

Supplement A: Patuxet & Wampanoag Homelands

TEACHER BACKGROUNDER: PATUXET & WAMPANOAG HOMELANDS

The Wampanoag (“People of the First Light”) are the Indigenous people whose homelands include what is now southeastern Massachusetts and eastern Rhode Island. Wampanoag people have lived in this region for thousands of years and continue to do so today.

Patuxet was a Wampanoag village located where modern-day Plymouth stands. Before the arrival of the English in 1620, Patuxet was a thriving community. Due to epidemic diseases brought by Europeans, Patuxet suffered deep losses. The Pilgrims built their new colony directly on this homeland.

Wampanoag communities such as the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), and the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe continue cultural and community life today.

Using the name Patuxet alongside Plymouth helps students understand that this place has a long Indigenous history. The land had a name, a community, and a story long before colonization.