

Lesson Plan

Land Use in New Hampshire: Farming

This is an adaptation of a lesson plan prepared by Patrice Brewer while participating in the New Hampshire Historical Society's New Hampshire History Summer Institute.

What Students Learn

Students discover ways the natural environment has affected how people live in New Hampshire—and in their own community.

Procedures

For the first day's activity, read page 15 of Marilyn Wyzga's *Exploring the Land We Call New Hampshire* and brainstorm problems farmers encountered as they prepared land for farming or raising livestock. Discuss why farming was the predominant economic activity in New Hampshire in colonial years and in the early years of statehood. Discuss how climate and physical geography in northern New England influenced this way of life. Write an essay on farming in New Hampshire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries based on the results of brainstorming and class discussion.

For the second activity, visit a working farm in the school's local community. (Be sure to alert the farmer about the purpose of your visit so that he or she is prepared to discuss how long the property has been used for farming and how and why land use has changed on the property and on land around the farm.) Use the observation sheet as a starting point for inquiry. After follow-up discussion, students will compose a creative piece—e.g., a story, poem, song, illustration—based on information they learned from their observations and investigations at the farm.

Lesson Materials

Observation Sheet for Field Trip to a Local Farm

Bibliography

Most entries, as well as other teacher resources, are available through the New Hampshire Historical Society's Tuck Library and its Museum Store.

Wyzga, Marilyn. *Exploring the Land We Call New Hampshire: An Activity Guide*.
Concord: New Hampshire Historical Society, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, 1992.

Assessment Tools and Techniques

Essay and creative-writing assignment.

Farming in New Hampshire: Observation Sheet

The questions below are meant to help you generate even more questions and to draw some tentative conclusions. They should not be treated as a simple checklist.

1. Look at any stone walls and speculate why they were built there. What purpose do you think they served? Are the stone walls still maintained? Are there other types of fence on the farm as well?
2. What kinds of animals are on the farm? How are they used for economic purposes? What land alterations were made to accommodate the animals? How many animals are on the farm?
3. What kinds of buildings are on the farm? What are they used for? Have they always been used for this purpose? Were some buildings built more recently than others were? Is there evidence that some buildings have been torn down?
4. Does the farm grow food? What crops are grown? How much of the food grown here is consumed by the family, and how much—if any—is sold to market?
5. Look at the physical layout of the farm—its buildings and fields. Draw a sketch showing where the buildings and fields are located. What ideas can you come up with to explain why the farm is laid out in this particular way? How does the layout allow the farmer to move animals and crops to the necessary buildings to get them ready for consumer use or market?
6. What are the physical features of the land on which the farm is located? How do these features help or hinder the work of the farmer?

Curriculum Information

Information relating to the *New Hampshire History Curriculum* refers to the K-12 resource in two volumes developed by the New Hampshire Historical Society in partnership with Public Service of New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Department of Education, and the New Hampshire Council for the Social Studies. The K-6 volume is available on-line through the school programs section of the Society's Web site (<http://www.nhhistory.org>).

Grade Level

Elementary School and Middle School

New Hampshire Social Studies Standards

Economics 1, 2, 6; Geography 2, 3, 4; US/NH History 4, 5

New Hampshire History Curriculum Focus Topics

Natural Environment and People

New Hampshire History Curriculum Eras

1623–1763: Colonization and Settlement

1763–1820s: Revolution and the New Nation

1801–1861: Expansion and Reform