



A typical Puritan family lived a humble existence in a small house with one room. Within the room was a fireplace that was used for cooking and warmth. Because the family lived in a single room, it was often very smoky, particularly during the winter. All members of the family would usually sleep in makeshift mattresses near the fire. During winter, finding and carrying firewood was one of the most important jobs. It was common for Puritans to sleep in heavy clothes under heavy blankets to ward off the cold. Puritan families treated their children differently than those today. Puritan parents had children so that they could help tend to the work, and such children learned the various jobs required of them at a very early age. Puritan parents made education and bible study a high priority, and the literacy rates among those living in New England were unusually high.

The Puritans were an industrious people, and virtually everything within the house was made by hand - including clothes. The men and boys took charge of farming, fixing things around the house, and caring for livestock. The women made soap, cooked, gardened, and took care of the house. Puritan society and politics were dominated by men. Puritan men believed they were the stronger gender.

When Puritan settlers weren't at work, they were likely at church or at prayer. Church was an extremely important part of the daily lives of Puritans, and attending church was mandatory. There could be severe punishments for those who failed to attend. Puritans believed that they were doing God's work and that those who disobeyed or strayed from Puritan teachings were sinners. Public whippings and humiliations were commonplace for transgressors. While the Puritans were hard-working and very religious, they sometimes allowed for festivals and celebrations, singing and game playing, and even drank wine and beer.

1. What does “industrious” mean in the sentence below?

The Puritans were an industrious people, and virtually everything within the house was made by hand - including clothes.

- A. Hard-working
- B. Lazy
- C. Interesting
- D. Angry

2. What does the author think you might be surprised by?

- A. Puritan society was dominated by men
- B. Puritan children had harder lives than children today
- C. Puritan life was dominated by church
- D. Puritans allowed celebrations and fun

3. Why was collecting firewood such an important job?

- A. It helped boys get stronger.
- B. It helped boys learn to work hard.
- C. Houses were cold during the winter and the wood was necessary to heat the house.
- D. It was something that the children could do, thus giving Puritan parents some valuable rest.

4. Which of the following might be “out of character” for a Puritan household?

- A. Puritan children being sent to bible school.
- B. A house with homemade furniture.
- C. A house with three rooms.
- D. A house with mattresses in front of the fireplace.

5. Which of the following could be a title for the final paragraph?

- A. Fun in a Puritan village
- B. The Role of Church in Puritan Life
- C. The Roles of Men and Women in a Puritan Village
- D. Public Whippings: The Various Punishments for Failing to Attend Church

6. Which of the following is true?

- A. Women in Puritan Massachusetts were often involved in community politics.
- B. Puritan parents did not believe in educating their children.
- C. The Puritans did not believe in public humiliation.
- D. Members of the Puritan community were forced to attend church.

7. Which of the following questions strays from the theme of the passage?

- A. What precautions did Puritans have to take to be more comfortable in the winter?
- B. When did the Puritans first come to Massachusetts?
- C. How was life different for Puritan children than for children today?
- D. In what ways were the Puritans humble?