

Week 3 Youth Edition Workbook January 12-17, 2026: Legal Limbo and the Road to Trial

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

This Week's Videos & Podcast

Daily Videos (Salem Witch Trials Daily YouTube Playlist) January 12: The Old Charter Saga
January 13: New Charter January 14: The Mathers January 15: The Afflictions of the Goodwin
Children January 16: Causes of Affliction January 17: Testimony as Evidence

Weekly Podcast (Extra Credit!) The Thing About Salem: "Meanwhile in the rest of the world in 1692"

This podcast shows you what else was happening around the world while Salem was falling apart. 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 12: The Old Charter Saga

Quick Recap:

Massachusetts got its original charter (permission to govern itself) from King _____ in 1629. In 1684, King _____ took it away because they'd been breaking laws and killing _____. Then in 1686, King _____ created a super-colony with _____ as the boss everyone hated. When the king changed in England, Bostonians arrested _____ and sent him home. Now Massachusetts had no legal _____.

Why does this matter?

January 13: New Charter

Stop and Think:

After learning the new charter didn't arrive until May 14, 1692:

By May, the jails were already packed with accused witches, but they couldn't have trials because there were no courts. If you're the new governor, what kind of pressure are you under to DO something fast?

Timeline Detective:

When did Governor Phips create the emergency court? _____

When was Bridget Bishop tried? _____

When was she hanged? _____

How many cases did the Court of Oyer and Terminer hear? _____

How many convictions? _____

That's a _____% conviction rate. (Hint: do the math!)

January 14: The Mathers

Stop and Think:

After learning about Cotton Mather's book about the Goodwin kids:

Cotton published a detailed description of how the Goodwin children acted when they were "afflicted" in 1689. By 1692, everyone in Salem had heard about it. If you know exactly how you're "supposed to" act when bewitched, does that make it easier to fake it or copy it?

Three Generations, Three Roles:

What did Richard Mather do for the church?

What did Increase Mather do about the trials (good or bad)?

What did Cotton Mather do about the trials (good or bad)?

January 15: The Goodwin Afflictions

Symptom Tracker:

Check off the weird symptoms the Goodwin children had: Tongues pulled out super long
 Jaws forced out of place Bent backwards neck to heels Went deaf, blind, or mute
 Screamed about invisible knives and clubs Marks appeared on their bodies Could rub
clean tables but not dirty ones Ate and slept fine at night

The Big Question:

How did the Goodwin case basically give Salem kids a script to follow?

January 16: Causes of Affliction

Stop and Think:

After learning ergot theory got debunked:

Why do people want simple explanations (like "moldy bread made them hallucinate") for complicated things like the Salem Witch Trials? What's easier about blaming one thing?

Theory List:

Put an M (medical), P (psychological), or F (fraud) next to each explanation:

Ergot poisoning () Lyme disease () Epilepsy () Mass psychogenic illness () Sleep paralysis ()
Lying and faking it ()

The Real Question:

According to the video, what's MORE important than figuring out why the afflicted acted weird?

January 17: Testimony as Evidence

Fill It In:

The first three people arrested were _____, _____, and _____ on _____. After being arrested, they were checked for _____ or _____. At least _____ people confessed during the trials.

Why does this matter?

Evidence Menu (What Counts as Proof):

List 5 types of "evidence" they used:

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

Which one seems most ridiculous to you? Why?

DETECTIVE WORK: Find the Chaos

Your Mission: Find 3 examples of the legal system being broken or institutions failing across this week's videos.

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!):

Charter:

Court of Oyer and Terminer:

Legal limbo:

Spectral evidence:

Witch's mark/teat:

Confession:

Toleration:

Mass psychogenic illness:

Sleep paralysis:

Ergotism:

WEEKLY CHALLENGES

Challenge 1: What Happens Next?

You know the legal system is broken. Emergency courts are running things. Evidence standards are super low (ghost stories count as proof!). Everyone knows how to act afflicted because of the Goodwin case.

When arrests start happening, what do you think goes down?

Your prediction:

Challenge 2: Find the Proof

Claim: "Salem's trials were possible because the legal system was broken, evidence standards were trash, and everyone knew how to fake being afflicted."

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 February 1692.

The jails are packed with accused witches, but you had no power to try them until May. You know this Court of Oyer and Terminer is just a quick fix. You've read Cotton Mather's books about witchcraft. You know about spectral evidence. You believe witches are real. Everyone's pressuring you to DO SOMETHING.

Write 5-7 sentences from your perspective: How do you feel? What evidence will you accept? Are you sure you can tell who's a witch? What worries you?

Challenge 4: Share What You Learned

Take something crazy you learned this week (charter mess, the Mathers, ergot being debunked, types of evidence) and share it.

Check what you did: Told someone about the legal chaos Posted about it on TikTok/Instagram/etc. Talked about the Mather family in class Made content about what counted as "evidence" Connected broken systems in 1692 to today

What did you share? What happened?

DISCUSSION QUESTION

After reading this week's blog:

When institutions fail (broken courts, emergency measures, accepting bad evidence), injustice happens. What modern examples can you think of?

Think about: Times when normal protections are suspended because of fear, when people rush to judgment, when the accused can't prove they're innocent.

Your thoughts:

PODCAST ACTIVITIES (Optional but Cool!)

Listening Notes: "The Thing About 1692"

Questions:

1. What was the "Early Modern Period"?
2. What war was happening in New England?
3. What happened in York, Maine on January 24, 1692?
4. How many people died in the Jamaica earthquake?
5. What was happening in Mexico City?
6. What did Isaac Newton publish?

Mind-Blowing Connection:

Henry Purcell's opera premiered on the same day that _____ got arrested for witchcraft.

Podcast Vocab:

Golden Age of Piracy:

Scientific Revolution:

Mexico City Corn Riots:

Think About It

How does knowing what else was happening in the world (wars, science discoveries, economic disasters, colonial violence) help you understand why witch trials were happening?

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

Why?

YOUR PROGRESS

Week 3 of ~75 weeks | About 4% Complete | January 2026 - May 2027

Where we are: January 12-17, 1692. The legal system is a disaster. Everyone knows how to act afflicted. Evidence standards are a joke. The machine is ready to kill people.

Coming next week: The afflictions spread beyond Betty and Abigail. Things are about to explode.

BADGE COLLECTION

Check off the badges you've earned: #SalemDailyStudent (you started!) #SalemWeek3 (you finished Week 3!) #SalemDescendantPathStudent (if your ancestors were involved - use with other badges)

Did you post your badges? Where?

You crushed Week 3! You're not just watching videos - you're doing real research. See you next week!

Post your progress: #SalemDailyStudent #SalemWeek3 #ThingAboutSalem
#SalemDailyYoutube #SalemDescendantPath