8th Grade American History

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My Life vs. Life in the Colonies

*Directions: Read the following quotes from Chapter 4. Think about how your life or our modern world compares to colonial times. Write a small paragraph in response to 8 of these quotes (your choice), giving some detail about your life and the world around you. Write your responses in your JOURNAL.*

**LIFE ON A FARM**

1. “Home is a single large room with a chimney at one end. In this room, your family cooks, eats, and sleeps. …..Your younger brothers and sisters sleep in a in a smaller “trundle” bed, a bed that can slide under the big bed during the day. At bedtime, you climb a ladder next to the chimney to sleep in an attic or loft. As your family grows, you help to build another room on the other side of the chimney.”
2. “Life…starts before sunrise. Everyone wakes up early [in your family] to share the work. Chores include cutting the wood, feeding the animals, clearing land, tending crops, building fences, making furniture…..and caring for babies.”

**LIFE IN CITIES**

1. “Cities were noisy, smelly places. Church bells rang out daily. Carts clattered loudly over streets paved with round cobblestones. The air was filled with the stench of rotting garbage and open sewers, but the colonists were used to it. Animals ran loose in the streets.”
2. “Just beyond the docks, a marketplace bustled with fishermen selling their catch and farmers selling fresh eggs, milk, and cheese…. When a fire broke out, the whole town helped to put it out.”

**CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

1. “Certain very serious crimes could be punished by death….In New England, colonists could be put to death for ‘denying the true God’ or for striking or cursing their parents…..crimes such as theft…highway robbery, carried harsh punishments….For these crimes, people might be jailed, whipped, or branded with hot irons…..A colonists might be locked in the town stocks. Stocks were heavy wooden frames with holes for a person’s neck, wrists, and ankles. Lawbreakers were locked for hours in this device in a public place where others might make fun of them.

**CLASS DIFFERENCES**

1. “In colonial America, titles and family background meant little. Most colonists started out poor. Those with ambition could use their brains and talents to climb the social ladder.”

**RELIGION**

1. “Religion was an important part of colonial life. Most colonists tried to lead good lives based on their faith. Children grew up reading the Bible from cover to cover several times over.”

**EDUCATION**

1. “Except in New England, most children in the colonies received very little formal education….Only in New England were towns required to provide public schools. The Puritans’ support for education was inspired by their faith. Parents were asked to contribute….to the village school. This might mean money, vegetables, firewood, or anything else the school needed…..Land was rented out to raise money for teachers’ salaries.”

**COLONIAL FAMILIES**

1. “Colonial men and women generally married in their early to mid-20s…..Almost every woman was assured of receiving a marriage proposal……life as a wife and mother often proved to be harder than life as an indentured servant. Most families had between seven and ten children….nearly half of all children died before they reached adulthood. After the death of a wife or husband, men and women usually remarried quickly. Thus, households often swelled with stepchildren as well as adopted orphans…..and no one would turn away a needy relative.”

**LEISURE**

1. When possible, colonists combined work and play by organizing ‘bees’ and ‘frolics.’ New settlers might host a ‘chopping bee’ in which neighbors helped clear the trees off their land. Other frolics included corn-husking bees for men and quilting bees for women. Sharing the work made it faster and a lot more fun.

**FOOD**

1. If you would like one more choice, choose a quote from page 60 and write a comparison.