

Name _____

Date _____

Colonial Life

Did you ever wonder how children lived long ago? Over 300 years ago, in what we call Colonial times, children in America did many things that you do, such as play, help with chores, and learn. But many things were different too.

Since there was no electricity, children could not play video games or watch t.v. Instead, Colonial children often made their own **games**. One popular game was **rolling the hoop**. Children would compete with each other to see who could roll big wooden hoops the fastest or farthest, using sticks to guide and roll the hoop along. **Nine pins** was another game they played. Nine pins was similar to bowling, except it was played outdoors. Children also flew kites, played marbles, and ran sack races. Indoors, children would read or embroider designs called "samplers" on pieces of cloth.

Some children went to **school**, while others were taught at **home**. Children studied reading, writing, simple math, poems, and prayers. Since paper was expensive and rare, students memorized most of their lessons and then recited them to the teacher, rather than writing them down. It was common for students to have only one book, called a "primer". Students also used **hornbooks**, which were flat pieces of wood with the alphabet or other information printed on them. As children got older, it was common for boys from wealthy families to learn advanced subjects such as history, Greek, science, and Latin, while girls learned how to take care of a household.

Children in colonial times dressed like "little adults". **Clothes** were not designed for children's needs. Babies (girls and boys) wore long dresses and petticoats, even up to the age of five or six. These dresses had tight **bodices** underneath, like an undershirt. These bodices often had long strings attached to guide a child learning to walk or control a rowdy youngster. Girls continued to wear long dresses while boys were given their first pair of pants (called **breeches**) between the ages of 4 and 7.

There were no supermarkets in Colonial times. To get **food**, families had to grow it on their farms or hunt and fish. Since they had no refrigerators, in order to keep vegetables over the winter they pickled and canned them. Only babies drank milk, children and adults drank tea or cider. Sugar was a luxury that few could afford.

Let's review!

Children in Colonial times made their own games.
Paper was rare, so children had to memorize their lessons.
Children's clothes were not designed for play.

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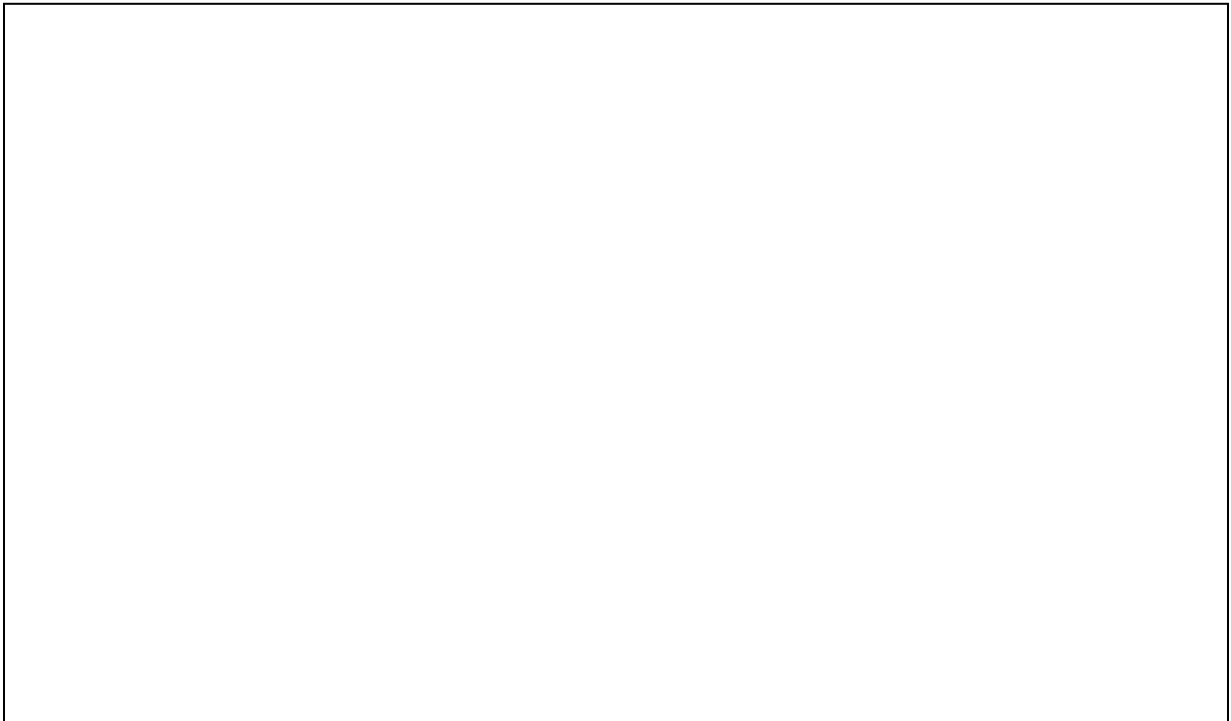
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Children ate food that was grown at home or came from hunting and fishing.

1. Make a Venn diagram that shows how life for Colonial children was different from and similar to yours.

2. What part of Colonial life would you like best? Least?

3. Design a mini poster that shows the life of Colonial children.



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Answers:

1. Answers will vary.

2. Answers will vary.

3. Answers will vary.