What Happens Next?

You know European methods were imported. Colonial precedents were set. Body searches are normalized. The governor created an emergency court. Books taught people how to act afflicted and how to find witches.

When arrests start, what do you think happens?

Challenge 2: Find the Proof

Claim: "Salem's trials were possible because 250 years of European witch-hunting created a playbook, colonial trials set precedents, and invented evidence made conviction basically guaranteed."

Your job: Find 3 pieces of evidence from this week. Write the date and what proves it.

Evidence 1: Date: _____ Proof:

Evidence 2: Date: _____ Proof:

Evidence 3: Date: _____ Proof:

Challenge 3: Time Travel Journal

You're a judge in Massachusetts in late January 1692.

You've read about Matthew Hopkins. You know about Connecticut's trials. You read Cotton Mather's book about the Goodwin kids. You believe witches are real. You know how to search for the devil's mark. You know ghost stories count as evidence. The jails are packed. The governor just created an emergency court.

Write 5-7 sentences from your perspective: What methods will you use? What evidence will you accept? Are you confident you can spot witches? What worries you?

Challenge 4: Share What You Learned

Take something crazy you learned this week (Hopkins's sleep torture, Connecticut's 100% conviction rate, invented evidence, the war of words) and share it.

Check what you did: Told someone about European or colonial methods Posted about it on TikTok/Instagram/etc. Talked about invented evidence in class Made content about the contemporary accounts Connected historical stuff to modern problems

What did you share? What happened?

DISCUSSION QUESTION

After reading this week's blog:

When you have imported methods, established precedents, and invented evidence, how does anyone prove they're innocent? What modern examples can you think of where "exceptional circumstances" justify throwing out normal protections?

Think about: Templates for finding witches, legal systems already tested, emergency courts under pressure.

Your thoughts:

PODCAST ACTIVITIES (Optional but Cool!)

Listening Notes: "Who Wrote the First Book on the Salem Witch Trials?"

Questions:

What did Deodat Lawson's book do?

What did Samuel Willard argue in his dialogue?

What did Thomas Brattle expose?

What was the difference between Cotton and Increase Mather's books?

What did Robert Calef accuse Cotton Mather of?

What did Thomas Maule say as a Quaker critic?

Podcast Vocab:

Spectral evidence:

Touch test:

Dragooning methods:

Humane evidence:

Think About It

How does reading the actual books and letters from 1692 help you understand how people went from total panic to realizing they'd made a horrible mistake?

What's one thing from the podcast that surprised you?

YOUR PROGRESS

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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: 5.3%; transition: width 0.3s ease;"></div> </div> <p style="margin-top: 8px; font-size: 14px; color: #666;">Week 4 of ~75 weeks | About 5% Complete | January 2026 - May 2027</p> </div>
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Where we are: January 19-25, 1692. The machinery is ready. Methods imported, precedents set, examinations normalized, emergency court created. It's about to get real.

Coming next week: Late January when the afflictions spread and the first people get accused.

BADGE COLLECTION

Check off the badges you've earned: #SalemDailyStudent (you started!) #SalemWeek4 (you finished Week 4!) #SalemDescendantPathStudent (if your ancestors were involved - use with other badges)

Did you post your badges? Where?

You crushed Week 4! You're not just watching videos - you're doing real research. See you next week!

Post your progress: #SalemDailyStudent #SalemWeek4 #ThingAboutSalem
#SalemDailyYoutube #SalemDescendantPath