

# The Mayflower

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*A classroom play by Team HOPE*

*Cast List*

William Bradford.....Governor of the Plymouth colony

Chief Student Correspondent (CHIEF) .....in charge of facilitating the discussion

Student Correspondent 1 (ST1).....questioner of historical figures

Student Correspondent 2 (ST2) .....questioner of historical figures

Student Correspondent 3 (ST3).....questioner of historical figures

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## TEACHER NOTES

**SETTING:** A contemporary classroom. It is advised to set up the anchor in the front of the room facing the class, in front of some sort of background with “The History New Report.” Other correspondents and the historical figure can be placed in a semi-circle to the left or right of the anchor facing the rest of the class. A name plate in front of each cast member is highly recommended. A 5x8 index card folded in half works great for this purpose.

**COSTUMES:** Although not necessary, any period costumes for the historical figures are a great addition. Even a simple hat or wig is excellent.

**MASKS:** Masks are an easy addition that will add to the drama and make the entire event more fun for the students. First, go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and click on “image search.” Type in the historical figure’s name and find an image of the person. Copy and paste the picture in a Word document. You may need to crop and then enlarge the photo so you get a picture large enough to be used as a mask. Portraits obviously work best for this use. Print out the picture and paste it onto a cardboard backing. You can tape a plastic spoon or popsicle stick to be used as a handle. You may decide to make masks for the student correspondents as well, using pictures of television news personalities for the masks.

*Note: If there is a historical person you cannot find a picture for, don’t despair! Almost any random “period” person’s picture (as long as it not someone easily recognizable) would work as a mask.*

**ROLES:** Encourage students to act out the roles with as much energy as possible. Do not be too terribly concerned that the sex of the historical figure matching with the sex of the student.

The teacher may decide to take a part in the play, role-modeling one of the historical figures. It is recommended that five copies of the scripts are specifically set aside for each character in the play. For each character, *highlight all their lines* in order to facilitate a faster pace of dialogue. All other students should receive an unmarked copy of the play to read as the play is performed.

**DISCUSSION:** Use the accompanying worksheet to facilitate discussion before and after the play. Students who are not directly involved in the play can attempt to write preliminary answers as the play is performed. The audience should be told that they will be the primarily responsible for the discussion questions at the end of the lesson.

# The Mayflower

(An Interview with William Bradford)

*NOTE: All responses by historical figures are based on actual eyewitness sources and reflect actual events as closely as possible.*

## CAST ABBREVIATIONS

William Bradford ..... **BRAD**  
Chief Student Correspondent ..... **CHIEF**  
Student Correspondent 1 ..... **ST1**  
Student Correspondent 2 ..... **ST2**  
Student Correspondent 3 ..... **ST3**

**CHIEF** Today we welcome to William Bradford to our classroom (*gesture toward them*). He is famous for having been Governor of Plymouth colony and sailed aboard the *Mayflower*. Let's hear his account!

**ST1** Governor, why did you leave England to begin with?

**BRAD** We left due to religion persecution. The Pilgrims were separatists and this meant that we felt the Anglican Church, the official state religion of England, was so corrupt that it could not be reformed. We wanted to form a separate church, but the law did not allow this in England. You were not free to choose your own church. King James I treated us so poorly, we were afraid that we would be accused of treason and possibly executed. We first left in 1609 for Holland.

**ST2** Why Holland?

**BRAD** It was the freest country in the world at that time. We felt we could practice our religious beliefs without fear of persecution.

**ST3** Did you find Holland acceptable?

**BRAD** We did, however, we found that after a few years we were beginning to lose our identity and we started plan on founding a holy commonwealth in the New World. We traveled back to England and made plans to start our voyage.

**ST1** Where did you intend to form this "holy commonwealth?"

**BRAD** We received permission to settle in Virginia, but we were blown well off course and ended up off 600 miles north, on the coast of Massachusetts, near what is now Boston.

**CHIEF** Governor, could you please describe the voyage on the *Mayflower*?

**BRAD** After we enjoyed fair winds and weather, we encountered many times, crosswinds, and met with many fierce storms, and the ship was thoroughly shaken, and her upper works made very leaky; and then one of the main beams was downed and cracked. We had some fear that the ship would not be able to complete the voyage.

**ST3** Did you discuss turning back?

- BRAD** Yes, we almost did, but were able to repair the main support beam that had cracked. It was decided that the ship was strong enough to finish the voyage.
- ST2** How did people handle the storms?
- BRAD** Not well. The storms were so relentless that almost everyone was very sick. We were also crammed into the small living area and because of the storms we were not allowed to go out on deck, which made conditions much more miserable.
- ST1** Did many people die on the voyage?
- BRAD** Actually, thanks to God, only one passenger died! Although another passenger, John Howland, was thrown overboard during one of the fierce winds and waves, but thanks to God he grabbed onto a rope. Despite being dragged underwater, he was able to be pulled back on deck. It was a miracle.
- ST2** How long did the voyage take?
- BRAD** After sixty-six days, we arrived in a place called Cape Cod. Having arrived in a good harbor and brought safe to land, we fell upon our knees and blessed the God of heaven, who had brought us over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered us from all the perils and miseries we suffered.
- ST3** But before you landed, you signed a very famous document. Can you tell us about that?
- BRAD** Of course! Before we disembarked, forty-one of the 102 passengers gathered together and affixed their signatures on what we called *The Mayflower Compact*.
- CHIEF** What was the purpose of this document?
- BRAD** We were agreeing on how we would govern ourselves. We announced to the world that for the Glory of God, the advancement of the Christian faith, and to honor our King and country, we pledged to covenant together to establish rules under which we would live.
- ST1** The first years were very difficult, were they not?
- BRAD** Extremely difficult. Fully half of those who made the voyage died of starvation and disease in the first year. However, in the spring, we were able to plant corn and catch fish, thanks to the advice of an Indian named Squanto. We were so thankful for our harvest in the fall that we invited Squanto's Wampanoag tribe to a festival of Thanksgiving. We held foot races, wrestling matches, and we ate corn, squash, deer, turkey, ducks, rabbits, and much other rich food. We ate a lot!
- CHIEF** The first Thanksgiving! Governor, thank you so much for your report!