



Day 19 Colonization Unit
70 Minutes

Colonial Trades

Lesson Title

Artisans and Trades in the 13 Colonies

Grade Levels: 5–9

Time: 60–75 minutes

Unit: Colonial Economy & Daily Life

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify major colonial trades and describe their daily work
- Explain why specialized trades were essential to colonial survival
- Analyze how tools and materials shaped colonial products
- Apply knowledge through interactive and hands-on activities

Materials

- **Uploaded PowerPoint:** *Trades of the 13 Colonies*
- **Interactive Trades Scavenger Hunt** (colonial town center)
- Differentiated Reading: *Life as a Blacksmith*
- **Drag-and-Drop Activity:** Match Trade ↔ Definition
- Student devices

Lesson Structure Overview

- **PowerPoint with Slide-by-Slide Script:** 20 minutes
- **Interactive Trades Scavenger Hunt:** 20 minutes
- **Differentiated Reading + Drag & Drop:** 20–25 minutes

- **Trades Game**
- **Wrap-Up / Reflection:** 5 minutes

Part 1: PowerPoint With Accurate Teacher Script (20 Minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/explorers/plans/trades2.pptx>

Slide – Blacksmith

Teacher Script:

“The blacksmith was one of the most essential people in any colonial town. Blacksmiths heated iron in a hot forge until it glowed red, then hammered it into shape on a heavy anvil. They made axes, hoes, nails, horseshoes, and wagon parts, and repaired broken metal tools. Nearly every family depended on the blacksmith, and the sound of hammering was constant in colonial towns.”

Slide – Silversmith

Teacher Script:

“Silversmiths were highly skilled artisans who worked with precious metals. They made items like spoons, teapots, buttons, jewelry, and engraved silverware. Their work required precision tools such as molds, files, and engraving tools. Many silversmith items were passed down as family heirlooms.”

Slide – Cobbler

Teacher Script:

“Cobblers made and repaired shoes. Because shoes were expensive, families repaired them instead of replacing them. Cobblers used leather, waxed thread, awls, knives, hammers, and wooden foot-shaped molds called lasts to shape shoes to fit each customer.”

Slide – Chandler

Teacher Script:

“Chandlers made candles, which were essential before electricity. They melted animal fat or beeswax and dipped wicks repeatedly to build candles layer by layer. Some chandlers also made soap. Without candles, colonists could not safely light their homes at night.”

Slide – Apothecary

Teacher Script:

“Apothecaries were early pharmacists. They mixed herbs, minerals, and plant extracts to create medicines for fevers, infections, and injuries. Apothecaries also sold spices, inks, and tobacco. Colonists often relied on them because trained doctors were rare.”

Slide – Tavern Keeper

Teacher Script:

“Taverns were some of the busiest places in colonial towns. Tavern keepers provided food, drink, and lodging, but taverns were also centers for news, politics, and business. Important meetings often took place there, and travelers shared information from other colonies.”

Slide – Printer

Teacher Script:

“Printers spread information and ideas throughout the colonies. They set metal letters by hand and used large wooden presses to print newspapers, pamphlets, books, and legal documents. Printers played a major role in education and later in political movements.”

Slide – Cooper

Teacher Script:

“Coopers made barrels, buckets, and casks. Barrels were essential for storing food, water, flour, salted meat, and gunpowder, and for shipping goods across the Atlantic. Their work required strength and precision to make barrels watertight.”

Slide – Saddlemaker

Teacher Script:

“Saddlemakers created saddles, bridles, reins, and harnesses used by farmers, travelers, merchants, and postal riders. Saddles were expensive and carefully crafted to fit both horse and rider, often lasting many years.”

Slide – Brickmaker

Teacher Script:

“Brickmakers made bricks by mixing clay, sand, and water, shaping them in molds, drying them, and firing them in kilns. Brick buildings were stronger and more fire-resistant than wooden ones, making this trade important for growing towns.”

Slide – Milliner & Wigmaker**Teacher Script:**

“Milliners often sold hats, ribbons, lace, and fashionable accessories, while wigmakers created powdered wigs worn by wealthy colonists and officials. Both trades supported fashion, status, and social identity in colonial society.”

Slide – Farmer & Carpenter**Teacher Script:**

“Farmers provided food for nearly everyone, while carpenters built homes, barns, fences, and furniture. Together, these trades formed the backbone of colonial survival and community growth.”

Part 2: Interactive Trades Scavenger Hunt (20 Minutes)

Activity Overview

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/13-colonies/13-colonies-trades>

Students explore a **colonial town center** and click on **trade symbols** (forge, shop signs, tools) to identify:

- The trade
- What the worker made
- Why the trade mattered

Use your discretion to choose the scavenger hunt option best for your students or classes:

- [13 Colonies Trades Digital Scavenger Hunt](#)
- [13 Colonies Trades Fact or Fiction \(Online\)](#)
- [13 Colonies Trades Printable Scavenger Hunt](#)

Review answers when students have completed the activity.

Part 3: Differentiated Reading + Drag & Drop (20–25 Minutes)

Literacy and Comprehension Options:

- [Life as a Blacksmith Online Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 850
- [Life as a Blacksmith Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 850
- [Life as a Blacksmith Printable Cloze Reading](#) - Grades 4 +

Activity 2: Drag-and-Drop Matching

This fun activity allows students to try their hand at matching the icons to their correct definition. The Program gives a detailed printable score report. Kids will love this!

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/13-colonies/13-colonies-trades/13-colonies-trades-matching>

Examples:

- Cooper → makes barrels for storage and shipping
- Apothecary → prepares medicines using herbs and minerals

Bonus: Colonial Shopper Game

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/13-colonies/13-colonies-fun-activities/colonial-shopper>

Important: Demonstrate the features and game play before students start. You can choose actual colonial currency (shillings and pounds) or use today's dollars and sense. Use colonial currency for a better challenge.

Colonial Shopper is an interactive budgeting game where students shop in a colonial town for a wealthy merchant, choosing the *correct versions* of requested goods (based on subtle clues like size, quality, and quantity) while staying under a spending limit. Town events can raise prices, trigger sales, or close shops, and students use the “Check My Purchases” feature to see clear feedback, fix mistakes, and earn gold coins for shopping under budget—then print a detailed score report.