

Teacher Edition: The Secrets of Plymouth Rock & Rockin' the Secrets of Plymouth Rock

Overview

This comprehensive Teacher Edition is designed to support instruction using the children's book *The Secrets of Plymouth Rock* by Diane L. Finn and the musical album *Rockin' the Secrets of Plymouth Rock* by Candido Bretto. It includes multi-day lessons, staging notes for performance, music cues, vocabulary lists, discussion prompts, and cross-curricular extensions aligned with the Massachusetts History & Social Science Curriculum Framework (2018). This enhanced Teacher Edition includes the full multi-day instructional guide plus a newly added Indigenous Perspectives section featuring Patuxet context, Wampanoag history, student writing activities, and primary source extensions.

Multi-Day Unit Plan (5-Day Sequence)

Day 1 – Introducing Plymouth Rock & Historical Symbolism

- Warm-up discussion: What is a symbol? Why do communities protect important objects? • Read aloud the first portion of the book or play Track 1 from the musical.
- Mini-lesson: Location of Plymouth, significance of 1620, Patuxet homeland.
- Activity: Students sketch Plymouth Rock as they imagine it looked in 1620.
- Exit ticket: One thing I learned about Plymouth Rock today...

Day 2 – The Rock's Perspective

- Read the next segment or play Tracks 2–3.
- Discuss: How does the Rock interpret events differently than people would? • Vocabulary focus: colony, Pilgrim, harbor, settlement, shoreline.
- Writing activity: Students write a diary entry from the Rock's point of view.
- Optional: Show historical images of Plymouth Harbor.

Day 3 – Pilgrims & Wampanoag: Two Perspectives

- Mini-lesson: Wampanoag daily life, homes, food, clothing, seasons.
- Play Track 4 and discuss early interactions and challenges.
- Comparison chart: Pilgrim vs Wampanoag life.
- Group discussion: Why are multiple perspectives important in history? • Art extension: Students draw both communities in 1620.

Day 4 – Preparing for Performance

- Listen to Tracks 5–7 and identify the story sequence.
- Begin staging a class performance using simple movement, gestures, or tableaux. • Staging notes: Teacher assigns narrator roles, Rock role, group choruses.
- Music cue practice with timing and lyric emphasis.
- Students rehearse lines or lyrics.

Day 5 – Culminating Performance & Reflection

- Final rehearsal followed by a brief classroom performance.
- Reflection questions: What did we learn about Plymouth in 1620? Why is Plymouth Rock important today?
- Assessment: Students write or draw what the Rock symbolizes to them. • Optional: Invite school staff or families to view the performance.

Staging Notes for Classroom or School Performance

- The Rock: Can be portrayed by one student or shared narratively among several students to mimic the Rock's long lifespan.
- Narrators: Positioned stage left or right, reading from binders or printed scripts.
- Chorus: Stands in a semi-circle; simple hand motions or steps add visual interest.
- Pilgrims & Wampanoag: Costumes optional; simple props like hats or baskets enhance storytelling. • Movement: Use gentle movement for waves, storms, or the passage of time between scenes.
- Set pieces: Cardboard Rock, ship outline, or fabric waves can be used but are not required.

Music Cues (Suggested)

Track 1: Opening theme — Introduce the Rock on stage.

Track 2: Arrival of the Pilgrims — Students walk in slowly carrying imaginary supplies. **Track 3:** Community builds — Students form a circle to show cooperation.

Track 4: Storm or hardship — Students sway to mimic winds or crashing waves.

Track 5: Celebration or hope — Students raise hands or props to symbolize achievement. **Track 6–7:** Finale — Full chorus sings together to end the presentation.

Vocabulary List

- Colony — A community settled by people from another land.
- Pilgrims — English settlers who arrived in 1620 aboard the Mayflower.
- Wampanoag — Indigenous people of the region where Plymouth was founded.
- Harbor — A sheltered body of water for ships.
- Settlement — A small community started in a new place.
- Symbol — An object that represents an idea or event.
- Patuxet — The Wampanoag homeland where the Pilgrims settled.

Discussion Questions

- Why do objects like Plymouth Rock become symbols?
- How does hearing history from the Rock's perspective change your understanding?
- What challenges did the Pilgrims face when they arrived?
- How did the Wampanoag help the Pilgrims survive?
- Why is it important to learn about both Pilgrim and Wampanoag viewpoints?
- How do we keep historical stories alive today?

Assessment Options

- Create a three-panel comic strip showing the Rock's experience from 1620 to today.
- Write a paragraph explaining the importance of Plymouth Rock.
- Group performance of one musical track with gestures.
- Compare two historical perspectives in writing or drawing.
- Produce a simple map showing the location of Patuxet/Plymouth and major landmarks.

Indigenous Perspectives: Patuxet, Wampanoag History & Cultural Context

Understanding Patuxet: Patuxet was a Wampanoag village located where modern-day Plymouth stands. Wampanoag people lived, fished, farmed, and raised families here for thousands of years. Before the arrival of the English in 1620, Patuxet was a thriving community. Epidemic diseases brought by Europeans devastated the village shortly before the Pilgrims arrived.

Why Include This History: Teaching both the Wampanoag and Pilgrim experiences helps students build accurate historical understanding, empathy, and the ability to hold multiple perspectives. The Indigenous history of Patuxet adds essential context to the story told through Plymouth Rock's voice.

Supplement A: Patuxet & Wampanoag Homelands (Teacher Backgrounder)

The Wampanoag ("People of the First Light") are the Indigenous people whose homelands include present-day southeastern Massachusetts. Their culture, language, and community structures have thrived for millennia and continue today. Patuxet, the homeland on which Plymouth was built, is central to understanding the full story of this place.

Supplement B: Mini-Lesson — Two Communities, One Shore

This lesson helps students explore Patuxet as a Wampanoag homeland and compare Wampanoag and Pilgrim daily life. Students examine homes, food sources, seasons, and cultural practices, and then reflect on what Plymouth Rock might remember about both communities.

Supplement C: Student Handout — Voices from the Shore

This writing activity invites students to write in two voices: a Wampanoag child living at Patuxet before 1620, and Plymouth Rock remembering both the Wampanoag community and the arrival of the Pilgrims. These writing choices deepen empathy and encourage historical imagination.

Supplement D: Indigenous Perspective Extensions

Teachers may expand learning using place-based resources such as the Plimoth Patuxet Museums' Historic Patuxet Homesite, Wampanoag tribal education pages, maps of Patuxet/Plymouth, and primary sources created by Wampanoag people. This enriches accuracy and cultural respect.

Conclusion

This Teacher Edition provides a flexible and engaging way to bring Massachusetts history to life through the combined power of music, narrative, and performance. Teachers may adapt lessons for different grade levels, learning styles, and classroom needs. This integrated edition ensures that students learn the story of Plymouth through an inclusive, accurate, and engaging lens. By honoring Patuxet and Wampanoag history, students gain a richer understanding of community, resilience, and the many voices present on these shores long before and after 1620.