

Skillbuilder Practice

Using Primary Sources

A **primary source** is something written or made by people who lived during historical events and witnessed them. The following primary source is Mary Rowlandson's account of her 13 weeks as a prisoner of the Narragansett during King Philip's War. It provides evidence to help historians answer questions about how people lived in the past. Read the excerpt and complete the chart that follows. (See Skillbuilder Handbook, page R20.)

There one of them [her captors] asked me why I wept. I could hardly tell what to say, yet I answered, they would kill me. No, said he, none will hurt you. Then came one of them and gave me two spoonfuls of meal to comfort me. Another gave me half a pint of peas, which was more worth than many bushels at another time.

[The Narragansett] fell to boiling of ground-nuts and parching of corn (as many as had it) for their [supplies], and in the morning away they went. During my [stay] in this place, Philip spoke to me to make a shirt for his boy, which I did, for which he gave me a shilling. I offered the money to my master, but he bade me keep it . . . Afterwards he asked me to make a cap for his boy, for which he invited me to dinner. I went, and he gave me a pancake about as big as two fingers. It was made of parched wheat, beaten, and fried in bear grease, but I thought I never tasted pleasanter meat in my life. . . . Another asked me to knit a pair of stockings, for which she gave me a quart of peas. I boiled my peas and bear together and invited my master and mistress to dinner.

from Roy Harvey Pearce, ed., *Colonial American Writing*. (Rinehart and Company, 1958), 120–121.

In Column 1, write a question that matches the answer in Column 2. In Column 2, answer the question asked in Column 1.

How did the Narragansett treat Rowlandson initially?	1. _____ _____
2. _____ _____	corn, peas, ground-nuts, horseflesh, wheat, bear grease, bear meat
Do you think the Narragansett liked English-style clothing?	3. _____ _____
4. _____ _____	The Narragansett gave Rowlandson money or food when she made things for them.
Did the Narragansett trade with colonists?	5. _____ _____