

Colonial Courtroom Answer Key

This activity is performance-based. Teachers should check that students:

- Understand that colonial justice systems were based on religious and community rules
- Support arguments with logical reasoning from the scenario
- Demonstrate their role accurately and respectfully
- Reflect on fairness using historical perspectives

Answers to reflection will vary but should include mention of colonial law, community expectations, and differing viewpoints on authority and religion.

Teacher's Guide

Differentiation Tips

- Support:
 - Provide sentence starters for roles (example: "I believe the law is important because...")
 - Allow note cards during presentations
 - Assign mixed-ability groups for balanced participation
- Challenge:
 - Require students to cite a real colonial law or Puritan belief
 - Add second charge or evidence for deeper argumentation

Engagement Strategies

- Bring a simple prop for each role (record book, judge's chair, hat for accused)
- Use a gavel sound to signal start and end of speaking time
- Encourage students to speak from their character's point of view

Extension Opportunities

- Students write the official verdict and punishment as a formal colonial document
- Compare fairness of colonial justice with modern legal rights
- Create a class discussion on religious freedom and how colonial rules shaped future laws