



# Deep Knowledge Building

In Fishtank ELA, students build knowledge by learning about historical and scientific concepts, while also developing self-awareness and agency. Fishtank ELA units give students the chance to learn social-emotional skills such as empathy, compassion, and critical thinking as they build knowledge of historical or contemporary events, or as they analyze fictional character's actions.

Fishtank ELA supports knowledge building throughout the unit and lesson structures, with each element building upon the prior steps.



## 3rd Grade ELA – Rediscovering Thanksgiving: Fact vs. Fiction

The unit **Rediscovering Thanksgiving: Fact vs. Fiction** invites 3rd grade students to learn about the Pilgrims and the first Massachusetts colonies, including why the Pilgrims came to the New World, their relationship with the Native peoples, and the truth behind the first Thanksgiving.

The unit plan outlines four Essential Questions that help define the knowledge students will build in their work with the unit.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS ?

- Why did the Pilgrims leave England? What challenges did they face when they reached the "New World"?
- Who were the first people to live in present day New England? How were their lives and communities impacted by the Europeans?
- What parts of the Thanksgiving story are true? What parts are myths?
- Why is it important to look at history from multiple perspectives?

This unit challenges students to view history with a critical lens, and to notice how there is always more than one side to a story. They read a variety of texts as they build their knowledge of this historical period.

### Core Materials

- *Pilgrims: A Nonfiction Companion to Magic Tree House #27* by Mary Pope Osborne
- *The Wampanoag (A True Book: American Indians)* by Kevin Cunningham and Peter Benoit

### Supporting Materials

- Article: ["The English Colonies"](#)
- Article: ["Letters from a Pilgrim Child \(Letter 1\)"](#) (Scholastic)
- Article: ["Letters from a Pilgrim Child \(Letter 2\)"](#) (Scholastic)

- Article: [“Notes from a Wampanoag Child \(Letter 1\)”](#) (Scholastic)
- Article: [“Notes from a Wampanoag Child \(Letter 2\)”](#) (Scholastic)
- *Squanto's Journey: The Story of the First Thanksgiving* by Joseph Bruchac
- *The Thanksgiving Story* by Alice Dalgliesh
- *1621: A New Look at Thanksgiving* by Catherine O'Neill Grace and Margaret M. Bruchac

## Teacher Intellectual Preparation

Through intellectual preparation, teachers build a deeper understanding of their content and the curriculum by reading a unit’s texts and exploring the unit and lesson goals. By considering the texts, tasks and thinking required by the unit in the context of their students' backgrounds and skill levels, teachers are better prepared to ensure that all students have equitable access to the unit content.

Fishtank ELA offers teachers a structure for this intellectual preparation in the form of the Unit Launch, a series of self-paced modules that offer videos, readings, and opportunities for reflection and action planning for each unit. When teachers use the Unit Launch in their preparation process and internalize the unit’s Essential Questions, they are better equipped to guide their students in developing this key knowledge.

### INTERNALIZING THE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

The Essential Questions in Fishtank ELA units serve as a guide to the content students will learn in the unit. Review below the potential answers to this unit’s Essential Questions. **Please note, there is not one "right" answer to the Essential Questions. Based on experiences, you and your students may have additional answers to the Essential Questions.** When reviewing our responses, think about what other answers or evidence students might provide.

- Pilgrims didn't know how to grow their own food. Many pilgrims died during the first winter due to illness.

#### Who were the first people to live in present day New England? How were their lives and communities impacted by the Europeans?

- The Wampanoag were the first people to live in present day New England. In 1600 there were about 12,000 Wampanoag.
- The Wampanoag have a close relationship with the environment. They express their respect for the environment through ceremonies, songs, dances, art, stories etc. that honor the animals, crops, and environment.
- The Wampanoag first made contact with Europeans in 1524. The Europeans captured many Wampanoag as slaves. In 1616,

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## Close Reading Lessons

Over the first three lessons of the unit, students read from one of the core texts (*Pilgrims*) and two of the supporting texts, “The English Colonies” and “Pilgrim Letter 1”.

In Lesson 3, students connect the knowledge they’ve built through the first two lessons to a first-person account of a young girl writing a letter from the Mayflower.

## ENGAGING WITH THE TEXT



35 minutes

This text should be read twice. The first read should be a read aloud to help students identify literal facts and details, the second read should focus on analyzing why the author decided to use the craft moves that they did.

Depending on student needs, students can answer the questions orally, annotate in the margins, or write their answers. While students are working, circulate to gather formative data to ensure that students understand the text's key ideas. Based on formative data, use the supports provided to help students access the task and text.

- What does the phrase, "in the beat of a heart" show about the way Lizzy was feeling?
- What does the word stench most likely mean as used in paragraph one? How do you know?
- How does Lizzy spend her days on the ship? Why?
- What happened that made Lizzy think that they would all "drown and become food for the fishes"?
- In what ways do Lizzy and the other pilgrims rely on religion for comfort? Explain.
- How is the information in this article similar/different to the information from the other sources? Why?

## Daily Target Task Writing

By Lesson 8, students are drawing knowledge from more of the *Pilgrims* text, as well as "Pilgrim Letter 2," to respond to the writing prompt: **Imagine that you, like Lizzy, have just arrived in the New World. Write a few sentences that describe the challenges and rewards of being in the New World. Make sure your sentences include important facts and details to help the reader visualize what it was like on the ship.**

Teachers have access to a sample brainstorm format they may use to help students make cause and effect connections. They are encouraged to have students work in partners to think of additional causes and effects that describe the challenges of being in the New World, and share student answers with the class.

Cause	Effect
Land wasn't good for farming	Struggling to find food
Men not successful hunting	Not getting food quick enough
Encounters with Native peoples	Unable to explore the land as much as we'd like
So cold out	Man got his toes frozen off, hard to be outside

## Student Writing Sample for Lesson 8 Target Task

Life for pilgrims in the "New World" was very challenging. One reason why it <sup>was</sup> very challenging for the pilgrims is that they arrived during winter and did not know how to use the land <sup>so</sup> they could not grow crops for food. Another reason it was very challenging for the pilgrims in the new world was the men weren't done building the houses the pilgrims were going to stay in <sup>so</sup> the pilgrims had to live on the boat. One more reason it was very challenging for the pilgrims in the new world was that they didn't have enough fresh water <sup>so</sup> they had to move from Cape Cod to Plymouth. These are all the reasons why it was very challenging for the pilgrims in the new world.

## Socratic Seminars

As students near the end of the unit, they engage in a discussion about one of the unit's Essential Questions: **What parts of the Thanksgiving story are true? What parts are myths?**

The lesson plan includes guidance for teachers about potential misconceptions that may surface in the course of the discussion.

Important Understanding	Potential Misconceptions	Supports
Students must synthesize that, overall, much of what we typically learn about Thanksgiving is not accurate, because of the perspective it is told from and whose perspective it includes.	Students may not realize that the various purposes of the texts they read led the authors to include different details.	Bring out conflicting texts, such as 1621 and The Thanksgiving Story. Ask students what their purposes are. Lead students in a discussion about how their purposes would impact the details the author chooses to include.
Students must correct the myths with specific, text-based details that they have read over the course of the unit.	Students may be confused about the true facts given the variety they have from prior knowledge and these various texts.  They may be unclear on the Native Americans' telling of events and perspectives.	Point students back to details across multiple texts about the Thanksgiving experience and facts that conflict with the widespread understanding of Thanksgiving. For instance, pages 37 - 43 of 1621: A New Look at Thanksgiving.

## Writing Project

Students' final writing project for this unit prompts them to research, draft, illustrate, and create books to teach younger students about the real story of the first Thanksgiving.

They practice planning and researching from within the texts they have read throughout the unit. They draw on the brainstorming skills they developed earlier in the unit, begin to plan paragraphs based on their notes, consider how they might use text features to help the reader better understand the topic, and finally edit to create their final draft.

## Content Assessment Writing

The unit's content assessment concludes with the prompt:

**Explain how the arrival of the Europeans impacted the Wampanoag. In your answer be sure to:**

- Include two to three key events that highlight how the Europeans impacted the Wampanoag
- Use cause and effect to describe what happened and why
- Use 2-3 vocabulary words from this unit

### Student Work Sample for Content Assessment Writing Prompt

The Europeans impacted the Wampanoag in many ways. Here's how. The Europeans impacted the Wampanoag badly because they took the Wampanoag's land. They also had lots of wars which means that most Pilgrim and Wampanoag. An example for one of the wars where King Philip's war! another way the Europeans impacted the Wampanoag was when the European came was diseases. Diseases were bad because that means that more Wampanoags would die and there would be less. Another way the Europeans effect the Wampanoag was scaring them how the Europeans scared the Wampanoag by doing things that the Wampanoag didn't know.

For example shooting their gun in the air. that all my info about the Wampanoag impacted.