



Colonial Trades

INTRODUCTION

Approximately one-quarter of colonial Americans worked regularly in a variety of skilled occupations called *trades*. These trades were vitally important, manufacturing essential as well as luxury goods and providing necessary services in colonial communities. Though many colonial trades differed greatly from modern occupations and are no longer practiced, some do have modern counterparts. All of the trades illustrate the integral role skilled workers fulfilled in society.

In this lesson, students will explore some of the eighteenth-century trades that young men (and occasionally women) could learn.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify ten eighteenth-century trades.
2. Match the tasks performed by tradespeople to the needs they filled in their communities.
3. Decide which eighteenth-century trades and working conditions they would find desirable and why.
4. Describe how the eighteenth-century apprenticeship system relates to their own system of education.

STANDARDS OF LEARNING

This lesson meets the National Standards of Learning in the areas of historical comprehension, analysis, interpretation, and decision making.

MATERIALS

- Worksheet 1: Colonial Trades
- Worksheet 2: Colonial Trades Descriptions
- Teacher Answer Key
- Photographs of Eighteenth-Century Trades
- Worksheet 3: Learning a Trade in the Eighteenth Century (for Lesson Extension One)

STRATEGY

1. Give each student Worksheet 1: Colonial Trades. Give students time to write down what type of work they think each tradesperson performed.
2. Display Photographs of Eighteenth-Century Trades around the room, providing enough space for students to move around among them.
3. Give each student Worksheet 2: Colonial Trades Descriptions. Instruct students to take both Worksheets 1 and 2 with them as they match the descriptions on Worksheet 2 with the posted photographs. [**Note:** This activity should take only five to ten minutes.]
4. As a class, go over Worksheets 1 and 2. Have students mark how many tradespeople's jobs they guessed correctly on Worksheet 1 and how many descriptions on Worksheet 2 they matched to the correct photographs.

5. Facilitate a class discussion in which students answer the following questions:

- What trades seem to have required the most training?
- How are people trained for these trades today, if they still exist?
- How have these trades changed? Have any ceased to exist?

LESSON EXTENSION ONE

Give each student a copy of Worksheet 3: Learning a Trade in the Eighteenth Century. Allow several minutes for students to fill out the worksheets. Conduct a class discussion about which trades students chose and why. Correct any erroneous impressions students may have formed about certain trades.

LESSON EXTENSION TWO

Have each student write six brief diary entries (Monday through Saturday) describing a week in the life of a new apprentice in a colonial trade of the student's choosing. [**Note:** Though Extensions One and Two stand alone, students may find it helpful to complete Worksheet 3 in Extension One for use as a graphic organizer or outline before completing the diary entries in Extension Two.] Students' diary entries must include the following information:

- The products that are made in the shop
- Who the shop's customers are
- The tasks an apprentice must perform every day
- Special duties the apprentice might learn in the future

WORKSHEET 1: COLONIAL TRADES

Name: _____

Directions: Below is a list of common trades of the 1700s. For each trade, use your own knowledge to predict the skills needed. Then, write a brief description of each trade.

APOTHECARY _____

BLACKSMITH _____

CABINETMAKER _____

CARPENTER _____

COOPER _____

MILLINER _____

PRINTER _____

SHOEMAKER _____

SILVERSMITH _____

TAILOR _____

WORKSHEET 2: COLONIAL TRADES DESCRIPTIONS

Name: _____

Directions: Below are descriptions of some common eighteenth-century trades. Read the descriptions and match them with the pictures that are posted around the room.

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | Makes and sells retail goods such as caps, cloaks, aprons, and other clothing accessories. |
| _____ | Forges, or hammers, metals such as iron and steel into useful shapes, including household tools and tools for other tradespeople. |
| _____ | Publishes newspapers, advertisements, legal forms, and other paper materials. |
| _____ | Makes and sells furniture of the latest fashion, including tables, chairs, and bookcases. |
| _____ | Makes and sells fashionable flatware (such as spoons and forks), hollowware (such as bowls and cups), and jewelry. |
| _____ | Makes wooden containers such as barrels, tubs, and buckets. |
| _____ | Diagnoses illnesses and makes and sells medicine. |
| _____ | Makes and sells shoes and boots. |
| _____ | Constructs and repairs buildings. |
| _____ | Cuts, fits, and sews men's coats, waistcoats, and breeches as well as women's stays and riding habits. |

Teacher Answer Key

WORKSHEET 2: COLONIAL TRADES DESCRIPTIONS

MILLINER	Makes and sells retail goods such as caps, cloaks, aprons, and other clothing accessories.
BLACKSMITH	Forges, or hammers, metals such as iron and steel into useful shapes, including household tools and tools for other tradespeople.
PRINTER	Publishes newspapers, advertisements, legal forms, and other paper materials.
CABINETMAKER	Makes and sells furniture of the latest fashion, including tables, chairs, and bookcases.
SILVERSMITH	Makes and sells fashionable flatware (such as spoons and forks), hollowware (such as bowls and cups), and jewelry.
COOPER	Makes wooden containers such as barrels, tubs, and buckets.
APOTHECARY	Diagnoses illnesses and makes and sells medicine.
SHOEMAKER	Makes and sells shoes and boots.
CARPENTER	Constructs and repairs buildings.
TAILOR	Cuts, fits, and sews men's coats, waistcoats, and breeches as well as women's stays and riding habits.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY TRADES

Image 1: Apothecary

Image 2: Blacksmith

Image 3: Cabinetmaker

Image 4: Carpenter

Image 5: Cooper

Image 6: Milliner

Image 7: Printer

Image 8: Shoemaker

Image 9: Silversmith

Image 10: Tailor

WORKSHEET 3: LEARNING A TRADE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

1. The trade I would be most interested in learning is: _____

2. Some of the tools and materials I would use in this trade are: _____

3. Some of the people who might be my customers are: _____

4. Explain the steps involved in learning an eighteenth-century trade. List and define the requirements of each step.

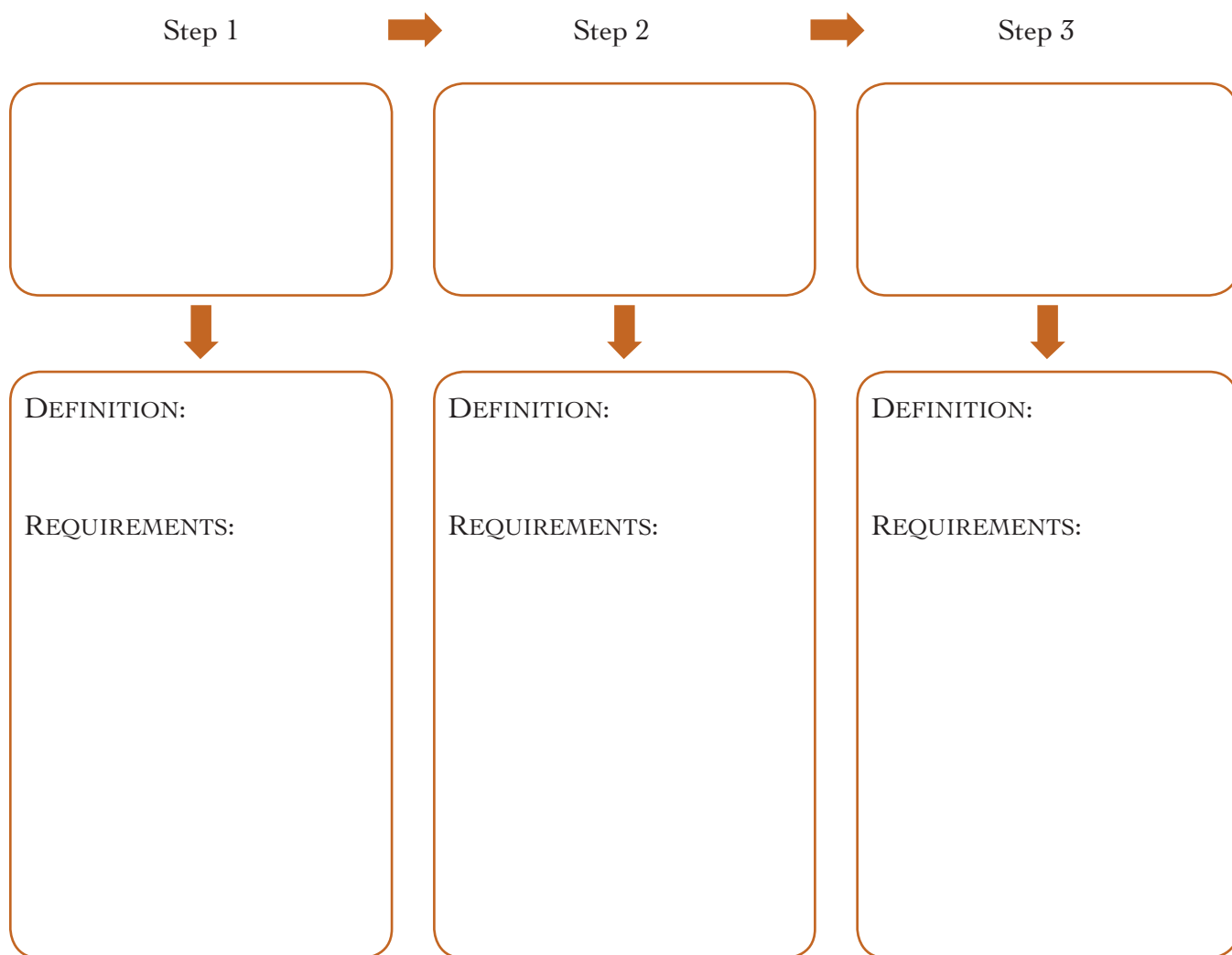


IMAGE 1



IMAGE 2



IMAGE 3



IMAGE 4



IMAGE 5



IMAGE 6



IMAGE 7



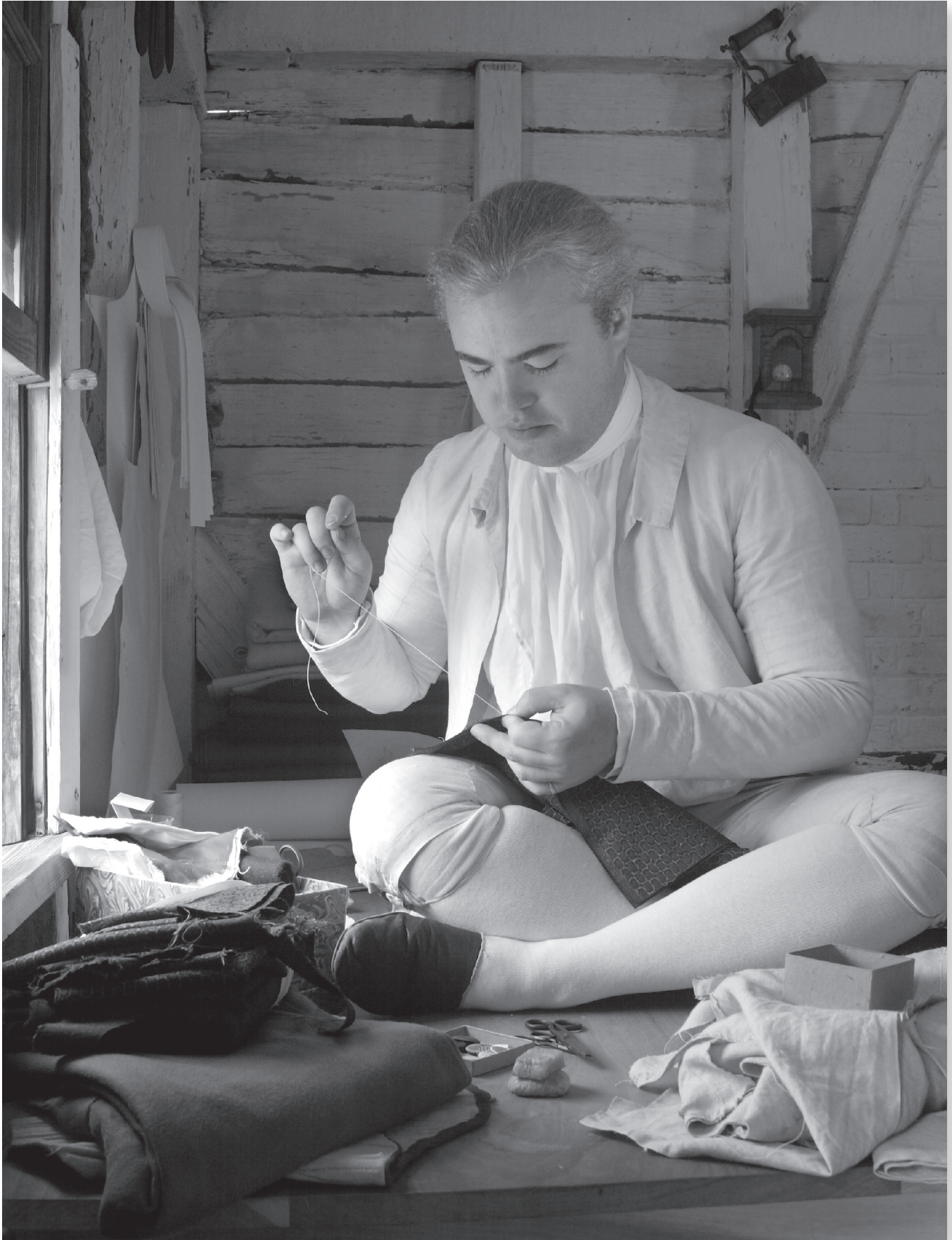
IMAGE 8



IMAGE 9



IMAGE 10





"Cabinetmaker," plate I in "Menuisier en Meubles" in volume 7 of Denis Diderot's *Recueil de Planches, sur les Sciences, les Arts Liberaux, et les Arts Mecaniques, avec leur Explication*, Paris, France, ca. 1762–1772.

We would enjoy receiving copies of some of your students' work from any of the lesson plans in this teacher guide. If you would care to share examples, please send them to:

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