

Document A: John Easton's Account (Modified)

John Easton, a Rhode Island official, met Metacomet on June 16, 1675, to try to prevent war between the colonists and the Native Americans. However, the negotiations failed and fighting broke out within days.

In the winter in the year 1674, an Indian was found dead in a pond. The dead Indian was called Sassamon. He was a Christian who could read and write. It was said that he was a bad man and that he tried to cheat King Philip. One Indian informed the English colonists that three other Indians had murdered Sassamon, knowing that it would please the English. The three Indians were hung by colonists.

It was reported that before his death Sassamon had informed the colonists of the Indian Plot to destroy the English for their wickedness. So the English were afraid and Philip was afraid and both increased their arms. About a week before war broke, we suspected it would. To try to prevent it, we sent a man to Philip, to ask if he would meet with us.

King Philip agreed to come to us. He and his men said that they had done no wrong but that the English wronged them. We said we knew the English said the Indians wronged them, but our desire was to avoid fighting. The Indians acknowledged that fighting was the worst way. . . .

They said when the English first came, their king's father was as a great man, and the English were as a little child; he prevented other Indians from wronging the English, and gave them corn and showed them how to plant, and let them have 100 times more land than now the king had for his own people. They believe their king's brother, when he was king, was poisoned by the colonists.

Another grievance was, if 20 of their honest Indians testified that an Englishman had done them wrong, it was as nothing; and if but one of their worst Indians testified against any Indian or their king, when it pleased the English it was sufficient.

Another grievance was, when their king sold land, the English would say he owed them more than they had agreed to.

Source: John Easton, "True Relation of what I know and of Reports and My Understanding Concerning the Beginning and Progress of the War now Between the English and the Indians," 1675.

Document B: Edward Randolph's Report (Modified)

The English government sent Edward Randolph to New England to investigate the causes of King Philip's War. This is an excerpt from his report to the English government.

There are various opinions of the causes of the present Indian war. Some blame it to an inappropriate **zeal** in the magistrates of Boston to Christianize the Indians . . . and forcing on them the strict observation of colonial laws, which, to a people so **rude** has proven intolerable . . . and that while the magistrates, for their profit, severely enforce the laws against the Indians, the colonists, on the other side, for **lucre** and gain, entice and provoke the Indians to break them. . . .

Some believe there have been Catholic priests who have made it their business to turn the Indians against the English. . . .

Others blame the cause on some injuries against the Sachem Philip, for he possessed a tract of land called Mount Hope. . . . Some English wanted it, so they complained of injuries done by Philip and his Indians to their stock and cattle, whereupon Philip was often called before the magistrate, sometimes imprisoned, and never released without parting with a considerable part of his land.

But the government of Massachusetts declares these are the sins for which God has allowed the **heathen** to rise against the colonists: for breaking the **fifth commandment** . . . ; for men wearing long hair and wigs made of women's hair; for women cutting, curling and laying out their hair, and disguising themselves by following strange fashions; for the people not attending their meetings, and others leaving before the blessing is pronounced; . . . for allowing the Quakers to live among them. . . .

The loss to the English in the several colonies is reckoned to amount to 150,000 pounds. . . . There having been about 1,200 houses burned, 8,000 head of cattle killed, and many thousand bushels of wheat and other grain burned . . . and upward of 3,000 Indian men, women and children destroyed, who if well managed would have been very serviceable to the English.

Source: Edward Randolph, "The Causes and Results of King Philip's War," 1675.

Vocabulary

zeal: enthusiasm

lucre: money

rude: uneducated

heathen: people who aren't Christian

pounds: English money

fifth commandment: one of the 10 Commandments

Document C: William Apess's Speech (Modified)

William Apess was a Methodist minister and Pequot. He was well known in Massachusetts as a speaker, author, and activist. He worked to gain rights for Native Americans. The following is an excerpt from one of his speeches.

In 1673, the Court ruled in favor of Talmon, the young Pilgrim. Philip had to give Talmon a large tract of land at Sapamet. This angered the Chief and his people. . . . In the year 1668 Philip had made a complaint against a Pilgrim, who had wronged one of his men of a gun and some swine. There is no record that Philip got any justice. . . .

The Pilgrims sent an Indian, a traitor, to preach to Philip and his men, in order to convert him and his people to Christianity. The preacher's name was Sassamon. . . . What could have been more insulting than to send a man to them who was . . . a traitor? . . . It was the laws of the Indians that such a man must die. . . . In March, 1674, one of Philip's men killed him, and placed him beneath the ice in a pond near Plymouth; doubtless by the order of Philip. . . . Tobias [was] apprehended and tried. Tobias was one of Philip's counselors. . . . In June, three Indians instead of one were arraigned. Only Tobias was previously suspected. Now two others were arraigned, tried, condemned and executed on June the 8th, 1675, by hanging and shooting. It does not appear that any more than Tobias was guilty. The other two persisted in their innocence until the end.

This so exasperated King Philip, that from that day he planned his revenge on the pilgrims. He believed the executions were a violation of treaties. . . . Until the execution of these three Indians, supposed to be the murderers of Sassamon, no hostility was committed by Philip or his warriors. After the Indians were executed, he could no longer restrain his young men, who, upon the 24th of June, provoked the people of Swansea, by killing their cattle and [and causing] other injuries, which was a signal to commence the war.

Source: "Eulogy on King Philip," delivered on January 8, 1836 at the Odeon, an auditorium in Boston, Massachusetts.

Name: _____

Guiding Questions

Document A

Before reading the document, answer:

1. (Sourcing) Who was John Easton?
2. (Sourcing) When was this account written?

Was this before or after King Philip's War?

After reading the document, answer:

3. How reliable is this document as an account of Metacomet's grievances?
4. (Contextualization) According to the text, what happened immediately before this meeting?

How did this event lead to this meeting?

5. (Close reading) According to this document, what were three grievances that Metacomet and his men made to John Easton?

Hypothesis 1 – What caused King Philip’s War?
(Use evidence from the document)

Document B

Before reading the document answer:

1. (Sourcing) Who was Edward Randolph?
2. (Sourcing) When was this account written?

Was this before or after King Philip’s War?

3. Why might the English government have wanted to know what caused King Philip’s War?

After reading the document, answer:

4. According to this account, what did the government of Massachusetts consider to be the causes of King Philip’s War?
5. How reliable is this document as an account of the colonial perspective of what caused King Philip’s War?

6. Based on this document, how would you describe the attitude of the English towards Native Americans? Explain.
7. According to this document, what were three causes of the war?

Hypothesis 2 – What caused King Philip’s War?
(Use evidence from both documents)

Document C

Before reading the document answer:

1. (Sourcing) Who was William Apess?
2. (Sourcing) How many years after King Philip’s War did he give this speech?

3. (Sourcing) What might have been the purpose of this speech?

After reading the document, answer:

4. How reliable is this document as an account of the causes of King Philip's War?

5. (Corroboration) What parts of Documents A and B does this speech corroborate?

What parts of Documents A and B does this speech challenge?

Hypothesis 3 – What caused King Philip's War?
(Use evidence from all three documents)