A Day in the Life

A Teacher’s Guide with Historical Background and Lesson Plans

Colonial Williamsburg
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A Day in the Life
Historical Background

In the third quarter of the eighteenth century, Williamsburg was the capital city of a populous, but mostly rural, colony. Among its bustling taverns and stores lived government officials, schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, ministers, tradesmen, lawyers, merchants, and doctors. Though Williamsburg, by today's standards, was a very small town, its residents benefited from the presence of these professionals, who provided more opportunities for education and more occupational options than were available in the countryside.

Williamsburg stretched about a mile in length, including the “suburban” development that had spilled out of the eastern boundary of the city around 1750. Approximately six blocks wide at its widest part, the capital city of Virginia was smaller than most new housing developments today. In 1775, its population was only 1,880 people—half white, mainly of middling and gentry status, with some few poor; and half black, mainly slaves. The small population meant that most of the city’s residents, white and black, knew each other by sight if not by personal acquaintance. They walked the same streets, shopped in the same market, and had the same friends and acquaintances. Their lives often intertwined.

By studying the eighteenth-century city of Williamsburg and its surrounding area, historians have been able to make generalizations about what life was like for the young people who lived there. We know a lot about family life, educational opportunities, and leisure.

Although surviving sources allow historians to make generalizations about what life was like in the colonial capital, reconstructing specifics, like a person’s daily activities, can be difficult. Williamsburg’s diverse population had daily routines as unique as each individual. We can’t know everything about how colonial Virginians spent their days. We do our best, however, to put together bits of evidence like pieces from a puzzle. We know more, of course, about the days of the wealthier and more educated people, who had leisure time to write letters and diaries. Fortunately, those letters and diaries also sometimes mentioned the pastimes and duties of those who didn’t write for themselves. We know what daily chores supported life as Virginians lived it and when during the day many of those duties were performed. Account books, published anecdotes in newspapers, memorials written about loved ones, and other primary sources provide more bits of information. Still, some pieces are missing. Historians make educated guesses to supply the missing pieces. Very few young people in Virginia kept diaries, so we must gather evidence from other sources to reconstruct how they spent their days.

How a young person spent his or her day depended on many factors, but especially important were gender, age, and social status. These factors were important because the child was being trained for the role he or she could expect to fill as an adult, and different roles meant different preparation. The greatest part of a young person’s day was taken up with preparation for adulthood.
FAMILY LIFE

Most white children had many brothers and sisters. The average period between births for white women was two to three years. In Virginia, the average number of children born to African-American women varied widely depending upon their circumstances. Rural slave couples often lived on different plantations; hard work suppresses ovulation, resulting in fewer pregnancies; and some women continued to follow African practices of nursing their infants for several years and abstaining from sexual intercourse while breast-feeding. Urban slaves generally performed domestic and trade work—skills rarely found among newly imported slaves. Because the town boasted a large slave population, spouses were more likely to live relatively close by. For these reasons, there were probably more slave children in most Williamsburg families than in rural families. Yet child mortality for whites and blacks remained high. Children who lived past their first birthdays often fell victim to disease and accident. Many did not survive to adulthood.

Most children, white and black, lived with their parents, but many did not. Although white couples could not divorce in the colonies, families were often torn apart by the death of a parent. Sometimes children were sent to live with relatives until the surviving parent remarried. Because most widows and widowers remarried, there were many blended families. If the surviving parent died, children might be raised by stepparents, an aunt or uncle, or a married sibling. Slave marriages were not recognized by law. As we have already noted, slave couples did not always live together, and young slave children usually lived with their mothers. Family life could be disrupted by the death of a parent or the sale of family members. Slaves were often given as marriage gifts to the master’s children or bequeathed as part of an estate. Sometimes individuals were hired out to work in other households.

SCHOOLING

While they were being educated, children often did not live with their parents. If they were not tutored at home, many gentry boys boarded at small schools and then went to England or a colonial college for their advanced education. Middling and slave boys—and some girls—were apprenticed to other families. When gentry girls finished their academic education at about age sixteen, they were usually sent on a round of extended visits to relatives. “The three R’s” could be learned in many ways in Williamsburg during the third quarter of the eighteenth century. In a society with no mandatory public education, where a young person got his or her academic training influenced greatly how he or she spent the day. Those who could not afford formal education learned in a catch-as-catch-can fashion from parents or friends. Privately run schools were an option for those of middling or gentry status. Sometimes the local minister conducted a school for gentry children and would include middling children who could afford the fee. Some gentry children had private tutors. Sometimes a member of the master’s family taught slave children to read. In Williamsburg, the Bray School, a local charity school funded by an English philanthropic organization, taught young black children basic academics and religious principles. Those who attended left the school when they were old enough to perform basic chores around the house.

Gentry children usually attended school all day, but their routine could be interrupted by visitors, special lessons in music or dance, or other acceptable disruptions. Surviving records do not make clear whether children of the middling sort, who usually received less formal schooling, were more likely to attend all day for more limited periods of time or to intersperse work with schooling during the day. Families and schoolmasters probably reached some agreement that suited both.
ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

Other preparation for adulthood was more direct. Children learned adult skills from those who did the work, whether within the family, by formal apprenticeship, or, in the case of slaves, from others in the slave workforce.

Apprenticeships commonly began when a young person was about fourteen and lasted until he or she came of age at twenty-one. Often the terms of the apprenticeship were spelled out in a legal document, called an indenture, that specified what was expected on both sides. The terms varied, but the master usually agreed to teach the apprentice his or her trade and to provide (besides food, clothing, and lodging) a certain amount of academic training. This might be enough reading instruction to enable the apprentice “to read distinctly in the Bible,” a specified term of schooling (such as a year), or specific subject matter (such as reading, writing, and “arithmetic as far as the rule of three”). The academic training might be provided by the master or at a school. The apprentice usually agreed to keep his master’s trade secrets and obey the master’s commands, as well as not to marry, waste his master’s goods, gamble “at cards, dice, or any other unlawful game,” or “frequent taverns, alehouses, or playhouses.”

LEISURE

Leisure was built into the school day for gentry children. (See “Daily Activities of a Young Gentry Woman [Early Teens].”) During their play time, the boys in one gentry family rode horses and took walks, while the girls also rode and walked, did needlework, and pretended to do grown-up chores, like washing the floor and knitting. For many middling and slave children, however, most of the day was probably taken up with work and some schooling. Some sources indicate that the time for play was often at night, when children (especially boys) would meet together outside (with permission or not) for games, like ball games. Archaeological and
documentary evidence shows that many Williamsburg boys played marbles. Apprentices sometimes got together at night to play pranks on the town’s families, and one night they got into a fight with the boys from the College.

Some white families entertained themselves with music, dancing, or games in the evenings, while members of the slave community sometimes came together to enjoy their own music, games, dancing, and storytelling.

**SUNDAYS**

Sunday was different. Traditionally, it was a day of rest. Except for some domestic slaves, like cooks whose duties were perhaps lighter but still needed, this was the day slaves had to themselves. Whites and blacks attended church on Sunday morning, and the rest of the day was often given over to visiting. Whites visited other families after church, often sharing dinner in the early afternoon. Slaves often visited family members who did not live in the same household. Slaves could use this day to work for themselves. Many rural slaves tended their own garden plots on Sundays.

**GENTRY AND MIDDLING GIRLS**

Most young white girls were trained to run a household, because they were expected to marry and have children. The size of that household depended mostly on social status and the location of the household in a town or on a plantation. Gentlewomen had more slaves to supervise than middling women, and thus had more mouths to feed and bodies to clothe. Household management for all women regardless of status involved thorough knowledge of cooking, laundry, child care, sewing, kitchen gardening, food preservation, poultry care, medical remedies, and supervisory skills. Although a woman rarely performed all these duties herself, she had to know how to do them, so that she could train slaves or servants to do them, see that all were done properly, and step in when needed. Women who lived in town relied more on the market than did plantation women, who directed the planting and harvest of large kitchen gardens and raised large amounts of poultry.

Girls learned about child care by helping to care for younger brothers and sisters. In the pre-teen years, they usually received training in housewifery from their mothers or a mother-substitute, such as an aunt or married sister. Poor or motherless girls sometimes apprenticed to learn housewifery, and some middling girls apprenticed to trades like millinery or mantuamaking. Fewer still found their way to trades dominated by men, like smithing. All gentry and most middling girls received some academic education, which was usually limited to reading, writing, and simple arithmetic.

Gentry girls and the daughters of prosperous tradesmen also received education in ornamental graces that would show off their social status and help them to marry well. The ability to dance well was considered essential for gentry girls. Every public dance event began with the minuet, a complicated type of dance performed one couple at a time. Each couple’s ability was closely watched and commented upon, so parents wished to insure that their children could do the minuet well. A typical schedule for dancing instruction was two full days every three weeks. All other lessons were suspended as several students (usually of both genders) gathered to learn the minuet, country-dances, and general deportment, including the ability to stand and walk gracefully. Some girls learned to play suitable instruments, such as the guitar or harpsichord. (Instruments that distorted the face, like woodwinds or horns, or that involved awkward sawing motions, like the fiddle, were not considered ladylike.) By watching their mothers and visiting at other households, gentry and upwardly mobile middling girls learned the skills of genteel hostesses, including how to serve tea.
GENTRY AND MIDDLING BOYS

Gentry boys were prepared to be gentlemen and to run large plantations or mercantile companies. To be gentlemen, they had to be well read in both English and Latin. They also learned mathematics, geography, and history. Boys usually received their early education from private tutors at home, from privately run schools, or from schools taught by the local minister. Some went to England at an early age and continued their schooling there until they were about twenty-one, while others stayed in the colonies until they were ready to finish their education at a college in England. Some never went to England and, instead, attended a colonial college, such as the College of William and Mary. A gentleman was expected to be able to stand, walk, and dance well, so, beginning in their early teens, gentry boys almost always had instruction from a dancing master. Lessons in fencing and a musical instrument were also considered important. Once their formal education ended, gentry boys usually learned plantation management from their fathers or guardians. Some learned to be merchants, either from their fathers or from merchants in London or Virginia.

White boys of middling status had a range of educational opportunities. Some received only the rudiments of reading, writing, and mathematics. Others learned these rudiments as well as a trade. Some learned Latin, which opened the door to further opportunities, such as study of the law or medicine and a chance to move up in society. A few apprenticed in the office of the secretary of the colony and became county court clerks, a lucrative and respected position. Some apprenticed to merchants and became successful merchants themselves. Middling boys had many more choices of occupation than gentry or slave children or girls of any social group. If they made wise choices and worked hard, they could gain wealth and property and move up in social rank.

SLAVES

Slave children did not expect freedom or even much freedom of choice. They learned skills that the master deemed valuable, yet sometimes they could influence the master’s choices and learn occupations that they enjoyed or that gave them more freedom of movement. Most rural slaves worked in the fields, but some apprenticed in trades useful on the plantation, and became coopers, carpenters, and other types of skilled workers. Some cared for livestock or worked as watermen. Others worked in domestic positions as cooks, nursery maids, laundresses, footmen, or personal servants. Urban slaves generally worked in the house or stable or at a trade. Towns supported a wide variety of trades, and slaves could be found working in virtually all of them. In port cities like Norfolk, many slaves were shipbuilders or pilots or worked in other trades associated with shipping. Because several urban occupations required some academic education, many slave children learned some reading, writing, or arithmetic. Some slaves learned to play musical instruments for their own enjoyment or their master’s.

CONCLUSION

As we know from our own lives, “typical” days often turn out to be anything but typical. In the eighteenth century, many events could disrupt daily life: illness or injury; visitors; severe weather; special events like weddings or balls, for which young people were often given time off from lessons to prepare; and special lessons, such as music or dance. Many of these factors were beyond a child’s control. Then, as now, young people made some choices about their daily lives, but a great part of their daily routine was determined by others, by custom, and by chance.
Glossary

APPRENTICESHIP—An arrangement by which a young person serves a master for a specified period of time and learns the master’s (or mistress’s) trade.

CARPENTER—A person who frames houses and often does the interior work as well, such as partitioning, building doors, laying floors, and installing moldings and wainscoting.

CHILD MORTALITY—A statistic describing the number of children who die in a given population.

COOPER—A person who makes wooden containers such as barrels and washtubs.

GENTRY—In Virginia, the highest social class. Gentry families owned large amounts of land and numbers of slaves and held the highest public offices.

MANTUAMAKING—The making of various types of gowns for women.

MARKET—A time and place specified by a town for the sale of goods, mostly foodstuffs. In eighteenth-century Williamsburg, the market was held on Market Square once or twice a week (frequency varied during the century).

MIDDLING—The middle ranks of society, neither of the highest classes nor the lowest; roughly equivalent to today’s “middle class.”

MILLINERY—The business of making and selling cloaks, hats, and linen and linen articles, such as aprons and caps, and of selling accessories, such as gloves, muffls, fans, and ribbons.

PLANTATION—A landholding where crops were grown. In eighteenth-century Virginia, a plantation could be any size, from a very small to a very large holding, what would today be called a farm. In the eighteenth century, a “farm” was land rented out to a tenant for growing crops.

SUBURBAN—Outside, but bordering on, a town’s boundaries.

THREE “R’s”—The educational fundamentals: reading, “riting,” and “rithmetic.”

TRADESMEN—Those who make a living by keeping a shop or producing goods by manual labor, as opposed to those who make their living in the “learned professions.”

TUTORED—Taught by a private tutor or hired teacher.

URBAN—Of, pertaining to, or living in a town or city.

WATERMEN—In the eighteenth century, men employed in sailing boats on the rivers.
INTRODUCTION
An important aspect of apprenticeships was the legal contract between the apprentice and master craftsman. These contracts could be drawn up, signed before the courts, entered into the deed book, and considered binding. The contract indicated behaviors expected of the apprentice, such as keeping trade secrets, obtaining permission to leave the premises, and abstaining from specific vices. The contract also listed the obligations of the master craftsman to his apprentice, including basic education, training in the craft, room and board, and tools upon completion of the contract. This lesson will look at an actual contract between John Draper, blacksmith, and Francis Moss, apprentice, in eighteenth-century Williamsburg.

OBJECTIVES
1. Students will analyze and interpret a primary source to explore the role and responsibilities of an eighteenth-century master craftsman and his apprentice.
2. Students will differentiate between the role and responsibilities of a master craftsman and those of an apprentice by completing a T-chart graphic organizer.
3. Students will transfer knowledge by comparing the roles and responsibilities of a twentieth-century employer and his or her employee.

STANDARDS OF LEARNING
This lesson meets the National Standards for History in the areas of historical comprehension, analysis, and interpretation.

MATERIALS
Apprentice Contract between John Draper and Francis Moss
Primary Document Analysis Organizer

STRATEGY
1. Students may work on this activity individually, in pairs, or in groups. Divide students and distribute copies of the apprentice contract and document organizer as needed.

2. Students will read the contract and complete numbers 1 through 6 on the organizer.

3. Divide the class into several small groups. Half of the groups will determine the role and responsibilities of the apprentice, recording them in the appropriate column on the T-chart. The other half will do the same for the master craftsman.

4. As a class, discuss the contents of the students’ T-charts. Students will complete their T-charts based upon the class discussion.

5. Complete the discussion by comparing and contrasting eighteenth-century apprenticeships with twentieth-century employment opportunities.

6. Students will choose a present-day job or career and compare the roles and responsibilities of the employer and employee. Students will create a contract between themselves and a future employer on a separate sheet of paper.
John Draper Indenture Contract

This Indenture Witnesseth That Francis Moss of the County of York by approbation of the Court of the County aforesaid and his own Consent hath put himself, and by these presents doth voluntarily and of his own free will and accord put himself apprentice to John Draper of the City of Williamsburg to learn his Art Trade and Mystery and after the manner of an Apprentice to serve the said John Draper from the Day of the Date hereof for and During and unto the full one and Term of Six Years during all which Term the said Apprentice his said Master faithfully shall serve his Secrets keep his Lawfull Commands at all Times readily Obey: He shall do no Damage to his said Master, nor see it be done by others without giving Notice thereof to his said Master. He shall not waste his said Masters Goods nor lend them unlawfully to any. He shall not contract Matrimony within the said Term. At Cards Dice or any other unlawful Game he shall not play whereby his said Master may have Damage With his own Goods nor the Goods of others without License from his said Master he shall not buy nor sell. He shall not absent himself Day or Night from his said Masters Service without his Leave nor haunt Alehouses Taverns or playhouses but in all Things, behave himself as a faithful apprentice ought to do during the said Term. And the said Master shall use the utmost of his Endeavours to teach or Cause to be taught or instructed the said Apprentice in the Trade or Mystery of a Blacksmith and procure or provide for him sufficient Meat Drink Cloathes Washing and Lodging fitting for an apprentice during the said Term of Six Years also teach him to read and write with freedom Dues And for the true performance of all and singular the Covenants and Agreements aforesaid the parties bind themselves each unto the other firmly by these presents. In Witness whereof the said Parties have interchangeably set their Hands and Seals hereunto Dated the Twentieth day of May in the Eleventh Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third King of Great Britain &c. Anno Domini One Thousand Seven hundred and seventy one.

Sealed and Delivered John Draper
In the Presence of Francis Moss

Source: York County, Deed Book 8, 1769-1777, pp. 111-112.
Primary Document Analysis Organizer

Complete each section as directed.

1. Type of Primary Document (check one):
   _____ Journal/Diary
   _____ Letter
   _____ Newspaper
   _____ Poster/Broadside
   _____ Bill/Declaration
   _____ Contract
   _____ Other

2. Name or Title of Document: __________________________________________________

3. Date of Document: _________________________________________________________

4. Author(s): ________________________________________________________________

5. What was its purpose? Why do you think the document was made?
  _________________________________________________________________________
  _________________________________________________________________________
  _________________________________________________________________________
  _________________________________________________________________________

6. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.
  _________________________________________________________________________
  _________________________________________________________________________
  _________________________________________________________________________
  _________________________________________________________________________

7. Role and Responsibilities of an Apprentice
   __________________________________
   __________________________________
   __________________________________
   __________________________________

   Role and Responsibilities of a Master Craftsman
   __________________________________
   __________________________________
   __________________________________
   __________________________________
LESSON ONE

Design a Day

INTRODUCTION
Gentry girls participated in activities that contributed to their education. Some of these were purely educational, some took the form of chores, while others were more leisurely activities. These girls spent most of their day learning housewifery skills and reading, writing, and basic math skills to prepare them for their social standing in the gentry class and a life of marriage and motherhood. A typical day may have brought encounters with other gentry-level people where proper manners could be displayed and connections with important people could be made.

OBJECTIVE
Students will be able to understand the daily activities of a gentry-born girl.

STANDARDS OF LEARNING
This lesson meets National Standards of Learning for Grades 5–6: Study historical documents to “tell a story” about the documents and the people and events connected with them.

This lesson meets National Standards of Learning for Grades 7–8: Interpret the data obtained from historical documents to analyze the historical context in which they were created and develop a report about it.

MATERIALS
Daily Activities of a Young Gentry Woman (Early Teens)

STRATEGY
1. Students will read and then discuss the handout of daily activities of a gentry girl.

2. Students will prioritize the daily activities and estimate the amount of time necessary to complete each activity. [Note: possible activities include tea, going to market or running errands with mother, stitchery (sampler), child care, housewifery skills, reading, writing, ciphering, shopping, dancing at the Palace or a neighbor’s house, music lessons, sitting in the garden talking with friends, and practicing French.]

3. Students will then have the option to create one of the following to illustrate a typical day in the life of a gentry girl:
   a. Storyboard  
   b. Comic Strip  
   c. Graphic Novel  
   d. Song  
   e. Poem  
   f. Skit  
   g. Pantomime

4. If the teacher chooses, this same lesson strategy may be used to “design a day” for an urban slave boy (see: Possible Daily Activities of an Urban Slave Boy) and/or a first-year apprentice boy (See: Possible Daily Activities of a First-Year Apprentice Carpenter).
Daily Activities of a Young Gentry Woman
(Early Teens)

Gentry girls usually attended school until the age of sixteen or so. When schooled at home by a tutor, their typical school schedule might follow the one described by Philip Vickers Fithian, tutor to the Robert Carter family of Nominini Hall, Westmoreland County, Virginia:

7:00 A.M.  Begin school for the day
8:00 A.M.  Breakfast
9:00 A.M.  Return to school
noon School dismissed (one tutor called the period between noon and dinner “school play hours”)
2:00 P.M.  Dinner
3:00 P.M.  Return to school
5:30 P.M.  School dismissed for the day

In 1756, young Maria Carter (aged about 11) of Sabine Hall, Richmond County, Virginia, described a similar schedule:

Now I will give you the History of one day the Repetition of which without variations carries me through the three hundred and sixty five days, which you know completes the year. Well then first begin, I am awakened out of a sound Sleep with some croaking voice either Patty’s, Milly’s, or some other of our Domestic with Miss Polly, Miss Polly get up, tis time to rise, Mr. Price is down Stairs, & tho’ I hear them I lie quite snugg till my Grandmama uses her Voice, then up I get, huddle on my cloaths & down to Book, then to Breakfast, then to School again, & may be I have an Hour to myself before Dinner, then the Same Story over again until Twi-light, & then a small portion of time before I go to rest, and so you must expect nothing from me. [Maria Carter of Sabine Hall to her cousin Maria Carter of Cleve]

Fithian’s diary indicates that the school schedule could vary at the discretion of the tutor or the parents. For example, Fithian’s students, Priscilla Carter (age 15) and Nancy Carter (age 13), attended the dancing master on Fridays and Saturdays every three weeks. (Priscilla, though, attended less regularly than Nancy.) In addition, they were both excused from school every Tuesday and Thursday to practice music. Sometimes the girls were excused from school to visit neighbors with their parents, and once Priscilla went to the county court with them. Special occasions that required some preparation, like a ball might excuse children from school. Children did not attend school when they were ill.

Maria Carter did not live with her father at Sabine Hall when she wrote her letter about her daily routine. Because her mother had died, Maria was living with her Grandmother Byrd at Westover in Charles City County. Young women learned housewifery in their pre-teen and early teen years and needed practical instruction from an experienced woman.

Girls’ training in housewifery was probably spread throughout the day, as chores came up in the natural course of the daily routine. Although gentry children had nursery maids, older daughters learned child care by helping to care for younger brothers and sisters. They might,
for example, have helped the young children to dress for the day or to eat properly. Girls learned to consult with the cook in the morning about the day’s meals. Young girls were often given small numbers of poultry to raise, which they would need to feed in the morning. On some mornings, urban girls might have accompanied their mothers to the market to purchase food and learn about prices, quality, bargaining, and so on. Throughout the day, they would perform other necessary household tasks.

Gentry girls who attended a private day school or a school run by a local minister probably did not begin their school day before breakfast, but we have no clear evidence when such a school might have opened in the morning. It seems likely students at these schools began at eight or nine in the morning, with a break for dinner and some leisure in the early afternoon, because Virginians ate their main meal of the day at about two o’clock.

During “school play hours” at Nomini Hall, the Carter girls rode on horseback with other family members or with their tutor, took walks in the garden or to the fields, or played games like checks (similar to tic-tac-toe played with peach stones). Girls who lived in town might have used this time for visiting or shopping. Additional training in housewifery might have included preparations for dinner during this break in the school day. Because candles and oil lamps were expensive and did not provide a steady, bright light, eighteenth-century people took advantage of all available natural light. Early afternoon light was best for detail work, such as needlework, and girls probably spent many of their “school play hours” sewing. Plain sewing included making shirts, shifts, caps, aprons, and baby clothes. Priscilla Carter embroidered a counterpane, as an example of fancy work. During the winter months, school was often dismissed early, because of failing light.

After a light supper in the early evening, the gentry family often gathered for conversation, to play music together, or to play games. Diarists mention games like “grind the bottle,” “hide the thimble,” and “button.” We have not been able to discover the rules for any of these games. Some families probably made up their own games, as we do today.

Young girls were usually in bed by nine o’clock.
### Possible Daily Activities of an Urban Slave Boy  
(Aged About 11, in a Gentry Family)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00–7:30 A.M.</td>
<td>Rise and dress. Bring in wood and build up the kitchen fire. Bring water to kitchen. If weather requires it, make fire(s) in room(s) to be used in the house. Help make fire and haul water for laundry if it is laundry day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00–9:00 A.M.</td>
<td>Carry food from kitchen to dining room. Wait at the master’s table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00–9:15 A.M.</td>
<td>Help to carry remains of meal back to kitchen. Bring in water needed for meal cleanup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15–9:30 A.M.</td>
<td>Eat breakfast in kitchen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 A.M.–NOON</td>
<td>Be available to tend fires in house when needed, run errands for white family or adult slaves (take messages, buy small items as ordered). Perform seasonal tasks, such as weeding the garden. Help in kitchen or stable as needed. Bring water needed for dinner preparation to kitchen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00–3:00 P.M.</td>
<td>Carry food from kitchen to dining room for dinner. Wait at the master’s table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00–3:15 P.M.</td>
<td>Help to carry remains of meal back to kitchen. Bring water needed for meal cleanup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15–3:45 P.M.</td>
<td>Eat dinner in kitchen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:45 P.M.–suppertime</td>
<td>Be available to tend fires in house when needed, run errands for white family or adult slaves (take messages, buy small items as ordered). Perform seasonal tasks, such as weeding the garden. Help in kitchen or stable as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 or 7:00 P.M.</td>
<td>Carry supper from kitchen to dining room. Wait at the master’s table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after supper</td>
<td>Carry remains of meal back to kitchen. Build fires in bedchambers, if needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rest of evening</td>
<td>Eat supper. Remain on call until bedtime; often considered a time for leisure activities. Might visit family or friends at another household. Typical evening activities might include storytelling, hearing the news from visiting slaves, playing music, or dancing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Possible Daily Activities of a First-Year Apprentice Carpenter

When an apprentice’s indenture required the master to provide schooling, the master often fulfilled the requirement quickly by sending the apprentice to school during his first year of his service. For some, this may have involved entire days of schooling, but we suspect that most Williamsburg apprentices attended school part of the day and worked at their new trade for the rest of the day. Although we don’t know the exact hours that most local schools operated, it seems likely that day-school students, unlike those who were tutored at home, probably breakfasted at home and stayed at school until almost dinner time.

6:00–7:00 A.M. Rise and dress. Perform any tasks the master asks.
7:00–7:30 A.M. Breakfast with the master’s family and leave for school.
8:00 A.M.–1:00 P.M. At school.
2:00 P.M. Dinner with the master’s family.
3:00 P.M.–dusk Go to work with master. First-year apprentices were given mostly unskilled “grunt work” to do. For an apprentice carpenter, these tasks might include moving lumber, sweeping up, or learning to plane. To take advantage of available daylight, carpenters often extended their workday until dusk fell. (London carpenters were said to work from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.)

about 7:00 P.M. Supper with the master’s family.
until bedtime Leisure time to read or otherwise amuse himself. The apprentice might join in the family’s evening activities, which could include music, games, or conversation. Some apprentices left the house (with or without permission) to get together with friends outside for ball games, to play pranks on the townspeople, or to engage in other mischief.
LESSON TWO

About Town with a Slave Boy

INTRODUCTION
An urban slave child might spend part of his day running errands for his master or his mother. These errands called for some interaction between the child and others living in town and required slave children to adhere to the protocol of their social class. African-colonial and white cultural perspectives were very different in the eighteenth century. When the two perspectives clashed, individuals had to make choices between them. All too often, the master’s wishes left the slave child with little or no choice.

OBJECTIVES
1. Using coordinate and directional skills, students will be able to map out Williamsburg.
2. Students will have an understanding of the places a slave boy might go in the course of a day.
3. Students will be able to prioritize and establish the sequential importance of the day’s errands.
4. Students will be able to write a directional paragraph.

STANDARDS OF LEARNING
This lesson meets National Standards of Learning #2 for Grades 5–6: Read geographic symbols, map scales, and directional indicators in order to obtain and interpret information from historical maps, such as the geographical features of the setting in which events occurred, their absolute and relative locations, and the distances and directions involved.

MATERIALS
- Three sheets of centimeter grid paper
- Tape
- Teacher Answer Sheet Map
- Scenario of a Slave Boy’s Errands
- Overhead transparency of map (teacher made)

STRATEGY
1. Students will work in pairs.
2. Students will lay two grid papers horizontally on the desk. The ends of the papers will be taped together so that there is no overlapping.
3. Instruct the students to draw a compass rose in the upper right hand corner to indicate directions. The teacher may refer to the Answer Sheet Map for proper directions.
4. With guidance from the teacher, each student will map out the city of Williamsburg with his or her partner.
5. Students will place each designated building in the correct location. These include: Robert Carter House, George Wythe House, Greenhow Store, the Governor's Palace, Market Square, St. George Tucker House, Milliner Shop, Apothecary, Carpenter's Yard, Peyton Randolph House, Raleigh Tavern, Printing Office, James Geddy House, Bray School, King's Arms Tavern, College of William and Mary, Wetherburn's Tavern, and the Blacksmith. Teacher should have copies of the Answer Sheet Map available for students to copy the buildings.

6. Students will read the Scenario of a Slave Boy’s Errands and mark on the map, with pencil, each place he goes and the order in which he should visit each site. They should also indicate the number of chores the slave boy would be doing at his home property (the George Wythe House) and keep in mind how these chores will limit his available time for running errands.

7. Ask each student to write a directional paragraph using cardinal points to describe the slave boy’s journey on his errands. A persuasive paragraph can also be written to describe the conflict and sequential importance of getting all of the errands and chores completed.

8. The teacher may wish to discuss further the sequential order students chose and the reasons behind their choices.

9. Collect and save all of the student maps. They will be used for the board game in the post-lesson.
Teacher Answer Sheet Map
Rotate this portion of map 90 degrees. Match portions at dotted line.
Scenario of a Slave Boy’s Errands

You want to see your father at the blacksmith shop and tell him that the master is thinking about selling your older brother to Carter’s Grove Plantation. You know your father will be there early in the morning.

The master’s wife asked you to go pick up a sugar cone at the morning outdoor market. She needs the sugar cone before the coals are ready for cooking. The fire was being started as you were leaving, and it takes an hour for the coals to heat up.

You were asked to take a message to Thomas Jefferson at the Raleigh Tavern. You saw him go into the tavern a few minutes ago.

Which is most important? Why?

What should you do first? Why?

How can you get them all done?

REMEMBER: You must also complete your daily chores, which include carrying water to the kitchen, restocking all woodpiles, feeding the chickens, gathering the eggs, and helping in the kitchen by turning the spit and churning butter.
POST-LESSON
A Day in the Life of Prissy Carter, Dennis, Her Slave, and Thomas Moss, a Carpenter’s Apprentice

INTRODUCTION
The daily activities of all young colonial Virginians included chores, education, and leisure activities. These tasks varied depending on the person’s role in the community. Opportunities as well as expectations for the future greatly affected the daily life of all young people. While going about their daily activities, gentry, slaves, and apprentices frequently interacted with one another. This board game simulates the daily activities typical for each character in the early 1770s. Prissy Carter and her slave, Dennis, were actual historical persons who lived in Williamsburg. Thomas Moss, though a fictional character, is representative of a typical apprentice.

OBJECTIVES
1. In a game setting, students will experience many possible activities in the day of a life of a gentry girl, a slave, and an apprentice.
2. By playing the game in a group of three, students will see how each of the three characters, each representing a different social level, interacts with the others.
3. From the specific limitations of each character’s task cards, students will see that some social levels provide more opportunities than others.

STANDARDS OF LEARNING
This lesson meets the National Standards of U.S. History in the areas of historical comprehension, interpretation, and issues analysis.

MATERIALS
Map created in “About Town with a Slave Boy” lesson. (If you did not use that lesson, you may photocopy the Teacher Answer Sheet Map as gameboard.)
Prissy Carter Task Cards
Dennis Task Cards
Thomas Moss Task Cards
A Day in the Life Checklist
Game pieces (small beans, stones, etc.)

STRATEGY
1. Copy the task cards on colored card stock, using one color for each different character.

2. Divide students into groups of three. In each group, one person will draw task cards for Priscilla Carter, one for Dennis, and the third for Thomas Moss.
3. Distribute to each group:
   • one set of the task cards for each of the three characters
   • one map from the previous lesson (or the one in the packet)
   • one A Day in the Life checklist for each student
   • one game piece (small bean, stone, etc.) for each student

4. Students decide who will be Prissy, who always goes first, Thomas, who goes second, and Dennis, who goes third.

5. Each game piece is placed at the character’s home base. Prissy begins in the Carter home, Thomas in the Carpenter’s Yard, and Dennis in the Carter kitchen.

6. The game is played by each character drawing a card from his or her pile, reading it aloud, and moving on the map to the location identified. If there is no specific direction to move (e.g.: “Go to...”), the activity takes place at the character’s home base. Each student must fill out his or her checklist: visiting four buildings other than his or her home base; making one purchase at a shop; participating in one leisure activity; and learning one thing. As students move about the board, they will decide which tasks fit in which categories. The first person to complete his or her checklist and return home (as directed by a task card) wins.

   **REMMINDER:** There is no prescribed circuit or finish line for the characters. The purpose of moving the game piece for each character is to show how much (or how little) characters from different social levels moved about the town and to show the proximity and interrelationships of the various sites in a compact colonial town.

7. If a character’s task cards are exhausted before the game is completed, reshuffle the pile of cards and reuse.

8. The tasks cover a variety of issues of colonial life that may be discussed at the end of the game. Topics of discussion may include: gender differences, class differences, opportunities and education, possibility of upward mobility, and reasons for certain characters being able to fill in particular items more easily.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRISSY CARTER</th>
<th>Gentry Girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go to the Wythe House. Invite them to dinner Sunday next.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRISSY CARTER</th>
<th>Gentry Girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receive minuet lesson from your dance instructor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRISSY CARTER</th>
<th>Gentry Girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice serving tea with your tea set.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRISSY CARTER</th>
<th>Gentry Girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go to Mr. Greenhow’s store. Buy ribbon for a new gown.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRISSY CARTER</th>
<th>Gentry Girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go to the market to pick up a chicken for dinner. Take Dennis with you to carry the chicken. DENNIS LOSES A TURN.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRISSY CARTER</th>
<th>Gentry Girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go to the market with mother to learn how to select a chicken for dinner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRISSY CARTER</th>
<th>Gentry Girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take a harpsichord lesson with your private tutor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRISSY CARTER</th>
<th>Gentry Girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take your French lesson with your private tutor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRISSY CARTER</th>
<th>Gentry Girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make a shadow play with your younger sister.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRISSY CARTER</td>
<td>Gentry Girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to a neighboring plantation for a dinner and dancing.</td>
<td>Put on a play for company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on your sampler.</td>
<td>Translate an entire story from French into English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have a fever and are unable to attend church.</td>
<td>Go to the Millinery Shop with Mother to select fabric for a ball gown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOU LOSE A TURN.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to the Tucker house for tea.</td>
<td>Play a game with your sisters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DRAW ANOTHER CARD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M other compliments you on your stitching.</td>
<td>Go to the Palace to attend a ball. You dance with a Burgess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DRAW ANOTHER CARD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You must supervise your younger brothers and sisters.</td>
<td>Go to the Apothecary with M other to purchase cloves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Dennis Task Cards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DENNIS Young Slave</th>
<th>DENNIS Young Slave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go to the Carpenter’s yard with Master Carter’s note about building a smokehouse.</td>
<td>Go to the market with Mistress Carter to help carry a chicken home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>YOU LOSE A TURN.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENNIS Young Slave</td>
<td>DENNIS Young Slave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to the Apothecary to purchase tooth powder.</td>
<td>Cart firewood from the woodpile to the kitchen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENNIS Young Slave</td>
<td>DENNIS Young Slave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to the tutor for your ciphering lesson.</td>
<td>Take a night walk to visit Father, who is owned by Mr. Geddy and lives in his household.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENNIS Young Slave</td>
<td>DENNIS Young Slave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to the Randolph kitchen to get an egg for Mother.</td>
<td>Go to the Raleigh Tavern to deliver a message from Master Carter to Mr. Wythe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENNIS Young Slave</td>
<td>DENNIS Young Slave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to the Printing Office for quills and writing paper.</td>
<td>Practice and learn your catechism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENNIS Young Slave</td>
<td>DENNIS Young Slave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help Mother in the kitchen.</td>
<td>Spend an evening storytelling with the other slaves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**DENNIS**  
**Young Slave**

Spend the evening reading Psalms to M other.

M other chides you for laziness.  
**YOU LOSE A TURN.**

Get water from the well.

Clean up your sleeping area in the kitchen.

Weed the garden.

Get drawing paper for Prissy's drawing lesson.

Sneak away behind the stables to play marbles with a friend. You are caught and punished.  
**YOU LOSE A TURN.**

The Master praises you for your speed in filling all of the wash basins.  
**DRAW ANOTHER CARD.**

Polish Mistress Carter's silver spoons.

Receive half a bit (money) for your speed in delivering a package.  
**DRAW ANOTHER CARD.**

Go to the pasture next to the Palace to return Master Carter's horse that had run away.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Card</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THOMAS MOSS&lt;br&gt;Carpenter’s Apprentice&lt;br&gt;Go to Mr. Greenhow’s store to purchase nails for your Master.</td>
<td>Go back to the Randolphs’ to fetch the froe you carelessly left there. YOU LOSE A TURN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOMAS MOSS&lt;br&gt;Carpenter’s Apprentice&lt;br&gt;M aster teaches you the art of riving (splitting) shingles.</td>
<td>Spend the evening on a ciphering lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOMAS MOSS&lt;br&gt;Carpenter’s Apprentice&lt;br&gt;Spend the evening with fellow apprentices playing with Aesop’s Fable cards for your moral education.</td>
<td>M aster sends you to the College of William and Mary to deliver plans for the new necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOMAS MOSS&lt;br&gt;Carpenter’s Apprentice&lt;br&gt;Go to Mr. Greenhow’s store to purchase a new froe for your Master.</td>
<td>Go to the Carter house to pick up shingles not used in construction of the smokehouse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOMAS MOSS&lt;br&gt;Carpenter’s Apprentice&lt;br&gt;Learn how to cut joints for the Carter smokehouse.</td>
<td>Journeyman shows you how to true planks for the smokehouse walls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOMAS MOSS&lt;br&gt;Carpenter’s Apprentice&lt;br&gt;Go to King’s Arms Tavern to deliver an important message to your Master.</td>
<td>Restack boards blown over in last night’s storm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THOMAS MOSS  
Carpenter’s Apprentice

On a hot day, take a long dinner, allowing you an hour of rest.

THOMAS MOSS  
Carpenter’s Apprentice

Go to the Governor’s Palace on an errand. You see a friend from home who is now a Bricklayer’s Apprentice.

THOMAS MOSS  
Carpenter’s Apprentice

Your Master calls you a lackey for your idleness.

YOU LOSE A TURN.

THOMAS MOSS  
Carpenter’s Apprentice

You plane and square boards for your Master.

THOMAS MOSS  
Carpenter’s Apprentice

You have run an errand without your Master needing to ask you.

DRAW ANOTHER CARD.

THOMAS MOSS  
Carpenter’s Apprentice

Spend an evening at Wetherburn’s Tavern. This act breaks the rules of your contract.

YOU LOSE A TURN.

THOMAS MOSS  
Carpenter’s Apprentice

Your Master compliments you for your good work on the shingles you are making.

DRAW ANOTHER CARD.

THOMAS MOSS  
Carpenter’s Apprentice

Clean the yard after the Master and Journeyman have finished the day’s work.

THOMAS MOSS  
Carpenter’s Apprentice

Do some ciphering to determine the measurements for the Carter smokehouse.

THOMAS MOSS  
Carpenter’s Apprentice

Go to Wetherburn’s Tavern and get into an argument with a student from William and Mary. Your Master chides you.

YOU LOSE A TURN.

THOMAS MOSS  
Carpenter’s Apprentice

Round front edges on shingles for the Carter smokehouse.
A Day in the Life Checklist

NAME:_____________________________________________________________________

COLONIAL CHARACTER:_______________________________________________________

SOCIAL STATUS:________________________________________________________________

BUILDINGS VISITED: 1. _________________________________________________________

2. _________________________________________________________

3. _________________________________________________________

4. _________________________________________________________

ITEM PURCHASED: 1. _________________________________________________________

WHERE PURCHASED? _________________________________________________________

LEISURE ACTIVITY: 1. _________________________________________________________

LESSON LEARNED: 1. _________________________________________________________
**Final Evaluation Activity**

Students will create two charts or visual diagrams. The first will pictorially show the daily life of a gentry girl, an apprentice, and a slave boy. The second chart will show a typical life of these same three children as adults. Students will have to take the knowledge they have acquired and infer/predict possible life expectations for each of the three individuals. The charts should be visual and have very few words. The students must then choose one or two key words to place under the pictorial information. In small groups, have students present and discuss their charts.

**ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITY**

In groups of three, ask students to role play a situation in which all three people meet one another as adults. For example, an adult slave is driving a gentry woman and her carriage is damaged, so the slave goes to the carpenter for repairs.

The teacher should not share actual expectations found in the background information until after the completion of the activity. After the activity, the teacher can discuss student opinions and relate their ideas to expectations that different social classes face in the twentieth century.
We at Colonial Williamsburg would very much enjoy receiving copies of some of your students' work from any of the lesson plans in this packet. If you would care to share examples of their work, please send them to:

Mary Stutz  
Colonial Williamsburg Foundation  
P.O. Box 1776  
Williamsburg, VA 23187-1776

Special thanks for their help to: Kelly Curtright, social studies curriculum coordinator, Oklahoma City, Okla.; Carol Gunner, elementary school teacher, Carlsbad, Calif.; Jeanne Lombard, middle school teacher, Vancouver, Wash.; Susan Pingel, high school teacher, Auburn, N.Y.; Gloria Sesso, high school teacher, Port Jefferson, N.Y.; and Laura Wilde, elementary school teacher, Marina Del Ray, Calif.

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