
MISSION 1: “For Crown or Colony?”
New in Town (February 21, 1770)
Writing Prompts

A NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR:

You will need to decide how best to share these writing prompts with your students. You might share them all and ask students to choose one for response. You might assign one or more to the entire group. You might make one or more of the topics the basis for in-class discussions. Make your decisions according to the needs of your group.

You may notice that many of the topics contain some version of the phrase, “Write about a time in your life...” The intention of these prompts is twofold: first, since students remember the content of their own lives, they can more easily respond to the questions and they are more likely to want to express themselves if they feel competent to do so; second, these questions can form a meaningful bridge between what happens in the lives of ordinary people today and the lives of people in history or in historical events themselves. For these reasons, you might decide to use some of those prompts before students encounter the history because thinking about them sets the students up to understand it and to relate to it.

Since students vary in their degree of comfort and skill in writing, you should decide when students write and how much students should write. We do suggest, though, that since students need to share their writing with each other to make personal and historical connections, you encourage them to focus on content rather than on mechanical skills. Pieces can be revised and edited later if you decide they should be shared more formally (such as on a bulletin board or newsletter).

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Read through all the topics. Then choose one of them to write about. Write the title of the piece at the top of your page. Write in complete sentences. After you are finished, proofread your work for correctness.

PROVING YOURSELF. Nat has a very real task ahead of him. He has to prove himself worthy so that Mr. Edes will accept him as an apprentice. Write about a time you felt you had to prove yourself worthy. What was going on? What was your goal? Who was the person judging you? How did your “trial” or “test” go? How did you feel at various times in the process? What happened after that?

OOPS. There were several times in Part 1 when, as you played the role of Nat and tried to do the right thing, you may have said or done the wrong thing. Sometimes others would overlook it. Other times, you suffered for it. Write about a time in your own life when you intended to say or do the right thing, but the wrong words came out of your mouth. Who was there? What were the circumstances? What did you say? Why did you say that? How did others react to what you said? How did you feel? What happened next?

MAKING UP YOUR MIND. Nat is a newcomer to Boston and he encounters people with very different views on things, yet almost all of what he hears seems to make sense to him at the time. Write about a time in your life when you heard several different opinions or points-of-view about something, and they all sounded right or logical to you. Who were the people? What was it about? Did you try to figure out what was right? How? How did you feel?

PROFIT OR PRINCIPLE? Mr. Edes refuses to place ads in his newspaper that are taken out by people who have opinions about the King with which he disagrees. That means he won't accept their money. He chooses his principles, ideas he values, over profit. What would you do in his place? Why?

MORE ABOUT PROFIT AND PRINCIPLE. Should the owner of a business have the right to refuse the business of customers who disagree with him or her? Think of yourself as the owner of a shoe store. Explain whether you feel you should have the right to refuse a customer's business in each of these instances:

- a. You know that your customer beats his children, and you are against child abuse.
- b. You happen to know that the customer is a racist, and you don't like the views of racists.
- c. You overhear the baseball team your customer supports, and you hate them.
- d. Your customer is a child, and sometimes children come into your store and steal things.
- e. The customer belongs to a religion that has beliefs you don't respect.
- f. The person belongs to a different ethnic group from you, and you don't generally like people from that ethnic group.

In America today, if you own a store, it is against the law for you to refuse a customer because of his/her race, beliefs, gender, age, etc. Considering what you wrote already, do you agree with this law?

DEAR NAT. Imagine you are Nat's mother or father back in Uxbridge. You just received Nat's letter (see the Part 1 vocabulary activity). Now write a letter back to Nat telling him the news in Uxbridge and also responding to some of the things he says in his letter. Use as much of the Day 1 vocabulary as you can, and each time you use a word or term, underline it.

PRIMOGENITURE? The reason Nat had to come to Boston was that it was the custom for the entire estate of the father to pass to the eldest son (a woman's property became her husband's when she married!). Since Nat was the youngest, he stood to inherit nothing. This custom was called *primogeniture* (pry-moh-JEN-uh-chure). Even a daughter who was the oldest child couldn't inherit the property. How do you think this custom got started? Why? Do you think it makes sense? If you were in charge of customs back then, what rules would you make about how property should go from parents to children? Why?

DON'T BUY FROM THESE MEN! This is an ad that appeared in a Boston newspaper in 1770. The text at the top introduces the list of men that follows by saying that they boldly go against the united feelings of the merchants of America because they continue to bring in British goods for sale in America. Notice that Mr. Lillie, Constance's uncle, is on the list.

Imagine yourself as a shoe store owner today. A group of people resents that you import the shoes and sneakers you sell from Asia. They feel that you should only sell things made in America. In addition to not buying in your store, they take out an ad on TV in order to embarrass you, and to let others know what you are doing. Is this fair? Should they have the right to hurt your feelings and your business in this way? Explain your reasoning.

A LIST of the Names of those
who AUDACIOUSLY continue to counteract the UNITED SENTIMENTS of the BODY of Merchants thro'out NORTH-AMERICA; by importing British Goods contrary to the Agreement.

John Bernard,
(In King-Street, almost opposite Vernon's Head.

James McMasters,
(On Treat's Wharf.

Patrick McMasters,
(Opposite the Sign of the Lamb.

John Mein,
(Opposite the White-Harle, and in King-Street.

Nathaniel Rogers,
(Opposite Mr. Henderson's Inches-Store lower End King-Street.

William Jackson,
At the Brazon Head, Cornhill, near the Town-House.

Theophilus Lillie,
(Near Mr. Pemberton's Meeting-House, North-End.

John Taylor,
(Nearly opposite the Heart and Crown in Cornhill.

Ame & Elizabeth Cummings,
(Opposite the Old Brick Meeting-House, all of Boston.

Israel Williams, Esq; & Son,
(Traders in the Town of Hatfield.

And, *Henry Barnes,*
(Trader in the Town of M. 1770.

List of Importers from the *Boston Gazette*, February 12, 1770