Lesson Plan 2

OBJECTIVES

☑ Students will review vocabulary, rules for sentences, and the U.S. timeline.
☑ Students will read about mercantilism and practice writing summary sentences.
☑ Students will use a diagram showing triangular trade to understand the economic relationships between England, its colonies and Africa.
☑ Students will learn and apply strategies for comprehending poetry.
☑ Students will read a letter from a teacher about aspirations and a career decision and write a response.

To see the classroom video, Strategies for Understanding Poetry, visit the CUNY HSE Curriculum Framework web site at http://literacy.cuny.edu/hseframework.

MATERIALS FOR LESSON 2

Activity 1: Review Stations
  • Review Stations packet

Activity 2: What’s Mercantilism?
  • Mercantilism diagram

Activity 3: Triangular Trade
  • Triangular trade diagram

Activities 4 and 5: Understanding Poetry
  • Poetry packet

Activity 6: Thinking About Aspirations and Careers
  • Letter from a Teacher

Homework:
  • Colonial Economies: Mercantilism
ACTIVITY 1  Review Stations

MATERIALS: Review Stations handout

STEPS:

1. Before students arrive, draw a timeline on the board for the timeline/map station and post pieces of flip chart paper with sentence starters for the vocabulary station. At the top of each piece of flip chart paper, write a sentence starter, such as, “One thing that prompted me to come to HSE class was...” “One thing I hope to prevail against in my life is...” “One group that I feel is unfairly persecuted is...”

2. As students come in to class, ask them to pair up. Give them each a copy of the packet. Have different groups begin on different stations. You can either have students rotate between stations, or have each pair focus on one station and prepare work they will present to the class.

3. For the sentence-combining group, you will want to provide a brief demonstration of how to combine sentences using commas in a series. A recommended method for doing this:

   Take the first set of stem sentences on the handout. Talk about how when we combine sentences, one method we can use is to delete information that is repeated. Ask students what information is repeated in the three stem sentences. Have them dictate a sentence that deletes the repeated information. This can be their model sentence. Explain where commas should be placed and why.

4. Circulate as pairs or groups are working to provide support and guidance.

5. Bring the class together and review the U.S. timeline, sentence combinations and expansions, and the vocabulary sentence starters students have completed.

6. Briefly mention the purpose of review; each time students revisit a particular fact/skill/piece of knowledge, their brain connections actually get stronger.

A new challenge for teachers and students alike with the TASC is the need to learn content. What is essential in learning content is to review so that students retain information they have learned in class and can apply it to new reading and learning. I have begun to use Review Stations in class because it provides a chance to review what has been learned in a time-efficient way. Different groups can work on different stations, then present to the class.
ACTIVITY 2  What’s Mercantilism?

MATERIALS: Mercantilism diagram, attached

STEPS:

1. Review with students the products produced by the colonies. What were they? If students don’t remember, write them on the board: tobacco, rice, indigo, fish, wheat. Tell students you want to teach them two new economics terms: raw goods and finished goods or manufactured goods. Discuss with students what these terms mean. What would be an example of each?

2. Tell students: based on what you’ve learned about colonial products, would you say the colonies were producing raw goods or manufactured goods? Review with students the reasons that European countries wanted colonies. They wanted: wealth, land, resources. Tell students that in order to make sure that they got rich from the colonies they started, England introduced a system called “mercantilism.”

3. Write the word on the board. Ask students what they do when they encounter a word they don’t know. Students may say that they use a dictionary or google. Ask them what they will do if they don’t have either of these tools. Students may say “break it down.” Ask students how they might break “mercantilism” down. You may want to mention other “isms,” like “capitalism, feminism, sexism, racism.” What do these “ism” words have in common? Ask whether the “mercant” looks at all familiar. Some students may recognize “merchant.” Confirm that mercantilism had to do with merchants and merchandise.

4. Ask students to look at the mercantilism diagram, read the text below, then verbally explain to each other what mercantilism was in their own words. After they have spoken an explanation, have them write a one or two word sentence about mercantilism. Circulate to provide encouragement and support. Ask one or two students to write their sentences on the board.

The purpose of this activity is two-fold: extend students’ understandings of certain basic economic concepts in a historical setting—the concept of raw goods and manufactured goods is a fundamental concept—and give them preliminary practice with paraphrasing to better comprehend.
ACTIVITY 3  Triangular Trade

MATERIALS: diagram of triangular trade

STEPS:

1. Tell students, *We’ve been talking about economics. We’ve seen that the colonies produced a lot of raw goods to sell to England. Producing raw goods can be very labor intensive. Who did the work?* Refer students back to Homework Reading B. What does that tell us about who did the work?

2. So colonists used slaves to help produce their raw goods. Not only in the North American colonies, but also in the Caribbean colonies, slave labor was used to produce raw goods. In fact, this entire economic system would not have been possible without slave labor.

3. Give out the diagram that shows the voyages made by one ship from Newport Rhode Island to Africa’s Gold Coast, to Barbados and then back to Newport. Have students look at the diagram in pairs and review, with you, the goods and products that the ship is carrying as cargo from one place to another. You may want to have students write a narrative for the diagram. “I am Captain..., the captain of the ship Sanderson in 1752. Here is how I make my living...”

4. Tell students, *In Lesson One, we talked about why we need to study history. We need background knowledge to help us understand what we read. But there are other reasons to study history as well. What are they?* As students make suggestions, write them on the board. Inevitably a student will mention that you can understand the present better if you understand the past. Confirm that as a reason to study history. Ask students whether they feel slavery has had a big impact on U.S. history. What have been some of the consequences of slavery? Write these on the board.

5. Remind students that they have already read a number of different kinds of texts in this class. They’ve looked at maps, diagrams, textbook excerpts, magazine excerpts. Now they are going to tackle a new text type: poetry. They are going to read a poem that refers to slavery. There is some poetry on the HSE test—not much—but because poetry can be tricky and difficult to understand at times, they will spend some time working on strategies for poetry. It helps them expand background knowledge and addresses students’ different learning styles.
ACTIVITY 4
Understanding Poetry with “Dreams” by Langston Hughes

MATERIALS: whiteboard and markers

STEPS:

1. Bring up the issue of poetry—how many students read poetry? Do any write poetry? Do they find poetry difficult? Once the whole-class discussion has got going, ask students to discuss, in pairs: 1) How do you know a group of words is a poem? And 2) What is difficult about comprehending poetry?

2. Circulate to hear students’ ideas, then ask some groups or individual students to go to the board and write their ideas. Students mentioned the following: you have to be in the situation the poet is in to understand it; grammar doesn’t always matter in a poem, which can make it more confusing; you have to read between the lines.

3. Discuss “inference”—a fancy word for “reading between the lines.” Tell students that actually, they make inferences all the time in their daily lives. For instance, throw your pen on the floor with an angry look on your face. Ask students how they think you are feeling. You may also want to talk about the way people are dressed. What are some inferences we might make if we see a man dressed in a very fancy spotless suit? Now that students have the idea, you can begin with a simple poem.

4. Write this simple Langston Hughes poem on the board:

   Hold fast to dreams
   For when dreams die
   Life is a broken winged bird
   That cannot fly

   Hold fast to dreams
   For when dreams go
   Life is a barren field
   Frozen with snow.

   Here students began to spontaneously draw upon their own knowledge and experience to make connections between the images in the poem and associations attached to those images. This kind of collaborative effort to make sense of a poem can work quite well in an adult ed classroom.

There is not a lot of poetry on the TASC, but there is some and students often struggle with poetry, especially poetry from earlier time periods which may have unfamiliar words and conventions. I like to get started by giving them a chance to voice what they already know about poetry, and what they consider to be difficult about poetry.
observed that “a barren field frozen with snow” connoted emptiness, death (it’s barren—nothing is growing there); emptiness (barren); a “bitter, cold world” and the idea that “your dreams are at a standstill.”

Tell students that this is exactly the right kind of strategy to be using to understand poetry. Tell them that the next poem will be harder, but now they know the strategies.

ACTIVITY 5  Understanding Poetry with “Since 1619” by Margaret Walker

MATERIALS: Poetry packet

STEPS:

1. Tell students that now they will read a harder poem. The poem they have just read was about Dreams. What do we mean when we talk about the American Dream? Is it true? Can anyone “make it” if they work hard enough? Refer back to the page from Homework Reading B about Jamestown. In this picture, who has a chance to realize their dreams? Who doesn’t? Tell students that the poem they are going to read next is about what happens when a group of people cannot reach their dreams because of persecution.

2. Give out the packet and call students’ attention to the strategies page. Tell students that you are going to do a think aloud with the first stanza—you will read it out loud and stop when you have a thought about it to talk about what you are noticing.

3. Begin by saying that one strategy that can really help to understand a poem is to know a bit about the poet. Have students read the biography of Margaret Walker. What do we know about her? She was an African American poet who lived in the 30s. What might have been some of the problems in the country at that time?

4. Tell students that another comprehension strategy for poetry is to pay close attention to the title. Ask whether anyone knows what happened in 1619. If no one knows, say that it is the year the first Africans were brought to the Americas as slaves.

5. Write the first stanza on the poem and read it out loud once, then begin the think aloud, writing annotations on the side in a marker of a different color.
You may want to comment on the word “Spirituals” and your associations with it. Other things to notice: both “hallelujah,” “spirituals,” and “heaven” have religious connotations. Every line is a question—is she asking someone this question or is she asking herself? Discuss the “speaker” of the poem—Margaret Walker is not really speaking as herself, because the poem begins “since 1619”—Margaret Walker wasn’t alive in 1619. She is probably speaking more on behalf of her people. What do we think “hated and haters” refers to? We know that Margaret Walker was African American and that the title refers to slavery. Could we be talking about discrimination? What do we think the poet may be saying? What feeling do we get? (students mentioned that the questions made the poet seem frustrated because she kept repeating “how long”)? Eventually we came up with the idea that perhaps the poet is getting frustrated with religion, which she thought would save her. Her people have been waiting too long. Maybe the last line, “how long have I been living in hell for heaven?” is about putting up with hellish conditions in the hope of going to heaven?

Write these phrases on the board:

- death knell
- Days of Wrath
- paltry pittances
- cold concessions
- angry mongrel

Go through the images and find out what students know, then explain their meanings. Ask students what associations and feelings they get from these images—violent? Sad?

Return to the full poem and read it out loud twice so that students can hear you pronounce the words—especially more challenging words like “paltry pittances” and “cold concessions.”

Divide them into four groups. Each group will be responsible for “translating” and paraphrasing one stanza into simpler terms, and will then rehearse in order to “perform” the stanza in a class reading of the poem, complete with the feelings they think the poet intends for that stanza.

Circulate as students discuss their stanza to provide support, define unknown words, confirm ideas, guide discussions. After 5-10 minutes, each group should be able to paraphrase their stanza and what they think the poet is saying and also be ready to read in unison.
Bring the class together. Have groups stand in order of the stanzas in a large circle. Perform a class reading of the poem.

Ask each group to report back on their understanding/paraphrase of their stanza.

**ACTIVITY 6** Thinking About Aspirations and Careers

**MATERIALS:** Teacher-written letter to students

**STEPS:**

1. Tell students, *Now we’re going to change direction. We’ve just been reading about some very depressing history. Slavery, racism and persecution held African Americans back when it came to realizing their dreams. But we are all here now, in class, getting the education we need to improve our lives. We’re going to shift gears now and think about that.*

2. Tell students that they are going to read a letter written by an HSE teacher who decided to change careers. Provide a context by saying that in addition to studying for the HSE test, they are in this class to think about what they will do after they get an HSE diploma. What career might they like? What are their interests and strengths? During the course of the semester, they will be guided to think about these things. For now, they are going to hear about one teacher who decided to change careers and why.

3. Hand out the letter. Have students read silently. Ask them to look for sentences or sections they especially like and be ready to talk about why. When all students have finished reading, give those who are slower readers a chance to find one thing that they liked in the letter. Go around the room and have each student share what he or she liked. Write these on the board and talk about how this made the writing effective.

4. In the CUNY demo class, this letter served two purposes: (1) get students thinking about careers and (2) thinking about what makes personal essays “good.” As students shared their favorite sections of the letter, I jotted down some of their comments and we talked about how these were general features that made personal writing “good.” Some of the characteristics we came up with:
• The writer described a universal experience that I could “relate” to.
• The writer included details that made the writing vivid.
• The writer reveals her thoughts.
• The writer wanted other people to understand how she felt.

Summarize some of the points that have come up about what makes personal writing effective, then tell students: It’s your turn. Now you are going to write about your aspirations. Write these sentences on the board as a prompt:

What are your thoughts about your future? What do you hope to be doing five years from now? What career path are you leaning towards? Do you think you will go to college?

Have students write for 20-30 minutes then collect. Tell students they will be returning to this topic in the future.

HOMEWORK:

- Read Colonial Economics: Mercantilism. Write a paraphrase of the important idea and answer the vocabulary questions.
- Suggested: More poetry practice, perhaps with poems and questions from the old GED prep books.
Review Stations

What Are Review Stations?

Review stations are a way to review what we went over in class the week before, but you get to move around from station to station with a small group or partner. There are three stations for today:

**SENTENCE STATION**

At this station, you will:

- Take a quiz on sentences.
- Combine sentences using commas in a series.
- Expand a sentence stem.

**MAP AND TIMELINE STATION**

At this station you will:

- Label the continents on a blank map of the world.
- Label certain states that were original 13 colonies on a blank map of the U.S.
- Put the major wars of the U.S. in order on a timeline.

**VOCABULARY STATION**

At this station you will:

- Put up the examples of vocabulary words you wrote sentences about for homework.
Quiz on Sentences

Decide whether you think each statement is true or false.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A sentence can be only two words.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Every sentence has a subject and a verb.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>The subject is always the first word in a sentence.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The subject is the thing that does the action of the verb.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The verb can be one word or more than one word.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>A word that ends with “ed” is probably a verb, but it might be an adjective.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>“Were” and “seemed” are both verbs.</td>
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SENTENCE STATION

Directions:

1. Take the quiz on sentences.

2. Sentence combining: Combine each set of stem sentences using commas to separate items in a list. The first one is done for you as an example.

   **Set 1 (Example)**
   1. The New England colonies had rocky soil.
   2. The New England colonies had harsh winters.
   3. The New England colonies had a short growing season.

   **Sentences combined using commas in a series:**
   The New England colonies had rocky soil, harsh winters, and a short growing season.

   **Set 2**
   1. The middle colonies had a longer growing season.
   2. The middle colonies had fertile soil.
   3. The middle colonies had rivers which allowed farmers to get their crops to market.

   **Set 3**
   1. The southern colonies had a long growing season.
   2. The southern colonies had very rich soil.
   3. The southern colonies were near ports so crops could be shipped to England.

3. Sentence expansion: Expand the sentence stem any way you like:

   Money is.
MAP AND TIMELINE STATION

Directions:

1. Label the continents on the blank map of the world. Draw a line from England to her North American colonies.

2. On the blank map of the United States, label the following:

   - New York
   - New Jersey
   - Pennsylvania
   - Connecticut
   - Massachusetts
   - Virginia
   - Florida
   - Texas
   - California

Which of the above were part of the original 13 colonies?

3. On the timeline that has been drawn on the board, put the following events in order:

   - The Civil War
   - Columbus “finds” America
   - World War II
   - 9/11
   - World War I
   - The Declaration of Independence
   - The Vietnam War
   - The Great Depression
   - The Korean War
Mercantilism

Mercantilism
As you have read, mercantilism was an economic theory practiced in Europe from the 16th to the 18th centuries. Economists of the period believed that a country’s power came from its wealth. Thus, a country would do everything possible to acquire more gold, preferably at the expense of its rivals. A mercantilist country primarily sought gold in two ways: establishing and exploiting colonies, and establishing a favorable balance of trade with a rival country. In the example to the right, England is the home country, America is England’s colony, and France is England’s rival.

1. England wants gold.
3. America does not have gold, but can produce cotton.
4. England buys cotton cheap and does not allow America to produce cloth.
5. England sells finished cloth to America, and to England’s rival, France.
6. England gets gold and depletes France’s gold reserves.

Skillbuilder: Interpreting Charts
Identifying Problems and Solutions. Under the mercantilism model, how might France try to acquire gold and become more powerful than England?
Triangular Trade
Making Inferences

When we make an inference, we fill in information that is left out of the text with information that is in our heads, and we put it together with information in the text.

The fact is, that we make inferences in life all the time. For example:

*Your child comes home from school and is very quiet and won’t speak to you. When you get home she immediately goes up to her room and shuts the door and when you come in and ask her what’s wrong, she won’t answer you.*

Your inference:

In literature, as in life, we are expected to make inferences. Consider the following:

*We had a big fight that night and I left, crying and saying I might not come back. When I returned in the morning, I found that the entire house had been cleaned. He had picked up all his clothes, washed the dishes, and made breakfast. When I entered, he gave me a big hug.*

Your inference:

**INFERENCES IN POETRY**

When reading poetry, we often have to work extra hard to understand what the poet is saying because poets require us to make a lot of inferences. Sometimes we have to be like detectives and use clues the poet has planted in order to try to figure out he or she means. One thing that can help is knowing a little bit about a poet and his or her life. Knowing the time that a person lives and the things that were going on in the world during that time can help, too.
STRATEGIES FOR UNDERSTANDING POETRY

- Think about what you know about the poet and the time he or she lived in
- Pay attention to the title
- Notice images or mental pictures the poet gives you: what feelings do you get from these images? Are they sad? Angry? Happy? Violent?
- Notice words—especially words you don’t know—and look them up
- Notice feeling
- Notice tone—is the tone serious? Light and playful?
- Notice repetition

- Notice grammar—is the poem made up of full sentences? Are there statements? Questions?
- Who is the “speaker” of the poem?
- Reread
- Annotate—write questions and observations in the margins
- Paraphrase—try to say what the poet is saying in your own words (you might want to take notes in the margin)
- Notice whether the poem is formal—does it have a regular rhythm and rhyme scheme? Are there stanzas?
- Is the style of the poem informal (the words go all over the page. There is no rhyming)?

BIOGRAPHY: Margaret Walker

Margaret Walker was an American poet and writer. She was part of the African-American literary movement in Chicago.

Biography: Walker was born in Birmingham, Alabama, to Sigismund C. Walker, a Methodist minister, and Marion Walker, who helped their daughter by teaching her philosophy and poetry as a child. Her family moved to New Orleans when Walker was a young girl. She attended school there, including several years of college, before she moved north to Chicago.

Literary writing: In 1942, Walker’s poetry collection *For My People* won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Competition, thus making her the first black woman to receive a national writing prize. Her *For My People* was considered the “most important collection of poetry written by a participant in the Black Chicago Renaissance before Gwendolyn Brooks’s A Street in Bronzeville.”

Walker was inducted into The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame in 2014.
Since 1619
By Margaret Walker

How many years since 1619 have I been singing Spirituals?
How long have I been praising God and singing hallelujah?
How long have I been hated and hating?
How long have I been living in hell for heaven?

When will I see my brother’s face wearing another color?
When will I be ready to die in an honest fight?
When will I be conscious of the struggle—now to do or to die?
When will these scales fall away from my eyes?

What will I say when the days of wrath descend?
When the money-gods take my life away:
When the death knell sounds
And peace is a flag of far-flung blood and filth?

When will I understand the cheated and the cheaters?
Their paltry pittances and cold concessions to my pride?
When will I burst from my kennel an angry mongrel,
Lean and hungry and tired of my dry bones and years?

When will the scales fall away from my eyes?
Letter to Students

Dear Students,

I wanted to share a little bit about my career path with you. I went to college in the 90s in Ohio. I worked a lot of different jobs while I was in college. When I graduated from college, I didn’t know what I wanted to do, but I needed a job right away. I told everyone I knew that I was looking for work. I had a lot of jobs while I was in college, including being a writing tutor and an assistant to an English professor.

One of my friends told me that there was an ESL program at City Tech that needed a teaching assistant. The job included making copies, grading papers, attending class and working with small groups, and doing other things to help the teachers. It sounded like something I could do so I applied right away. The director called me to come for an interview, and I remember that I didn’t know what to wear. Should I dress like a teacher? Was I supposed to wear a suit? I didn’t have a suit, so I wore nice pants and a button-down shirt.

I got hired and started working with four teachers. They each had me do different things. It was interesting to see how different they all were. One was very quiet in class, and the students were always busy but quiet also. Another talked a lot more, and had a jolly booming voice. I did whatever they asked me to do, and I enjoyed talking with the students, who were all immigrants to the United States and had come from all over the world.

About seven months later, I was starting to look around for other jobs because I didn’t get enough hours as a teaching assistant to support myself. One day, the director called me at home. One of the four teachers had fallen and shattered her anklebone. She was going to be out for the rest of the semester. He wanted to know if I could take over and teach the rest of the class. My first instinct was, “No way! I have no idea how to teach a class, I’m just a helper.” But he tried to convince me to do it. Also, it was a full time job, and I would make enough money to support myself. So after thinking it over for a day, I agreed to give it a try. I ended up teaching at this school for many years.

My students were amazing. Many of them had moved to New York as adults, knowing almost no English. Most of them worked 40 hours a week or more, and also came to class 25 hours a week. Many of them were my age and were totally reinventing themselves, in a new country, a new language, and a new career. While I loved the students, I was getting a little bored with teaching. One problem with teaching is that you end up teaching the same content over and over and over. I had taught the past tense, the present tense, the present continuous tense so many times. And
I didn’t really care that much about verb tenses. So when I noticed that I was getting irritable in class because I just didn’t want to talk about introductions and conclusions and verbs any more, I started thinking about making a change.

It took me many more years to decide what I wanted to do. I talked to a lot of people about it. It was more helpful to talk to older people, because they had longer careers and could give advice. I was in my early 30s at this time. I knew I would have to work until I was 65 at least, if not longer. So I had almost 35 more years of work ahead of me!

One topic I had always been interested in was sickness and health. My mother was a nurse for 49 years, and my father died of cancer when I was 12 years old, so it was a constant presence in my life when I was growing up. I always enjoyed reading articles about health in the newspaper. But I knew that I didn’t want to be a nurse. I knew too much about it from my mom. It had never occurred to me to be a doctor—I knew that you had to be really, really smart to be a doctor, and I hadn’t really taken any science in school. I found science interesting, but I didn’t have a strong background in it. I also didn’t know anyone who had been a doctor.

Right around this time, my mother had surgery because she had skin cancer. I went to be with her, and then I went to the doctor’s appointments with her after the surgery. I was surprised to see that the surgeon was about my age, or only a year or two older. The surgeon just seemed like a regular guy—not necessarily some genius. He especially seemed like a regular guy when he started flirting with me during my mother’s appointment! After he checked my mom’s stitches and the appointment was over, he kept hanging around, asking me questions about what I did and where I lived. I was not interested in him at all because I already had a boyfriend. But this was an important interaction for me anyway, because I realized that doctors were not gods—they were just regular people, and weren’t even necessarily that much smarter than me.

After that experience, I started to wonder what it would be like to be a doctor. I read some books written by doctors. It reminded me a little bit of teaching—you get to work individually with people and try to help them. But unlike verbs, I was very interested in illness and how to help people have better health. I researched what classes I would need to take to go to medical school. It was a lot of classes—biology 1 and 2, general chemistry 1 and 2, physics 1 and 2, organic chemistry 1 and 2, and calculus. I had taken calculus in college and gotten a C-, which was definitely not good enough for medical school.

I was pretty open about this idea with my friends, and a lot of friends encouraged me to try it out. But not everyone did. One of my oldest friends said to me that I should think about why teaching wasn’t “good enough”
and questioned why I would want to make such a drastic change. I had a hard time explaining why, but it just felt like the right thing to do. I did not tell my mother than I was considering this. I knew that she would not be very supportive and would have a lot of questions and try to convince me to stay at my current job.

Meanwhile, I met a few doctors and talked to them about it. Most of them were very encouraging, but not everyone. It split down gender lines—the women doctors were so excited for me and often told me that going to medical school was the best decision they had ever made. But a few of the male doctors, especially the ones who had gone right into medical school directly from college, warned me against it.

I started classes at Hunter College in February 2012. After being a teacher for a long time, it was really fun to be a student, but it was difficult, too. I disagreed with how some of the teachers were teaching. I had a hard time understanding some of the science. I was still working, and I had to spend a lot of time on the weekends studying. But I felt excited to be going in a new direction.

When I finally told my mother what I was doing, she reacted just like I expected. She said, “Doctors are not very nice people, so why would you want to be a doctor?” She said, “Medical school is very competitive, do you think you will get in?” I was annoyed since it seemed like she didn’t think I was smart enough. She then suggested that I become a nurse or maybe a pharmacist instead. After talking to her, I went for a long run in the park to burn off some anger.

In 2014, I applied to medical school, and I got interviews at four schools. I was accepted at one school, rejected from one school, and put on the wait list at two schools. I will go to the school where I was accepted, which is in Cleveland, Ohio, which is where I am from, and where my mother lives.

I will be moving to Cleveland on June 12th to start school, so I will not be able to finish this class. I’m really sad not to be working with this class anymore. I’ve been so impressed with your thoughtfulness, your ideas, your participation, and your excellent questions.

What I’ve learned on my journey is that we only have this one life, so you’ve got to make it into the life you want. I think you all probably agree with me since you are here right now, doing the same thing. If you have people in your life who are not supportive of what you are doing, their lack of support is a reflection of who they are, not who you are. I respect you all and support you totally.

Rebecca
The Colonial Economy: Mercantilism

Mercantilism was a system of trading goods between nations that was based on the following idea: to build economic strength, a nation must export more than it imports. To achieve this favorable balance of trade, the English passed laws exclusively benefiting the British economy. These laws created a trade system whereby Americans provided raw goods to Britain, and Britain used the raw goods to produce manufactured goods that were sold in European markets and back to the colonies. As suppliers of raw goods only, the colonies could not compete with Britain in manufacturing. English ships and merchants were always favored, excluding other countries from sharing in the British Empire’s wealth.

Between 1651 and 1673, the English Parliament passed four Navigation Acts meant to ensure a trade balance that would benefit England. The acts declared the following:

- Only English or English colonial ships could carry cargo between ports in England and the English colonies.
- Certain goods, including tobacco, rice, and furs, could not be shipped to foreign nations except through England or Scotland.
- The English Parliament would pay “bounties” to Americans who produced certain raw goods, while raising protectionist tariffs\(^1\) on the same goods produced in other nations.
- Americans could not compete with English manufacturers in large-scale manufacturing.


The colonists complained about these restrictions on trade. In New England in particular, many colonists evaded\(^2\) the restrictions of the Navigation Acts by smuggling. But although relations between England and the colonies were often full of friction\(^3\), the two sides never came to any real conflict. Instead, England developed a policy of salutary neglect\(^4\) toward the colonies, which meant that the trade laws that most hurt the colonial economy were not enforced.

Threatened by the presence of the French in North America, British officials knew that at some point they would have to clash with the French over the domination of the continent, and they needed the colonists to support them when that time came. The British did not

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\(^1\) Protectionist tariffs—a tariff is a tax that must be paid by a company or merchant who brings goods from one country to another to be sold. “Protectionist” means that the country is protecting the businesses of its own citizens, because only people selling goods from other countries must pay the tariff.

\(^2\) Evaded—to avoid something; to get around it. When my husband starts an argument about my son’s habits, I usually try to evade the discussion. You may have heard the word evade on the subway—someone can be a fare evader.

\(^3\) Friction—friction can mean when two things rub against each other. Here it means that there is some anger and source of disagreement between two parties.

\(^4\) Neglect is a verb that means to ignore or forget something you were supposed to do. It almost always has a negative connotation. You have neglected to take the garbage out. In this case it means that England has neglected to enforce some of the laws it made so that there wouldn’t be too much conflict between their own country and the colonies.
want to alienate their much-needed allies through aggressive trade restrictions.

With the prospect of war against the French looming, the British employed salutary neglect to maintain the colonists’ loyalty.

### The Triangular Trade

The mercantilist policies of Britain created trade routes that came to be called **triangular trade**. Trade routes linked the American Colonies, West Indies, Africa, and England. Each port provided shippers with a payoff and a new cargo. New England rum was shipped to Africa and traded for slaves, which were brought to the West Indies and traded for sugar and molasses, which went back to New England. Other raw goods were shipped from the colonies to England, where they were swapped for a cargo of manufactured goods.

Mercantilism and the triangular trade proved quite profitable for New England tradesmen and ship builders. But in the Southern Colonies, where the Navigation Acts vastly lowered tobacco prices, economies suffered. The triangular trade also spurred a rise in the slave population and increased the merchant population, forming a class of wealthy elites that dominated trade and politics throughout the colonies.

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5 **Alienate**—You know what “alien” means. An alien is “not one of us.” Alienate is a verb that is used when you are talking about making someone angry or uncomfortable with you. It often means that you need someone and don’t want them to dislike you. I didn’t want to alienate my husband by talking about the fact that he had neglected to take the garbage out, because I was going to ask him to write a big check.

6 **Allies**—an ally is a friend; a person who will help you when you are in need. We can have an ally in the personal sense—My mother has always been my ally in life, helping me figure out what to do about my problems—or between countries. In the 20th century, England and the U.S. have always been allies and fought side by side in wars.

7 **Prospect**—prospect is a word that has to do with future events. What are the prospects that you will become rich in the next ten years?

8 **Looming**—When something looms over you, it is something that may happen in the future, and it probably negative. The prospect of failing the TASC loomed over me and made me depressed.

9 **Maintain**—We have all heard of maintenance men, who keep up the building and make sure everything works. Maintain generally means “to keep something going,” but we can also use it to mean something like “argue,” “say,” or “claim.” He maintains that he was never at the crime scene.

10 **Spurred**—spurred means started. Originally it comes from horseback riding. A spur is a sharp metal object that is pushed into the side of the horse by the rider to let the horse know the rider wants the horse to go. We often hear the term “spurred into action.”

11 **Elites**—the elite are the people who are on the top. They have a privileged place in society.
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT FOR THE COLONIAL ECONOMY

- Read the article.
- Write a paragraph in which you explain what mercantilism was in your own words. Explain what salutary neglect was. Explain why England followed the policy of salutary neglect.
- Answer the vocabulary questions below.

VOCABULARY QUESTIONS

1. **Evade**—What is one way you try to evade arguments at home?

2. **Neglect**—What is one thing in your life you try never to neglect?

3. **Alienated**—Describe a time you felt alienated.

4. **Ally**—Who is a person who has been an ally in your life? How has this person helped you?

5. **Maintain**—What is one way you try to maintain your happiness?

6. **Elites**—what is an example of a person in our society who you would consider to be an elite?
Vocabulary Words

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By learning to use evidence to support claims about both the past and the present, students empower themselves to speak up for themselves and be heard.