

## DOCUMENTS

Interpreting Alternative Viewpoints  
in Primary Source Documents

# Banished

## Anne Hutchinson and the Antinomian Crisis

*Was Anne Hutchinson a bold woman fighting for religious freedom or a fanatic who put herself above the law?*



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*Debating* the  
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# Teacher Introduction

## ★ *Using Primary Sources*

Primary sources are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past era or historical event. They are the raw materials, or the evidence, on which historians base their “secondary” accounts of the past.

A rapidly growing number of history teachers today are using primary sources. Why? Perhaps it's because primary sources give students a better sense of what history is and what historians do. Such sources also help students see the past from a variety of viewpoints. Moreover, primary sources make history vivid and bring it to life.

However, primary sources are not easy to use. They can be confusing. They can be biased. They rarely all agree. Primary sources must be interpreted and set in context.

To do this, students need historical background knowledge. *Debating the Documents* helps students handle such challenges by giving them a useful framework for analyzing sources that conflict with one another.



*“Multiple,  
conflicting  
perspectives are  
among the truths  
of history.  
No single  
objective or  
universal account  
could ever put an  
end to this endless  
creative dialogue  
within and  
between the past  
and the present.”*

From the 2011 Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct of the Council of the American Historical Association.

## INTRODUCTION

### ★ *The Debating the Documents Series*

Each *Debating the Documents* booklet includes the same sequence of reproducible worksheets. If students use several booklets over time, they will get regular practice at interpreting and comparing conflicting sources. In this way, they can learn the skills and habits needed to get the most out of primary sources.

#### **Each *Debating the Documents* Booklet Includes**

- **Suggestions for the Student and an Introductory Essay.** The student gets instructions and a one-page essay providing background on the booklet's topic. A time line on the topic is also included.
- **Two Groups of Contrasting Primary Source Documents.** In most of the booklets, students get one pair of visual sources and one pair of written sources. In some cases, more than two are provided for each. Background is provided on each source. *Within each group, the sources clash in a very clear way.* (The sources are not always exact opposites, but they do always differ in some obvious way.)
- **Three Worksheets for Each Document Group.** Students use the first two worksheets to take notes on the sources. The third worksheet asks which source the student thinks would be most useful to a historian.
- **One DBQ.** On page 20, a document-based question (DBQ) asks students to write an effective essay using all of the booklet's primary sources.

### ★ *How to Use This Booklet*

#### **1. Have students read “Suggestions for the Student” and the Introductory Essay.**

Give them copies of pages 5–7. Ask them to read the instructions and then read the introductory essay on the topic. The time line gives them additional information on that topic. This reading could be done in class or as a homework assignment.

#### **2. Have students do the worksheets.**

Make copies of the worksheets and the pages with the sources. Ask students to study the background information on each source and the source itself. Then have them take notes on the sources using the worksheets. If students have access to a computer, have them review the primary sources digitally.

### 3. “Debate the documents” as a class.

Have students use their worksheet notes to debate the primary source documents as a class. Urge students to follow these ground rules:

- Use your worksheets as a guide for the discussion or debate.
- Try to reach agreement about the main ideas and the significance of each primary source document.
- Look for points of agreement as well as disagreement between the primary sources.
- Listen closely to all points of view about each primary source.
- Focus on the usefulness of each source to the historian, not merely on whether you agree or disagree with that source’s point of view.

### 4. Have students do the final DBQ.

A DBQ is an essay question about a set of primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, students write essays using evidence from the sources and their own background knowledge of the historical era. (See the next page for a DBQ scoring guide to use in evaluating these essays.)

The DBQ assignment on page 20 includes guidelines for writing a DBQ essay. Here are some additional points to make with students about preparing to write this kind of essay.

#### **The DBQ for this Booklet (see page 20):**

Was Anne Hutchinson a rebel fighting for religious freedom or a Puritan extremist who put herself above all authority?

- Analyze the question carefully.
- Use your background knowledge to set sources in their historical context.
- Question and interpret sources actively. Do not accept them at face value.
- Use sources meaningfully to support your essay’s thesis.
- Pay attention to the overall organization of your essay.

## INTRODUCTION

### ★ *Complete DBQ Scoring Guide*

Use this guide in evaluating the DBQ for this booklet. Use this scoring guide with students who are already familiar with using primary sources and writing DBQ essays.

#### **Excellent Essay**

- Offers a clear answer or thesis explicitly addressing all aspects of the essay question.
- Does a careful job of interpreting many or most of the documents and relating them clearly to the thesis and the DBQ. Deals with conflicting documents effectively.
- Uses details and examples effectively to support the thesis and other main ideas. Explains the significance of those details and examples well.
- Uses background knowledge and the documents in a balanced way.
- Is well written; clear transitions make the essay easy to follow from point to point. Only a few minor writing errors or errors of fact.

#### **Good Essay**

- Offers a reasonable thesis addressing the essential points of the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least some of the documents and relates them to the thesis and the DBQ.
- Usually relates details and examples meaningfully to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some relevant background knowledge.
- May have some writing errors or errors of fact, as long as these do not invalidate the essay's overall argument or point of view.

#### **Fair Essay**

- Offers at least a partly developed thesis addressing the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least a few of the documents.
- Relates only a few of the details and examples to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some background knowledge.
- Has several writing errors or errors of fact that make it harder to understand the essay's overall argument or point of view.

#### **Poor Essay**

- Offers no clear thesis or answer addressing the DBQ.
- Uses few documents effectively other than referring to them in “laundry list” style, with no meaningful relationship to a thesis or any main point.
- Uses details and examples unrelated to the thesis or other main ideas. Does not explain the significance of these details and examples.
- Is not clearly written, with some major writing errors or errors of fact.

# Suggestions to the Student

## ★ *Using Primary Sources*

A primary source is any record of evidence from the past. Many things are primary sources: letters, diary entries, official documents, photos, cartoons, wills, maps, charts, etc. They are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past event or time period. This *Debating the Documents* lesson is based on two groups of primary source documents. Within each group, the sources conflict with one another. That is, they express different or even opposed points of view. You need to decide which source is more reliable, more useful, or more typical of the time period. This is what historians do all the time. Usually, you will be able to learn something about the past from each source, even when the sources clash with one another in dramatic ways.

## ★ *How to Use This Booklet*

### 1. **Read the one-page introductory essay.**

This gives you background information that will help you analyze the primary source documents and do the exercises for this *Debating the Documents* lesson. The time line gives you additional information you will find helpful.



### 2. **Study the primary source documents for this lesson.**

For this lesson, you get two groups of sources. The sources within each group conflict with one another. Some of these sources are visuals, others are written sources. With visual sources, pay attention not only to the image’s “content” (its subject matter) but also to its artistic style, shading, composition, camera angle, symbols, and other features that add to the image’s meaning. With written sources, notice the writing style, bias, even what the source leaves out or does not talk about. Think about each source’s author, that author’s reasons for writing, and the likely audience for the source. These considerations give you clues as to the source’s historical value.

### 3. **Use the worksheets to analyze each group of primary source documents.**

For each group of sources, you get three worksheets. Use the “Study the Document” worksheets to take notes on each source. Use the “Comparing the Documents” worksheet to decide which of the sources would be most useful to a historian.

### 4. **As a class, debate the documents.**

Use your worksheet notes to help you take part in this debate.

### 5. **Do the final DBQ.**

“DBQ” means “document-based question.” A DBQ is a question along with several primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, write an essay using evidence from the documents and your own background history knowledge.



## *The Antinomian Crisis*

In 1637, the Puritan leaders of Massachusetts Bay Colony ordered Anne Hutchinson to be banished. In 1638, they forced her to move with her family to Rhode Island. What was her “crime”? She had openly criticized many of the colony’s ministers and said things they saw as dangerous. She discussed her views with women (and later with some men) who regularly gathered at her home to talk about each week’s sermon.

It is easy today to admire Anne Hutchinson and see her as a courageous fighter for religious freedom or even women’s rights. In an indirect way, she may have been. Yet to view her from this modern-day point of view is to misunderstand a great deal, both about her and the Puritan leaders she challenged.

Both Hutchinson and her critics accepted the basic Puritan teachings of New England’s Congregational churches. These beliefs were harsh and demanding. Puritans believed that God had decided for all time who would be saved and who would be damned. Humans were all sinful by nature. Only those whom God chose and filled with holy grace would be “justified” (that is, saved). The Puritans called this promise of salvation a “covenant of grace” (a covenant is an agreement or bond).

Puritans longed to know that God had granted them grace and saved their souls. Yet they could do NOTHING to earn that grace! All they could do was search for signs that they already had it. This they did constantly, earnestly, and fearfully. Most of them looked for signs of grace in such actions as living a moral life, obeying God’s laws in the Bible, or acting uprightly in the community. Yet they actually could not try to win grace by such actions. That would be to bargain with God, to try to force God to do something. It would be to put one’s own will above that of God’s. The Puritans saw this as a sin. They called it practicing a “covenant of works.”

Anne Hutchinson and her supporters were even stricter than this. They agreed it was sinful to try to win God’s grace by one’s own efforts, or “works.” They also said it was wrong even to look for signs of grace in one’s works. You could only know you were saved if God revealed it to you directly in a powerful inner experience. No outward sign could ever prove you were among the small group of the saved, or the “elect,” as Puritans called them.

The colony’s Puritan leaders opposed this view. They called it “antinomianism” (Latin for “against law”). They gave it this name because antinomians seemed to put themselves above the law—or above the ministers in judging who was saved.

Normally, it was a minister who examined and judged a person’s spiritual condition. This judgment could decide that person’s church membership and political rights in the colony. In New England, the Puritans were not a minority as they had been in England. They now ran their own government, and they felt a strong need to judge and control people’s outward behavior. This is why they feared the antinomians, who they believed put themselves above such judgments.

In Anne Hutchinson’s view, one minister did preach a pure covenant of grace. His name was John Cotton. In 1634, she had followed Cotton to New England, where she and her merchant husband became major figures in Boston’s social and political life. At meetings in her home, she compared Cotton favorably to the other ministers. These ministers felt she had accused them outright of a covenant of works. She denied having gone this far.

The time line here will help you see how this conflict split the New England Puritans. The documents will help you better understand Anne Hutchinson and this crisis in the history of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

## Anne Hutchinson Time Line

1591

- • • Anne Hutchinson is born Anne Marbury on July 17 in Alford, Lincolnshire, England. Her father was a clergyman and Puritan reformer.

1612

- • • Anne marries William Hutchinson, a wealthy merchant. Anne will have 15 children by him. Anne and William are both Puritans and followers of the Reverend John Cotton.

1629

- • • The earliest Puritans settlers arrive in New England under the charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Thousands follow over the next decades.

1630

- • • John Winthrop takes charge as governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony. He will be voted out occasionally, but also re-elected 12 times. Boston is founded as the site of the colony's government. Later, Winthrop will be Anne Hutchinson's most powerful critic.

1633

- • • Under suspicion by Church of England authorities, John Cotton sails to the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

1634

- • • Following after John Cotton, Anne Hutchinson and her family arrive in Massachusetts. Anne becomes a midwife. Soon, she also begins holding meetings for women in her Boston home to discuss the Bible and the sermons the group was hearing. Later men attend the meetings as well. Anne defends her criticisms of some ministers, saying her views are based on her own inner spiritual light or understanding.

1635

- • • The first American public secondary school, Boston Latin Grammar School, is founded in Boston.

1636

- • • Henry Vane becomes governor of the colony. Vane is one of Anne's supporters, who include some of Boston's more prominent citizens. The colonists launch attacks on Pequot settlements in response to the murder of a settler. These attacks soon lead to the Pequot War. Roger Williams is banished from Massachusetts and settles Rhode Island as a place of religious toleration. Harvard College is established in Newtowne, which is now Cambridge, Massachusetts.

1637

- • • The Pequot War continues. The colonists clear Connecticut for settlement. At a January meeting in Boston, John Wheelwright delivers a dramatic sermon in defense of Anne and her supporters. In May, John Winthrop is re-elected governor, replacing Vane. In August, Anne is condemned by the conference of ministers. Other antinomians are tried and sentenced to be banished from the colony. In November, Winthrop presides at Anne's civil trial before the General Court of Massachusetts. She is found guilty of slandering the ministers and is put under house arrest until the spring.

1638

- • • After a second church trial, Anne Hutchinson is banished from Massachusetts Bay Colony. She and 60 followers move to Rhode Island where they help found Portsmouth.

1642

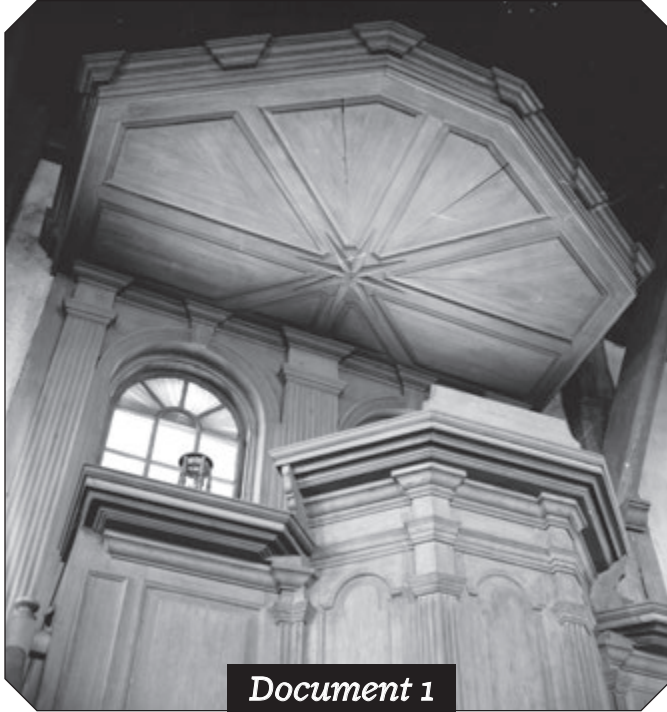
- • • After the death of her husband, Anne and her younger children move to Long Island, in the Dutch colony that will become New York.

1643

- • • Anne and all but one of the children with her in Long Island are murdered by Native Americans.

## DOCUMENTS 1 & 2

# Visual Primary Source Documents 1 & 2



**Document 1**

The Library of Congress: Prints and Photographs division, HABS MASS, 12-HING, 5-31



**Document 2**

The Library of Congress: Prints and Photographs division, LC-USZ62-7714

### *Information on Documents 1 & 2*

**Document 1.** This photo of the pulpit of the Old Ship Church in Hingham, Massachusetts, gives a sense of the importance of religion in Puritan New England in the colonial era. The pulpit was built in the mid-1700s. By then, the Old Ship church was already moving away from the strict Congregationalist ideas of the Puritans of Anne Hutchinson's time. Yet this photo still hints at the powerful role of the minister and the church in colonial New England. All aspects of a community's life were under the church's watchful eye.

**Document 2.** This engraving by Elkanah Tisdale from 1795 shows a heated debate in a colonial New England town meeting. The Puritans who founded Massachusetts Bay Colony settled there as an entire community. As the colony grew, families often moved as groups, not as individuals, to found other towns. Town meetings were a form of direct democracy in which decisions were made by all male church members—and in time, all male residents of the town.