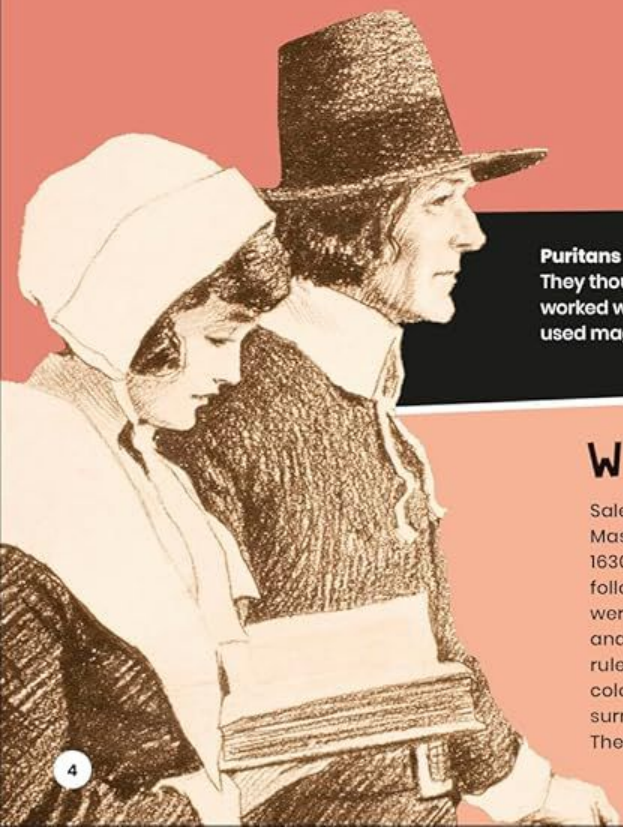


History in Perspective

In the winter of 1692, the people of Salem Village, Massachusetts, were shaken by a mystery illness. The illness mainly affected young women. It was blamed on **witchcraft**. This led to a series of events that divided this deeply religious community.

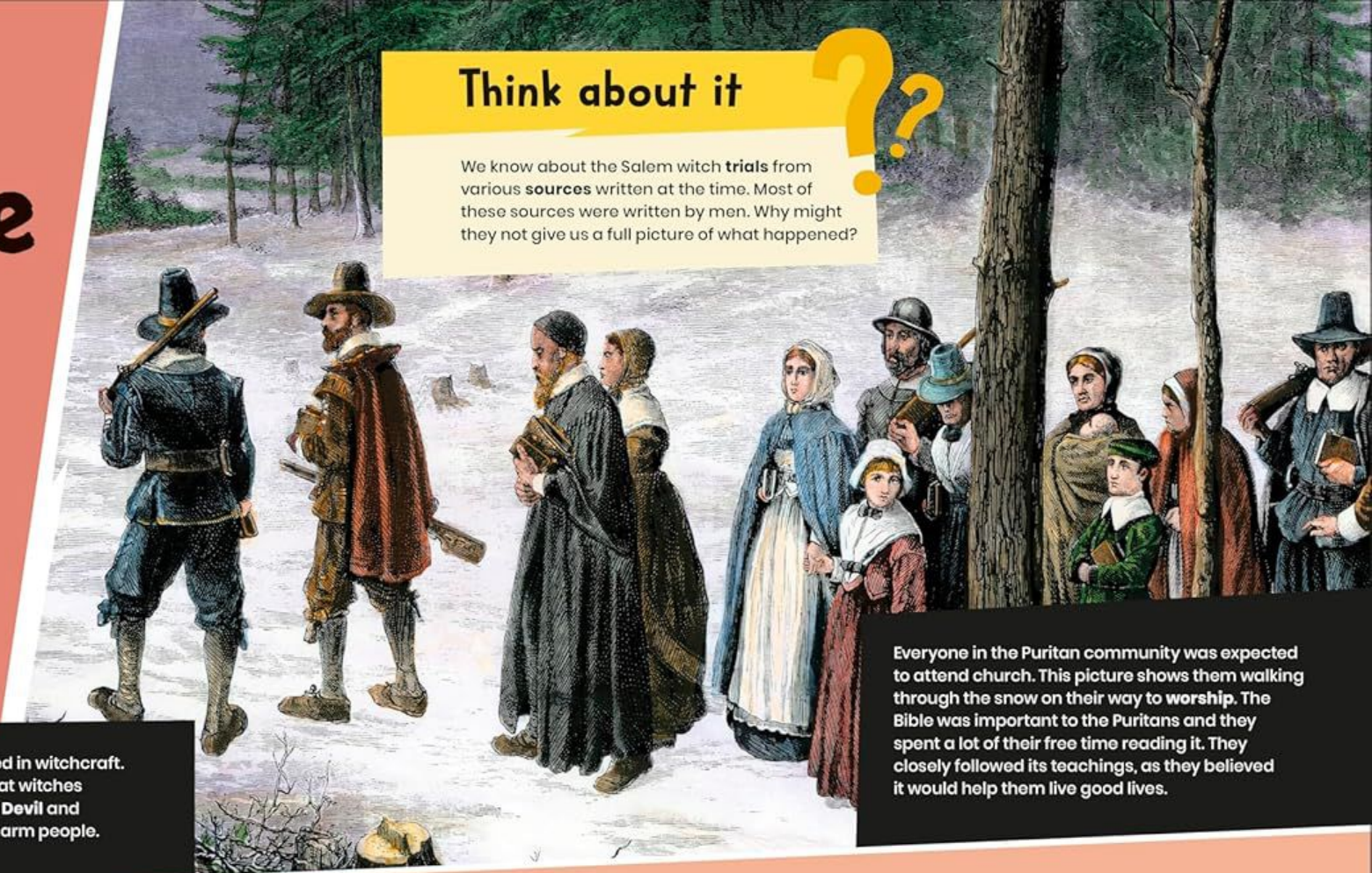


Puritans believed in witchcraft. They thought that witches worked with the Devil and used magic to harm people.

Think about it



We know about the Salem witch trials from various **sources** written at the time. Most of these sources were written by men. Why might they not give us a full picture of what happened?



Everyone in the Puritan community was expected to attend church. This picture shows them walking through the snow on their way to **worship**. The Bible was important to the Puritans and they spent a lot of their free time reading it. They closely followed its teachings, as they believed it would help them live good lives.

Where and when?

Salem Village was part of the province of Massachusetts Bay, a **colony** founded in 1630 by **settlers** from England. These settlers followed a strict form of Christianity. They were known as Puritans. The government and laws of the colony were based on the rules of their religion. The small European colonies on North America's coasts were surrounded by **Indigenous** populations. They were often mistreated by the settlers.

Who was involved?

Massachusetts was mostly **governed** by Puritan men. The events of the Salem witch trials affected mainly women and girls, but they had very little power, as men made most of the decisions. Non-Puritans also had less influence in the community.

Different perspectives

Different groups in society may have deeply contrasting experiences of events. Official records of the past often only present one side of the story. This means that they can't reflect the experiences of everyone affected. To understand what happened, it is important that we look at events from more than one point of view.

Key Location SALEM VILLAGE

In the late 17th century there were two places called Salem. Salem Town was a busy port on Massachusetts Bay, and is the place now known as Salem. A short distance away was Salem Village. This was a farming community of about 500 people and is now the town of Danvers. The accusations of witchcraft, investigations and questioning took place in Salem Village. The trials took place in Salem Town.

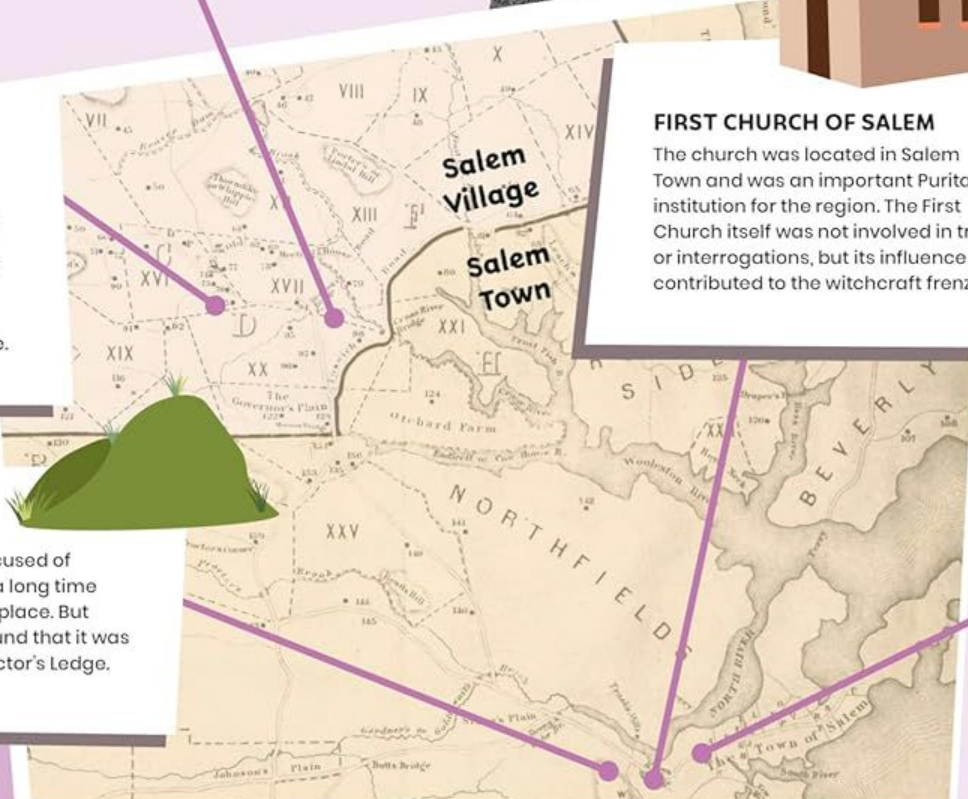
REBECCA NURSE'S HOMESTEAD

The home of Rebecca Nurse, one of the most well-known victims of the witch trials. Rebecca was a 71-year-old grandmother and a respected member of the Salem community when she was accused of witchcraft and convicted and executed. Rebecca is believed to be buried here and it now operates as a museum.



SALEM VILLAGE PARSONAGE

The home of Minister Samuel Parris, the minister of Salem Village. This was the first place where his daughter Betty and niece Abigail Williams showed strange behavior. Tituba, an enslaved woman in the Parris household, was one of the first people to be accused. She **confessed** under pressure.



FIRST CHURCH OF SALEM

The church was located in Salem Town and was an important Puritan institution for the region. The First Church itself was not involved in trials or interrogations, but its influence contributed to the witchcraft frenzy.



PROCTOR'S LEDGE/GALLOWS HILL

The site of the **gallows** where 19 people accused of witchcraft were executed by hanging. For a long time it was not known exactly where these took place. But research and **archaeological evidence** found that it was near the base of Gallows Hill, known as Proctor's Ledge.



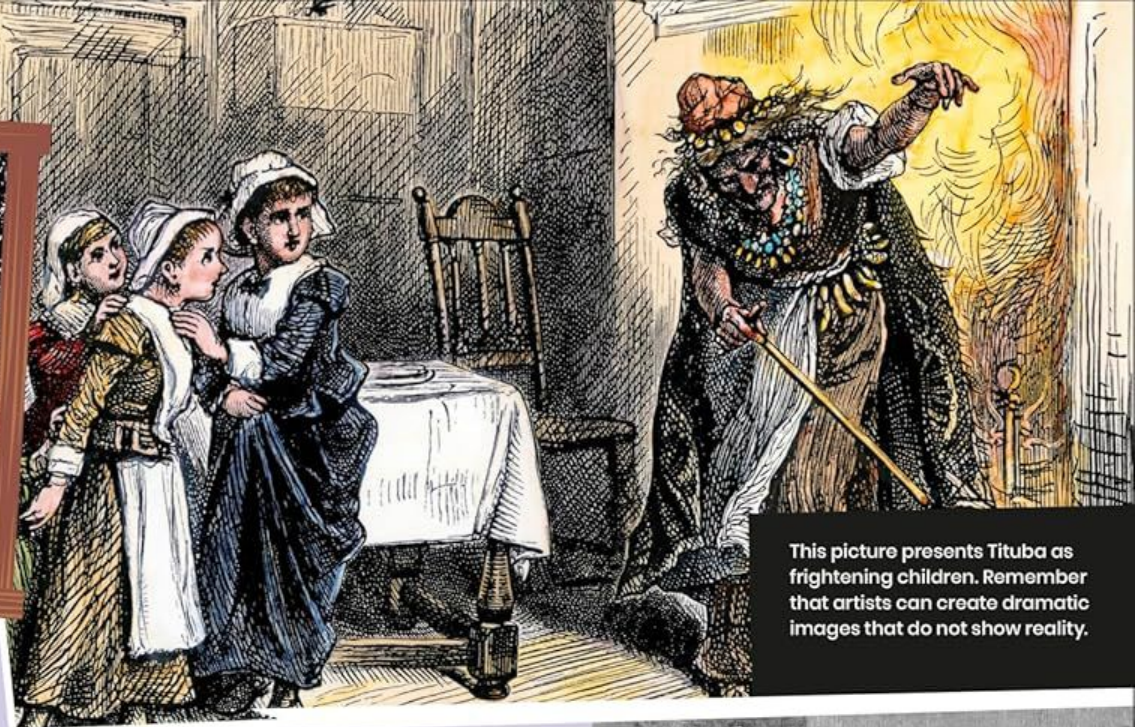
THE WITCH HOUSE

The home of Judge Jonathan Corwin, one of the magistrates who headed the witch trials. The house is now a museum. No trials or questioning took place in the house itself, but Judge Corwin was very involved in the events that led to the execution of 20 people.

Illness and Accusations

When Doctor William Griggs decided that the mystery illness was due to witchcraft, people wanted to find out who was to blame. The witch hunt became more urgent as other girls also started to get sick. New cases included Ann Putnam, the daughter of a well-known local family.

Sarah Good, also known as Granny Good, was found guilty of being a witch.



This picture presents Tituba as frightening children. Remember that artists can create dramatic images that do not show reality.

WITCH HUNT

Minister Samuel Parris held prayer meetings to help his daughter and niece, who were acting strangely. Salem's leaders asked the two girls who they thought had bewitched them. The girls named three people as witches. The first was Tituba, an enslaved Indigenous woman in the Parris home. The second was Sarah Good, a poor woman who was not well-liked in the village. The third was Sarah Osborne, an older woman who did not attend church often. These three women were among the first in Salem to be accused of witchcraft.

Tituba was one of the women accused of witchcraft.

INVESTIGATION

Local magistrates questioned the three women. When the girls saw the women in the courtroom, they screamed and appeared to be in pain. Sarah Osborne and Sarah Good strongly denied being witches. When Minister Samuel Parris forced Tituba to confess, she said there were other witches in Salem.

Think about it

The first women to be accused were all outsiders, either because of their background or the way they behaved. Why do you think people blamed them?



Under Suspicion



Martha Corey
Devout Puritan woman



Giles Corey
Farmer and husband of Martha Corey



Ann Putnam
12-year-old daughter of the well-known Putnam family



Ann Putnam Sr
Mother of the younger Ann



Edward Putnam
Investigator and Ann's uncle



Ezekiel Cheever
Investigator and clerk of the court



John Hathorne
Salem merchant and magistrate, a leading judge in the trials

Salem Village, March 1692. Martha Corey was a respected member of the community when stories began to be shared of girls being bewitched.



Martha, there are accusations of witchcraft in the village.



I do not believe there are witches in our godly community.

One witch has already confessed. Be careful!



The villagers grew suspicious of anyone who did not join in the hunt for witches, but Martha wanted no involvement in the stories of witchcraft.



I want to join the other villagers. Where is the saddle for my horse?

Martha desperately tried to stop her husband from getting involved.

I have hidden it. We want no part in these witch hunts.

Across Salem Village, people wanted to know why girls were falling ill.



Ann Putnam was one of the first girls to fall ill.



There must be more witches causing this. Perhaps your uncle can help us.



Niece, tell us who has bewitched you.



In my dream, the witch torments me, pinching and hitting me.



What does she wear?

She blinded me so I could not see, but I heard her name - Martha Corey.

Oh! She pretended to be so godly!

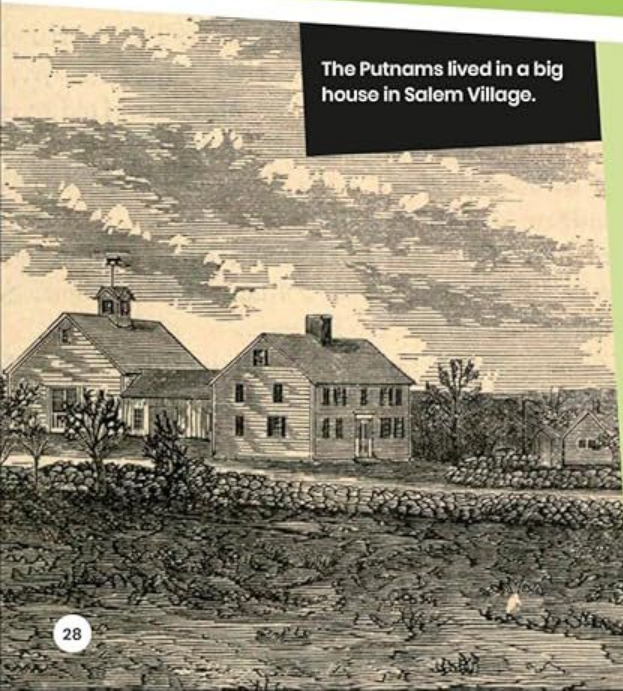
Family Feuds

During the events in Salem, the Putnam family was involved in several of the accusations. Some members of the family, such as young Ann Putnam, became ill and accused people of being witches. Ann's father, Thomas Putnam, helped with the investigations and trials. Many people think the Putnams might have used these accusations to punish their enemies in the village.



These actors are performing as Thomas and Ann Putnam Sr in a 1960s play about the witch trials of Salem.

The Putnams lived in a big house in Salem Village.



A DIVIDED VILLAGE

The Putnam family was very important in Salem Village. They owned a lot of land and helped run the community. They wanted the village to have its own church and minister, separate from the bigger town of Salem. The Putnams were strict Puritans who supported Minister Samuel Parris. They did not get along with another wealthy family called the Porters, and the two families fought over who should control the village.



GEORGE BURROUGHS

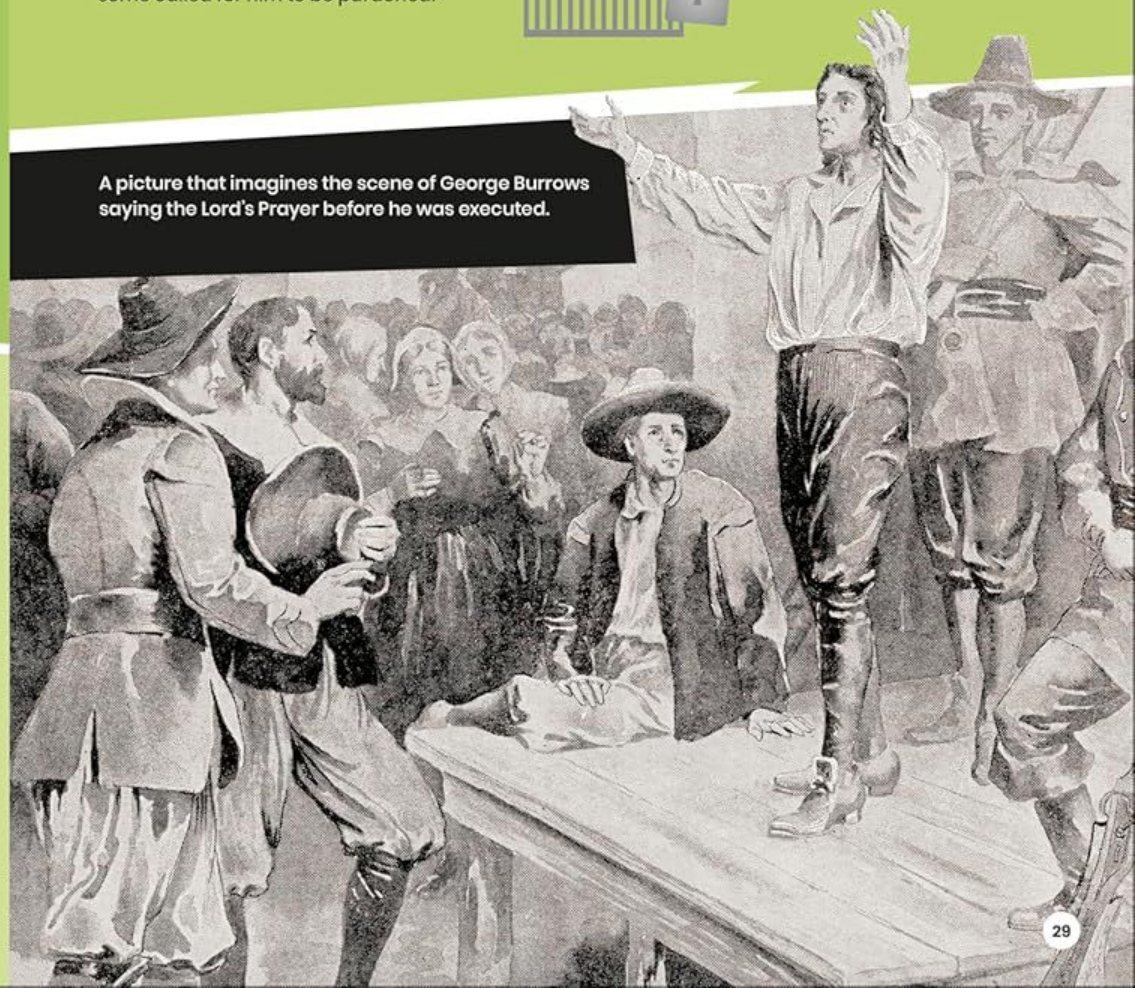
George Burroughs was a former minister in Salem Village. He had borrowed money from the Putnam family, leading to a long-standing **grudge** between them. George had moved away from Salem, but was brought back to face trial. He was accused of leading the witches. Many local people spoke against him. Just before he was executed, he said the **Lord's Prayer**. People believed witches could not do this, so some called for him to be pardoned.

Think about it ??

Many enemies of the Putnam family were killed or imprisoned during the witch trials. Do you think the Putnams could have caused these events to happen on purpose?



A picture that imagines the scene of George Burrows saying the Lord's Prayer before he was executed.



Vocabulary Builder

News Report



How would the witch trials be reported today? Read this article to see how a newspaper or website might cover the story. Pay attention to words that describe the investigation and how local people are reacting to it.

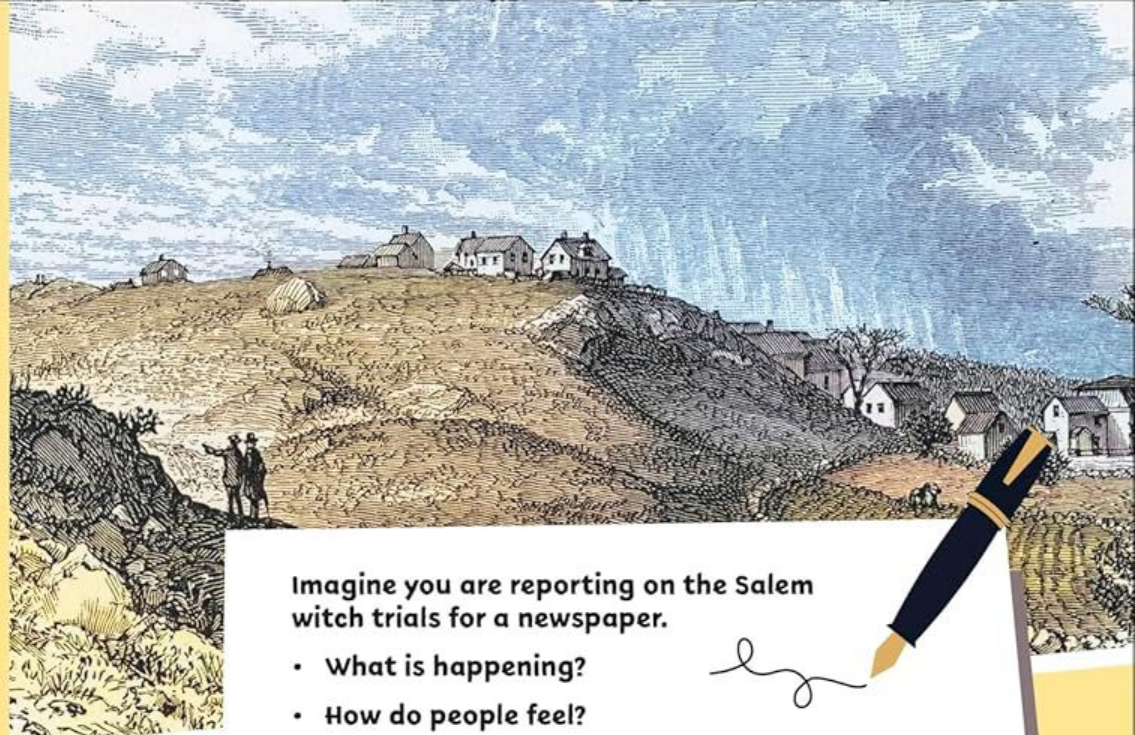
WITCH TRIAL SHAKES SALEM

People across Massachusetts are shocked by the witch trials taking place in Salem Village. They started when a young woman got sick with a mystery illness. A local doctor said she was bewitched. Members of the prominent Putnam family have been affected by the strange illness.

Since the first arrests, accusations have spread throughout Salem Village. Many women and some men have been accused of being witches.

In response to the crisis, Governor William Phips has set up a special court. Much of the evidence hinges on what the accusers have seen in dreams and visions. Some people are worried this is not strong enough to prove guilt. But some judges think it should be carefully examined in court.

The people of Salem Village are very concerned about what is happening. They hope these trials will reveal the cause of their community's problems.



Imagine you are reporting on the Salem witch trials for a newspaper.

- What is happening?
- How do people feel?
- What details can you add to interest readers?

Use the words in the vocabulary box below, and the example on page 42, to help you write your own news report.

Looking at evidence

accusations, examine, identify, investigate, question, suspicion, witness

Reactions

alarmed, disturbed, scared, shocked, suspicious, upset, worried

Descriptions

extraordinary, frightening, mystery, prominent, serious, sinister