



The Country Family

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☑ Lesson Objectives

Core Content Objectives

Students will:

- ✓ Identify the key characteristics and differences between “towns” and “the country” or “countryside” during the colonial period of American history
- ✓ Explain that long ago, during the colonial period, families who lived on farms in the country were largely self-sufficient, and that all family members had many daily responsibilities and chores
- ✓ List similarities and differences between modern family life and colonial family life
- ✓ Identify reasons why people who lived in the country traveled to town

Language Arts Objectives

The following language arts objectives are addressed in this lesson. Objectives aligning with the Common Core State Standards are noted with the corresponding standard in parentheses. Refer to the Alignment Chart for additional standards that are addressed in all lessons in this domain.


Students will:

- ✓ With prompting and support, compare and contrast ways life today is different from early American farm life, by creating a Venn diagram as a group (RI.K.9)
- ✓ Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to present information about colonial towns (W.K.2)
- ✓ With assistance, categorize and organize facts and information comparing colonial life to life today using a Venn diagram (W.K.8)

- ✓ Distinguish current events from events that happened long ago by identifying that “The Country Family” took place a long time ago because they didn’t have electricity or running water or machines, and they made everything themselves
- ✓ Discuss personal responses to having chores at home, and to shopping for clothes and food, and connect those to the chores and shops in colonial times

Core Vocabulary

- apprentice, n.** Someone who works with a tradesperson to learn his or her job
Example: The boy chose to be the baker’s apprentice so he could learn how to be a baker when he grew up.
Variation(s): apprentices
- churn, n.** A wooden container with a handle designed to stir milk into butter
Example: The girl couldn’t wait to open the churn and taste the butter inside.
Variation(s): churns
- country, n.** An area of land with few buildings, where homes are distant from one another, and most of the land is made up of farms
Example: The farmer and his family lived in the country.
Variation(s): none
- trade, n.** A job that uses special skills, knowledge, and tools
Example: Dylan worked as an apprentice to learn the trade of blacksmithing.
Variation(s): trades
- tradesperson, n.** A person who works in a job that requires special skills, knowledge, and tools
Example: My aunt is a tradesperson because she works as a carpenter, building houses out of wood.
Variation(s): tradespeople
- weave, v.** To combine strands of thread or yarn in an alternating pattern in order to make cloth
Example: The mother asked her daughter to help her weave pieces of yarn to make a square of cloth.
Variation(s): weaves, wove, weaving

<i>At a Glance</i>	Exercise	Materials	Minutes
<i>Introducing the Read-Aloud</i>	Domain Introduction		10
	Essential Background Information or Terms	index cards; yarn	
	Purpose for Listening		
<i>Presenting the Read-Aloud</i>	The Country Family		10
<i>Discussing the Read-Aloud</i>	Comprehension Questions		10
	Word Work: Country		5
 Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day			
<i>Extensions</i>	Venn Diagram	chart paper, chalkboard, or whiteboard	15
<i>Take-Home Material</i>	Family Letter	Instructional Masters 1B-1 and 1B-2	*



The Country Family

1A

Introducing the Read-Aloud

10 minutes

Domain Introduction

Tell students that over the next few weeks they will be learning about what life was like in America hundreds of years ago. Explain that hundreds of years ago, people made most of what they needed at home. Explain that living back then meant doing a lot of work, and even the children had to help by doing chores every day. Ask students if they have any chores at home. Ask if anyone has ever helped cook dinner or taken care of pets. Explain that today's read-aloud will describe a lot of the chores a family would have done hundreds of years ago on a farm in the country.

Then explain that over the next few days students will be learning about towns, places where farmers could go to buy things that would make life easier at home. Ask students where they get their food and clothes. Explain that hundreds of years ago, there were only a few kinds of stores, called shops, and they were only found in towns, which could sometimes be very far from a farmer's house. A very large town might have several different shops, but most towns were small, often with only one shop. This one shop carried just about every type of good a farmer could need—flour, cloth, seeds, tools, and so on. Unlike today's stores which require money for the purchase of any goods, during colonial times these shops traded their goods for a farmer's crops, a practice called bartering. In towns, people lived and worked in buildings and shops that were close together. In the country, homes and farms were far apart.

Over the next few weeks, students will learn about tradespeople, people who had special jobs like making clothes or building houses. Farmers liked going to town because tradespeople made and sold things farmers needed so they didn't have to make them at home. A farmer went to town for a lot of the same reasons we go to stores today.

Essential Background Information or Terms

Explain that over the next few weeks you will be reading stories about people who lived in America long ago. Take this opportunity to identify the time period you will be reading about by plotting it on a timeline along with other key time periods in American history that you have already studied (*Native Americans* and *Columbus and the Pilgrims*). Use a timeline you already have, or make one with index cards along a piece of yarn. Tape index cards labeled with century markers from 1000 to 2000 at even intervals along a piece of yarn or string. Add one card after 2000 labeled with the current year.

Whether you are reminding students of domain knowledge they have already covered or are introducing this information for the first time, make sure that the timeline is labeled with the following dates:

1492: Columbus sails to America and meets Native Americans already living in America

1620: Pilgrims land at Plymouth Rock and establish Plymouth colony

Explain to students that the Colonial Towns and Townspeople read-alouds take place in the 1700s, and add an index card labeled “Colonial Towns” around the 1700 point in the timeline. Read the following as you point to the appropriate place on the timeline:

Native Americans lived in America for hundreds of years. Many tribes were nomadic, meaning that they moved frequently, finding new hunting grounds, looking for new sources of fish or vegetation, and moving when the seasons changed. Other tribes settled in one location, developing large farming communities that became large towns over time. When European explorers like Columbus came, they set up settlements in which they stayed each time they came to claim lands and goods on their voyages, but many of these settlements were temporary and didn’t last. Years later, other groups of Europeans sailed to America to stay and live here permanently. One such group was the Pilgrims. Groups like

the Pilgrims set up colonies or towns in America that were ruled by England. Native Americans continued to live in America on lands near these colonies, but they didn't live in the same kinds of towns that European Americans did. The first towns established by European settlers were small with a few common buildings and land to grow crops. As the years passed, more colonies were established along the East Coast of America. The farms and the towns grew larger, and people who lived there grew to depend more on each other for the things they needed. The colonial towns we will read about were formed in the early 1700s, when these colonies were still under English rule.

Purpose for Listening

Tell students to listen carefully to the read-aloud so they will be able to name the chores that children had to do long ago in colonial times if they lived on a farm.



The Country Family

◀ Show image 1A-1: Farm family

Today we're going to take an imaginary trip back in time, about three hundred years ago, to an early American farm. If you lived in the **country** long ago, you and your family did most of the work necessary for survival right at home.¹ In the country, houses were far apart from one another, so you couldn't rely on neighbors or stores to get everything you needed—you had to make most things at home. Everything you needed—food to eat, water to drink or use for cooking and cleaning, lighting to help you see after dark, heat when it turned cold, and clothing—required a lot of work by the family. Even young children had to help out, because there was so much work to do!

- 1 The country is an area of land with few buildings and several farms. *Country* also means a nation, like the United States



◀ Show image 1A-2: Household chores

There was no electricity for lamps or lights, and there were no flashlights! The only way to see anything after it got dark was to light candles that you made at home.² There were no electric ovens or stoves,³ so you had to build a fire to heat your home and cook your meals. There were no sinks or faucets with running water inside the house,⁴ so you had to fetch any water you needed for drinking, cooking, or cleaning from the nearby creek or the well outside. There were no malls with clothing stores, so you had to make your own clothes. There were no supermarkets, so you had to grow your own vegetables, milk your own cows, and make your own cheese.⁵ Imagine doing all that work—*every day!*

- 2 [Point to the woman making candles in the picture.]

- 3 like we have today

- 4 like we have in kitchens and bathrooms today

- 5 [Point to the chores in the picture as you mention them.]



◀ Show image 1A-3: Old-fashioned country kitchen with hearth

At the start of a typical day in the country, the first thing a woman did was fetch wood to start the fire in the hearth, or fireplace. The hearth was the most important place in the home. Most of the chores to be done required fire, and especially in the winter, everyone needed to stay close to the hearth because it provided the only heat in the house.



← **Show image 1A-4: Rolling dough**

After building the fire, a country woman would most likely start her day by baking bread. Sometimes she would make her own flour by grinding corn kernels or wheat into a fine powder. Then she would mix this flour and water with yeast, and let it rise for several hours. The dough would then be put into an iron pot with a tight lid and hung over the hearth⁶ to bake, or cook.

6 Can you see the dough in this picture? Where is the pot over the hearth?



← **Show image 1A-5: Cheese made from curds**

One task that had to be done twice a day, no matter what, was milking the cows. This task took a long time and was usually left for children to do.

Once the milk was collected, the milk that was not drunk was either made into cheese or butter. Making cheese involved a slow process of boiling and cooling the milk to produce curds or clumps of soured milk that look sort of like cottage cheese. These curds were pressed into forms to make the cheese.



← **Show image 1A-6: Using a butter churn**

To make butter, milk was left to sit until the fatty cream floated to the top. Then the cream was poured into a tall, wooden container called a **churn**.⁷ A child usually had to pump the handle of the butter churn, called the dasher, up and down for a long time until the fat in the cream separated into butter. The leftover liquid, called buttermilk, was used for cooking or drinking.

7 Today, we use the word *churn* to mean mix.



← **Show image 1A-7: Old smokehouse**

People in the country ate mostly vegetables and grains. They only ate meat if the men or nearby neighbors had butchered⁸ one of their animals. Because there were no refrigerators, the meat had to be preserved so it would not spoil.⁹ This was done by hanging it in strips above the fire or in a separate shed like this one called a smokehouse. The smoke from the fire dried out the meat, which prevented spoiling.¹⁰ Other foods were preserved by covering them in salt, canning them, or storing them in a cool, dark cellar.¹¹

8 or killed for food

9 or go bad

10 The fire kept the meat from going bad. Beef jerky is an example of dried-out, smoked meat.

11 Canning is sealing food tightly in jars so no air can get in.



← **Show image 1A-8: Needlework at home**

12 or cut the wool off sheep

13 To dye cotton or wool means to color it.

14 To weave means to join threads in an alternating pattern to make cloth.

After all those chores were done, it was time for the sewing. In colonial times, women had to make their own thread and cloth before they could sew anything! Men and boys picked cotton from the fields or sheared the sheep,¹² and women cleaned and dyed this cotton or wool.¹³ Then women made the cotton or wool into thread or yarn. After that, they would **weave** the yarn into cloth to be used for clothing.¹⁴ Girls were taught to sew and weave usually before the age of ten, so they could help make their own clothes. Because it was so much work to make clothes and so expensive to buy new clothes in town, much of the sewing work was patching or fixing old clothes that had become worn out and had holes or tears.



← **Show image 1A-9: Vintage cornhusk dolls**

15 Do you get time to play daily? In colonial times, children had very little time to play, if any.

16 or a special job that uses certain skills, knowledge, and tools

17 A tradesperson is an expert in his or her job, or trade, and is the one who trains an apprentice.

Because children were expected to help out with every one of these chores, they did not have a lot of time to play.¹⁵ The few toys they had, they usually made themselves. Sometimes girls made dolls like these out of parts of a corn plant, and sometimes boys carved small toys out of wood. Most boys worked the farm alongside their fathers, taking over the family farm when they became older. If the family lived near a large town, some boys only lived at home until they were eleven or twelve years old. Then they were expected to learn a **trade**.¹⁶ Each boy would become an **apprentice** for several years, working with a master **tradesperson** in town to learn his job.¹⁷ The country family in colonial times worked hard every day. Sometimes a trip into town was a welcome relief or break from their daily tasks. In town, the family was able to trade or buy things they needed so they could save the time and effort it took to make them. In the next read-aloud, you will hear about what happened when a farmer took a trip into town.

Comprehension Questions

10 minutes

If students have difficulty responding to questions, reread pertinent passages of the read-aloud and/or refer to specific images. If students give one-word answers and/or fail to use read-aloud or domain vocabulary in their responses, acknowledge correct responses by expanding students' responses using richer and more complex language. Ask students to answer in complete sentences by having them restate the question in their responses.

1. *Literal* In colonial times, what kinds of chores did children who lived on a farm have to do? (prepare food, make clothes, etc.)
2. *Inferential* Was the farm we heard about in the read-aloud a farm that existed a long time ago or one that exists today? (a long time ago) How can you tell? (They didn't have electricity or running water or machines; they made everything themselves.)
3. *Inferential* Was the farm we heard about today in town or in the country? (in the country) Name one way the country was different from towns. (Houses were far apart; they had animals; they grew their own crops; etc.)
4. *Inferential* Long ago, there was no electricity. What did farmers use for light to see at night? (candles that they made)
5. *Inferential* Long ago, there were no furnaces to heat the houses. What did people use to warm their houses? (a wood fire in a hearth, or fireplace) What else was the hearth used for? (cooking)
6. *Inferential* Long ago, there were no sinks or faucets with running water inside the house. How did people get water? (from a well or a nearby creek)
7. *Inferential* Long ago, there were no grocery stores. Where did milk and eggs come from? (cows and chickens) Where did cheese and butter come from? (People made them from milk.)
8. *Inferential* Long ago, it was very expensive to buy clothes. How did people get clothes? (They picked cotton and sheared wool from sheep; dyed or colored it; made thread and yarn; wove it into cloth; sewed clothes.)

[Please continue to model the *Think Pair Share* process for students, as necessary, and scaffold students in their use of the process.]

I am going to ask a question. I will give you a minute to think about the question, and then I will ask you to turn to your neighbor and discuss the question. Finally, I will call on several of you to share what you discussed with your partner.

9. *Evaluative Think Pair Share:* Do you think you would have liked living on a farm in the country hundreds of years ago? Why or why not? (Answers may vary.)
10. After hearing today's read-aloud and questions and answers, do you have any remaining questions? [If time permits, you may wish to allow for individual, group, or class research of the text and/or other resources to answer these remaining questions.]

Word Work: Country

5 minutes

1. In the read-aloud you heard, "If you lived in the *country* long ago, you and your family did most of the work necessary for survival right at home."
2. Say the word *country* with me.
3. The country is an area of land with few buildings, where homes are distant or far apart from one another, and most of the land is made up of farms.
4. I love being out in the country at night—there isn't any traffic, so it's quiet, and there aren't many lights, so you can see the stars really well.
5. Tell me about one thing you might see in the country. Use the word *country* when you tell about it. [Ask two or three students. If necessary, guide and/or rephrase students' responses: "I might see _____ in the country."]
6. What's the word we've been talking about?

Use a *Making Choices* activity for follow-up. Directions: I am going to name some things. If the thing I describe is something you might see in the country, say, “I might see a _____ in the country.” If the thing I describe is not something you might see in the country, say, “I would probably not see a _____ in the country.”

1. a cow (I might see a cow in the country.)
2. a skyscraper (I would probably not see a skyscraper in the country.)
3. a barn (I might see a barn in the country.)
4. a field of wildflowers (I might see a field of wildflowers in the country.)
5. a traffic jam of cars (I would probably not see a traffic jam of cars in the country.)

➤ Above and Beyond: You may want to have students name additional things they might see, or probably would not see, in the country.



Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day



The Country Family

1B

Extensions

15 minutes

Venn Diagram

Draw a Venn diagram on chart paper, a chalkboard, or a whiteboard. Label one circle “Now” and one circle “Then.” Tell students that you are going to use this diagram to compare and contrast life back then to life now. Explain that to compare is to tell how things are similar, and to contrast is to tell how things are different. Tell students that you are going to write down what they say in pictures and words, but they are not expected to be able to read the words you write because they are still learning all the rules for decoding. Emphasize that you are writing what they say so that you don’t forget, and that you will read the words to them.

Ask students to name some things that make life today different from early American farm life. Refer to some of the topics covered in the comprehension questions (light, heat, milk, eggs, butter, cheese, and clothes). You may also ask students to name some chores they do today as compared to the chores children did then. Not every idea needs to have a counterpart. For example, you may draw a toy in the “Now” circle and point out that children back then didn’t have many toys. When possible, draw pictures instead of words to represent the ideas (e.g., a candle in the “Then” circle and a lightbulb in the “Now” circle). Now ask students if they can think of any similarities between life now and then, and draw or write these ideas in the center overlapping area. Display this diagram to refer to and add to throughout the domain.

Take-Home Material

Family Letter

Send home Instructional Masters 1B-1 and 1B-2.