



# **Whydah Pirate Museum & Center for Historic Shipwreck Preservation**

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**History & Social Science  
Educational Offerings for School Groups  
Grades 3-5**

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# CAPE COD'S LEGENDARY SHIPWRECK

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## INTRODUCTION

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Did you know there's a *real* pirate ship buried right off Cape Cod's coastline? Yes, it's true! The vessel is called *The Whydah Gally* and her adventure is not a myth. The former London slave ship was captured by the Pirate Prince, "Black Sam" Bellamy, and his crew over three hundred years ago. Then on the night of April 26, 1717, the *Whydah* wrecked on the Cape Cod coastline during a powerful storm.

Centuries later, thanks to advances in science and technology, as well as in-depth historical research, the shipwreck was discovered in the summer of 1984. To this day, artifacts from the *Whydah* are still being unearthed by divers and archaeologists. Get ready to learn the fascinating story of an actual Caribbean pirate ship and her discovery centuries later!

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## MISSION STATEMENT

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This unit plan has been designed by the Whydah Pirate Museum in association with the Center for Historical Shipwreck Preservation, to use the true story of *The Whydah Gally* to teach upper-elementary school students skills and standards in history, science, and language arts. While each lesson plan can function independently, as a multi-lesson exercise the entire unit illustrates how multiple academic disciplines can work together.

During these lessons, students explore local history and bits of related folklore through a reading comprehension and oral narration exercise. Straightforward physics and chemistry experiments demonstrate how a scientific understanding of natural processes helps uncover and conserve the past. Activities in geography, demographics, and economics illustrate the larger forces that impacted and influenced the central characters of the *Whydah's* chronicle.

The creators of these lessons hope that the use of the *Whydah's* history and artifacts will remind students that these exercises—both ours and theirs—are not fruitless or trivial endeavors, but honest efforts to reveal, understand and sustain the legacy of ordinary people, who lived extraordinary lives.

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## UNIT OVERVIEW

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This unit plan has been designed around your visit (or virtual visit) to the Whydah Pirate Museum, with the history and social science lessons taking place *prior* to the class field trip and the science lessons taking place *after* the trip.

These lessons are designed to give students historical background. Exploring the museum after completion of these lessons will reinforce and expand upon the concepts and standards they learned in the classroom. Guided trips to see the Whydah wreck site at the Cape Cod National Seashore (approximately a 45 minute drive from the West Yarmouth museum) can also be arranged. Touring the museum's conservation laboratory will provide students with context for the final lesson activities, which explore the science and technology used to locate and salvage artifacts.

Scheduled school groups virtually visiting the exhibit will be given the opportunity to speak with an archaeologist/educator who will answer questions from students, chaperones, and teachers, as well as elaborate on aspects of underwater archaeology and pirate history. Teachers are encouraged to frame questions that underscore the relevance of the experience to their own class curricula. Our staff will accommodate your school's platform for virtual learning.

Students and teachers can also access our Crowdcast podcast lessons through The Shipwreck Center. These are an excellent way to introduce the legend of Black Sam Bellamy and the Whydah before our curriculum and a trip to the facility.

The history of the *Whydah* and the men who sailed her illustrate several important aspects of 18th-century history, specifically North American colonial history, which is appropriate to the following grade levels as delineated in the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework.

**Grade Three:** Observation of visual historical sources and narratives with the opportunity to analyze and describe their content; Observation of historical artifacts as a form of primary sources and interpretation of what such artifacts tell us of how people lived in the 18th century; Learning concepts of barter and trade in the context of pre-modern colonial America, and how these trade structures helped prompt the American Revolution.

**Grade Four:** Observation of visual historical primary sources and narratives that described the early settlement of New World settlements - specifically how mapmaking and map reading was

used in the 18th century; Learning from original sources that include slavery conditions, materials, and reasoning for the Triangular Trade which impacted the settlement of North America and aided in the development of each region's rich culture; Providing information to aid in robust analysis and purposeful discussions about how North America has incorporated its various groups of peoples. In addition to building on the above, elements of the *Whydah* story include: Historical maps, navigation, astronomy and other locational concepts pertinent to the study of historical geography; The role of supply and demand and other important factors (such as climate, soil, labor availability, and types of agriculture) in shaping the colonial American economy; The importance of maritime commerce—including fishing, shipbuilding, and the trans-Atlantic trades in the development of the colonial Massachusetts economy, as well as North America.

**Grade Five:** Building knowledge on the history of colonial America with focus on the special place of the slave-trade, as well as the harsh conditions of “The Middle Passage” - this is a significant part of the *Whydah Gally's* history because the *Whydah* served as a slave ship prior to her capture by pirates; Observing the special role of blacks aboard pirate vessels of the early 18th century, and their unique status of equality within pirate crews as a budding form of democracy from actual artifacts off a documented slave ship; Highlighting the comparisons of egalitarian organization among pirates and how this was symptomatic of fundamental forces within colonial society that culminated in the American Revolution.

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## LESSON ONE: BLACK SAM AND THE WHYDAH

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GRADE: 3-5 (suggested for all grades prior to attending the Museum)

DURATION: 40 - 50 minutes

LOCATION: Classrooms

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The first lesson in the unit begins with a biographical narrative of three individuals from colonial Cape Cod whose interwoven fates took them on a voyage throughout the Western Hemisphere. Although the narrative is based on authentic history, the lesson activity is grounded in language arts and focuses on phonetics, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

Students will practice discerning the fiction from the facts by examining the lives of three legendary, yet very real, Cape Cod historical figures. By reading aloud the story of these characters in the form of a classic oral narration, students will learn the story of common sailor and eventual pirate captain, Samuel Bellamy, as well as his love, Maria Hallett, and his partner and financier, Paulsgrave Williams. Students will answer "true or false" questions and construct a general timeline at the completion of the reading.

### GUIDELINES AND LEARNING STANDARDS

1. Organize information and data from multiple primary and secondary sources.
2. Analyze the purpose and point of view of each source; distinguish opinion from fact.
3. Evaluate the credibility, accuracy, and relevance of each source.

[3.T4-1] Explain who the early men and women were and why they left Europe to seek a place where they would have the right to practice religion; describe their journey, the government of their early years in the Plymouth Colony, and analyze their relationships with the Native Peoples.

[4.T3-3] Trace on a map European explorations of North America and the Caribbean Islands in the 15th and 16th centuries, evaluate the reasons for the voyages, noting that they were part of an effort by European nations to expand their empires, find new routes for trade with Asia, new opportunities for colonization, and new natural resources; make a timeline of their landings and conquests.

[5.T2-1c] Explain the reasons for the French and Indian War and how its costs led to an overhaul of British imperial policy; explain key British policies and the colonial response to them.

*History and Social Science and the Standards for Literacy- Reading Informational Text [RI]*

Key Ideas and Details - 1-3

Craft and Structure - 4

Integrations of Knowledge and Ideas - 7

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity - 10

*Speaking and Listening Standards [SL]*

Comprehension and Collaboration - 1-3

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas - 4-6

## **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS & LESSON OBJECTIVES**

How can personal motivations impact an individual's decisions and actions? How can global or societal circumstances impact an individual's decisions and actions?

By the conclusion of the lesson students will be able to:

- Define time frame terminology such as *decade, century, 1700s*.
- Construct timelines.
- Discuss the biographies and local folklore of Cape Cod figures Samuel Bellamy, Maria Hallett and Paulsgrave Williams.
- Differentiate between fact and fiction.

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## **LESSON TWO: THE CARIBBEAN- THE CROSSROADS FOR 18TH CENTURY COMMERCE**

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GRADE: 3-5 (lesson examples, details and vocabulary are tailored to grade)

DURATION: 60 - 90 minutes

LOCATION: Classrooms, Whydah Pirate Museum, or Virtually

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Students will analyze the goods and resources that made up the transatlantic trade. Students will also study how merchants, sailors, and slaves were at the heart of global commerce. Lesson activity has students filling in their own maps to provide an overview of the shifting populations, language, and political powers of the colonial Caribbean. A group exercise will have students act out the trade process and demonstrate how large forces impacted the everyday lives of individuals in particular groups.

This lesson takes students to the West Indies where they will examine the political and economic conditions that shaped the 18<sup>th</sup> century world—not to mention created the conditions for the "Golden Age of Piracy." The two activities demonstrate how European colonialism and globalization altered the people, languages, and economics of the Caribbean in ways that can still be seen today.

### **GUIDELINES AND LEARNING STANDARDS**

1. Develop focused questions or problem statements and conduct inquiries
2. Organize information and data from multiple primary and secondary sources
3. Argue or explain conclusions, using valid reasoning and evidence

[3.T1-2] Research the demographic origins of the town or city of region. Explain that before the mid-19th century most of the settlers were of Native American, Northern European, or African descent.

[3.T3-1] Locate North America, the Atlantic Ocean, and Europe on a map, explain how Native Peoples first came into contact with Europeans, and explain why Europeans in the 16th-17th centuries sailed westward across the Atlantic.

[3.T3-3] Explain how any one of the explorers described the Native Peoples and the new lands, and compare an early 17th century map of New England with a current one.

[4.T1-1] On a physical map of North America, use cardinal directions, map scales, key/legends, and title to locate and identify important physical features.

[4.T1-2] On a political map of North America, locate the nations of the Caribbean; explain the meaning of the terms *continent*, *country*, *nation*, *county*, *state*, *province*, and *city*.

[4.T3-3] Trace on a map European explorations of North America and the Caribbean Islands in the 15th and 16th centuries, evaluate the reasons for the voyages, noting that they were part of an effort by European nations to expand their empires, find new routes for trade with Asia, new opportunities for colonization, and new natural resources.

[4.T4-4] Explain that many different groups of people immigrated to the United States from other places voluntarily and some were brought to the US against their will (as in the case of people of Africa).

[5.T1-6] Describe the Triangular Trade and the harsh conditions of trans-Atlantic voyages (called the Middle Passage) for enslaved Africans.

[5.T1-7a] Compare and contrast the living and working conditions of enslaved and free Africans in the colonies in the 18th century, and explain how some enslaved people sought their freedom - enslaved African Americans were property that could be bought, sold, and separated from their families by their owners; they were generally not taught to read or write, and generally owned no property; they suffered many kinds of abuse and could be punished if they were caught after running away from their masters.

[5.T1-7b] Many enslaved Africans became skilled artisans, such as cabinetmakers, coopers, and ironworkers and could be hired out to work.

[5.T1-7c] Some Africans came to America as indentured servants or sailors and were freed when their service was completed; some former slaves were granted freedom and some in the North took legal action to obtain their freedom.

## **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS & LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Were the goods being produced by slave plantations necessary for human survival? Why was the Triangular Trade an essential mechanism for imperial Europe?

By the conclusion of the lesson students will be able to:

- Identify Cape Cod's maritime industries and explain how they connected to a global economy.

- Illustrate the flow of goods involved in the "Triangular Trade."
- Indicate which forces changed the demographics of the Caribbean; explain how these forces changed the demographics.



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## LESSON THREE: CAPTAIN SOUTHACK'S MAP, 1717

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GRADE: 3 or 4

DURATION: 60 minutes

LOCATION: Classroom, Whydah Pirate Museum, or Virtually

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Students will analyze the 1717 (primary source) map of cartographer Cyprian Southack who led the governor's unsuccessful salvage effort of the *Whydah* over three centuries ago. This map of eastern Massachusetts will be used to identify familiar locations and geographical features. Students will examine both a modern and an eighteenth century map of Coastal Massachusetts. Maps will be used to practice skills such as navigation (cardinal direction, longitude and latitude) and to discuss the key features and purpose of the map. Additionally, the map-based activity gives students the opportunity to practice location and geography skills, while also underscoring a map's role as part of the historical record.

### GUIDELINES AND LEARNING STANDARDS

[3.T1-1] On a current map of Massachusetts, use the cardinal directions, map scales, legends, and titles to locate and describe the city or town where the school students attend is located, its local geographic features and historic landmarks, and their significance

[3.T2-1] On a physical map of North America, use cardinal directions, map scales, legends, and titles to locate the Northeast region and identify important physical features.

[3.T3-3] Explain how any one of the explorers described the Native Peoples and the new lands, and compare an early 17th century map of New England with a current one.

[4.T1-1] On a physical map of North America, use cardinal directions, map scales, key/legends, and title to locate and identify important physical features.

[4.T2-3] Explain how archaeologists conduct research (e.g., by participating in excavations, studying artifacts and organic remains, climate and astronomical data, and collaborating with other scholars) to develop theories about migrations, settlement patterns, and cultures in prehistoric periods.

[4.T2-4] Give examples of some archaeological sites of Native Peoples in North America that are preserved as national or state monuments, parks, or international heritage sites and explain

their importance in presenting a comprehensive history of Americans and American life.

[4.T3-1] Explain how historians studying the European voyages to the Americas used archaeological evidence, maps, illustrations, and texts produced in Europe at the time, and what all of these materials are called *primary sources*.

[4.T4a-2] Using resources such as print and online atlases, topographical maps, or road maps, construct a map of the Northeast that shows important cities, state capitals, physical features and that includes title, scale, compass, and map key.

[4.T4b-3] Explain how natural disasters, such as hurricanes and floods, have affected the region, and how government and citizens have responded to catastrophic natural events.

### **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS & OBJECTIVES**

Why are primary sources critical to the study of past events? How do archaeologists use historical documents to aid in their research and discoveries?

By the conclusion of the lesson students will be able to:

- Interpret basic map features and chart a course using cardinal directions, longitude and latitude.
- Compare the similarities and differences between an 18<sup>th</sup> century and a modern map of Cape Cod.

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## LESSON FOUR: BURIED TREASURE BENEATH THE SANDS

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GRADE: 4

DURATION: 60 minutes

LOCATION: Whydah Pirate Museum - This lesson works best *after* touring the museum's conservation lab with your class, but can be done prior to field trips.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Students will learn about archaeology and artifacts. By using examples of everyday objects, students will determine what objects and materials will survive in a saltwater environment and how they react in the ocean. Students will learn about artifact recovery and conservation in underwater archaeology by following an object's journey from the past into a modern museum.

Hands on activities will look at the science and technology used to locate salvaged items. This science lesson shows students how density affects the arrangements of objects on the seafloor, the natural process that protects artifacts (concretions) and how archaeologists recover, excavate, and preserve these relics. Vocabulary used will emphasize concepts: *artifact, reaction, corrosives, concretions, deteriorate*. Students will learn the differences between *conservation, preservation, and excavation*.

### GUIDELINES AND LEARNING STANDARDS

[4.T2-3] Explain how archaeologists conduct research (e.g., by participating in excavations, studying artifacts and organic remains, climate and astronomical data, and collaborating with other scholars) to develop theories about migration, settlement patterns, and cultures.

[4.T2-4] Give examples of some archaeological sites of Native Peoples in North America that are preserved as national or state monuments, parks, or international heritage sites and explain their importance in presenting a comprehensive history of Americans and American life.

[4.T3-1] Explain how historians studying the European voyages to the Americas use archaeological evidence, maps, illustrations, and texts produced in Europe at the time, and that all of these materials are called primary sources.

[4.T4b-3] Explain how natural disasters, such as hurricanes and floods, have affected the region, and how government and citizens have responded to catastrophic natural events.

### **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS & OBJECTIVES**

How do we learn things about the past? What does an archaeologist do? How is underwater archeology different from archeology on land?

By the conclusion of the lesson students will be able

- Understand how science and history work together as archaeology
- Discuss what an artifact is and how artifacts are recovered
- Discuss the physical properties of objects



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## **LESSON FIVE: A FLOATING DEMOCRACY**

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**GRADE:** 3 or 5 (lesson examples, details and vocabulary are tailored to grade)

**DURATION:** 60-90 minutes

**LOCATION:** Classroom, Whydah Pirate Museum or Virtually

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Students will define democracy and distinguish this concept from dictatorships, monarchies, and oligarchies. Students will discuss what happens without rules and justify why Rule of Law is beneficial to ‘the people.’ Comparisons will be made with the Magna Carta, Mayflower Compact, Declaration of Independence and Pirates Code as primary sources for the foundations of modern freedoms. Students will learn who became a pirate and what conditions forced people to ‘go on the account’; a parallel condition to the Pilgrims’ desire to flee England and the reaction to British imperial policies. Lastly, students will create their own written record for a community to govern themselves, a version of the Articles. Students will state their concept of civics and civil duty.

### **GUIDELINES AND LEARNING STANDARDS**

[3.T1-3a] Explain why classrooms, schools, towns, and cities have governments, what governments do, how local governments are organized in Massachusetts, and how people participate in and contribute to their communities: classroom and school governments provide a way for students to participate in making decisions about school activities and rules.

[3. T1-3b] Explain why classrooms, schools, towns, and cities have governments, what governments do, how local governments are organized in Massachusetts, and how people participate in and contribute to their communities: city and town governments provide a way for people to participate in mankind decisions about providing services, spending funds, protecting rights, and providing community safety.

[3.T1-3c] Explain why classrooms, schools, towns, and cities have governments, what governments do, how local governments are organized in Massachusetts, and how people participate in and contribute to their communities: Massachusetts communities have either a city or a town form of government.

[3.T1-3d] Explain why classrooms, schools, towns, and cities have governments, what governments do, how local governments are organized in Massachusetts, and how people participate in and contribute to their communities: people can participate in and influence their local government by reading and responding to news about local issues, voting, running for office, serving on boards or committees, attending hearings or committee meetings.

[3.T4-1a] Explain who the Pilgrim men and women were and who they left Europe to seek a place where they would have the right to practice their religion; describe their journey, the government of their early years in the Plymouth Colony, and analyze their relationships with the Wampanoag and Abenaki/Wabanaki people.

[3.T6-3] Analyze how the colonists' sense of justice denied led to declaring independence, and what the words of the Declaration of Independence say about what its writers believed.

[3.T6-5] Explain that states as well as nations have plans of government; recognize that the Constitution of Massachusetts (1780) is the oldest functioning constitution in the world, that its primary author was John Adams, and that, in addition to outlining government, it gives basic rights to citizens of the Commonwealth.

[5.T2-1a] Explain the reasons for the French and Indian war and how its costs led to an overhaul of British imperial policy; explain key British policies and the colonial response to them. Policies like the Proclamation of 1763, the Sugar Act (1764), the Stamp Act (1765), the Townsend Duties (1767), the Tea Act (1773), the Intolerable Acts (1774)

[5.T2-1b] Explain the reasons for the French and Indian war and how its costs led to an overhaul of British imperial policy; the slogan, "no taxation without representation"

[5.T2-1c] Explain the reasons for the French and Indian war and how its costs led to an overhaul of British imperial policy; roles of the Stamp Act Congress, the Sons of Liberty, and the Boston Tea (1773), the Suffolk Resolves (1774), in which Massachusetts colonists and the British soldiers in Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill (1775) and the evacuation of the British from Boston (1776)

[5.T2-3] Explain the development of colonial governments (e.g., legislative bodies, and describe how these developments contributed to the Revolution.

[5.T2-4] Read the Declaration of Independence (1776), explain its main argument, the reasons given for seeking independence, the meaning of the key ideas on equality and natural and legal rights and the rule of law.

[5.T2-8] Explain the reasons for the adoption of the Articles of Confederation in 1781, the weaknesses of the Articles as a plan for government, and the reasons for their failure.

[5.T3-1] Read the Preamble to and sections of the Constitution and explain how these writings reflect the following political principles: *individual rights and responsibilities, equality, the rule of law, general welfare, limited government, representative democracy.*

[5.T3-3] Describe the responsibilities of government at the federal, state, and local levels (e.g., protection of individual rights and the provision of services such as law enforcement and the building and funding of schools).

### **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS & OBJECTIVES**

Why are governments formed, and how are they organized? Who can participate?  
Who gets to, how and why do we vote? Who is protected under a constitution?

By the conclusion of the lesson students will be able

- Understand how and why people feel the need to establish governments that are inclusive to its community
- Know how to participate in different levels of government
- Understand the power of voting

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## **LESSON SIX: PIRATE SYMBOLS**

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**GRADE:** 3-5 (lesson examples, details and vocabulary are tailored to grade)

**DURATION:** 60 minutes

**LOCATION:** Classroom, Whydah Pirate Museum or Virtually

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Spanish Reales and Pieces of Eight! Students will see (possibly handle) real pirate treasure as they learn about the identifying marks and weights of Potosi silver. Lesson will cover where, how and why this element was so valuable as well as how it trickled into Caribbean and New World economies via bartering and fencing illegal goods. Discussion will focus on the symbols on coins, flags, maps (the myth of X marks the spot), and indicators towards pirate friendly towns, harbors, and merchants. Parallels will be drawn between piratical designs and the underground railroad, slave quilts, and trade goods from Lewis & Clark's journey West. Students will design their own flag and pirate map with legends, keys, compass, and scales.

### **GUIDELINES AND LEARNING STANDARDS**

[3.T1-1] On a current map of Massachusetts, use the cardinal directions, map scales, legends, and titles to locate and describe the city or town where the school students attend is located, its local geographic features and historic landmarks, and their significance

[3.T2-1] On a physical map of North America, use cardinal directions, map scales, legends, and titles to locate the Northeast region and identify important physical features.

[3.T5-5b] Explain the importance of maritime commerce and the practice of bartering - exchanging goods or services without payment in money - in the development of the economy of colonial Massachusetts, using materials from historical societies and history museums as reference materials: trans-Atlantic and Caribbean trade, especially the Triangular Trade that included Africans who were sold as slaves in the colonies and goods such as sugar and cotton produced by slave labor to be sold in the colonies and in Europe.

[4.T1-1] On a physical map of North America, use cardinal directions, map scales, key/legends, and title to locate and identify important physical features.

[4.T2-3] Explain how archaeologists conduct research (e.g., by participating in excavations, studying artifacts and organic remains, climate and astronomical data, and collaborating with other scholars) to develop theories about migration, settlement patterns, and cultures.

[4.T2-4] Give examples of some archaeological sites of Native Peoples in North America that are preserved as national or state monuments, parks, or international heritage sites and explain their importance in presenting a comprehensive history of Americans and American life.

[4.T3-1] Explain how historians studying the European voyages to the Americas use archaeological evidence, maps, illustrations, and texts produced in Europe at the time, and that all of these materials are called primary sources.

[5.T4-2] Evaluate the importance to the nation of the Louisiana Purchase and trace the expedition of Meriwether Lewis and William Clar, with Sacagawea and the Corps of Discovery, from 1803-1806.

[5.T5-3] Explain the ideas and roles of some of the people of the pre-Civil War era who led the sturggle against slavery (abolitionism) and for voting and property rights for African Americans (e.g., Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, Harriet Beecher Stowe).

## **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS & OBJECTIVES**

Where did pirate gold and silver come from? What is a piece of eight? How did pirates offload their illegal goods and who was willing to trade with them? Did pirates bury treasure and leave maps to be followed?

By the conclusion of the lesson students will be able

- Understand how the majority of pirates were illiterate, but could communicate using symbols and hidden messages
- Know that coins represent a snapshot in time: who were important leaders, what buildings were important to societies, who had the technology to mine and mint different metals
- Recognize what was able to be purchased and how valuable items were as a measurement of currency