

What could be worse than working all day on your play scripts - and then up all night getting an earful from your characters – telling you what you *should* have written? Those early colonists certainly weren't reluctant to share their views – especially if that entailed telling their creator his lines were rubbish! The only way to shut these good folk up was to let them have their say – however long it took – even if *their* idea of setting the record straight was strictly *off* the record!

And so we have 5 sleepless nights –a mild form of torture for our poor playwright but great for us – learning all about:

1. Colonial homes
2. Weaving and spinning
3. Candle and soap making
4. Recreation
5. Religion (including education and punishment)

This set of scripts can be read by a group (of 6), keeping the same characters throughout; or as a class of 30 or 25, in groups of 6 speakers.

1.Colonial Homes

Speakers:

Playwright

Mother Mrs. Smith

Father Mr. Smith

Son Adam (10 years old)

Daughter Abigail (8 years old)

Grandma Granny

Mrs. Smith: (Sighing) Ah! It doesn't seem like yesterday that you were in those long petticoats!

Adam: (Hissing) Mother, please!

Granny: Oh let her be, Adam. Us mums always like reminiscing!

Mr. Smith: Though you seem to conveniently forget all that howling that came with having babies around!

Abigail: (Snorting) Just exercising our lungs!

Adam: That's right! Us babies weren't meant to feel any pain!

Granny: And so you got ignored! Quite right too!

Adam: (Sarcastically) Oh Granny, you're *all* heart!

Granny: Well, you had your 'puddings'!

Playwright: (Yawning) I thought we'd covered meal times!

Mrs Smith: (Snorting) So much for thorough historical research! No, she means the padded caps babies wore to protect their heads. And they certainly needed protecting, the amount of falling over they did!

Playwright: So why did you dress them up in those ridiculous long gowns? How were they ever meant to crawl about in those things?

Mr. Smith: They weren't! That's just the point!

Granny: The very thought of it! My grandchildren crawling around on all fours, like the very beasts of the earth!

2. Weaving and Spinning

Speakers:

Playwright

Mother Mrs. White

Father Mr. White

Son William (10 years old)

Daughter Mary (8 years old)

Grandma Granny

Mary: (Crying) He's not going to have us put in the stocks, is he?

Playwright: Calm down! Calm down! The lot of you! It's bad enough being woken in the middle of the night ... but then to have to lie here and listen to you making a drama out of nothing!

Mr. White: Huh! Coming from you! That's rich!

Playwright: Well, I'd like to think *my* drama was informative and educational!

Mrs. White: And that's why we're here! To make sure you got all your facts straight!

Playwright: So tell me though I strongly suspect you're going to anyway Where did I slip up today?

3. Candle and Soap Making

Speakers:

Playwright

Mother Mrs. Wilkins

Father Mr. Wilkins

Son Tom (10 years old)

Daughter Alice (8 years old)

Grandma Granny

Tom: Mine was "What did one candle say to the other candle?"

Granny: But candles can't speak!

Tom: (Groaning) We know that, Gran! But it's just a *joke* Or *was*.

Mrs. Wilkins: Oh come on Tom! Don't sulk! Tell us – What *did* one candle say to the other candle?

Tom: Let's go out tonight!

Alice: (Laughing) Very good! Do you want to hear mine?

Mr. Wilkins: Go on then!

Alice: How long does it take to burn a candle down?

Granny: Ooh, now let's see

Alice: About a wick!

Granny: (Tutting) You didn't give me enough time to work out the answer!

Tom: (Aside) Which probably would have *taken* about a week!

4.Recreation

Speakers:

Playwright

Mother Mrs. Jones
Father Mr. Jones
Son Jacob (10 years old)
Daughter Gill (8 years old)
Grandma Granny

Playwright: And your problem *this* time?

Mrs. Jones: We were nothing *like* as miserable as you made us out to be!

Jacob: Yeah! What a bunch of losers!

Gill: *Not!* We had just as much fun as you guys today – if not more!

Granny: A little *too* much fun, if you ask me!

Playwright: And how do you work that one out? What about all that 'Puritan stuff'? What about the 'working from dawn 'til dusk'? *Fun*? You lot wouldn't know the *meaning* of the word!

Mr. Jones: Boy! Have we got our work cut out tonight!

Mrs. Jones: He's really lost the plot on *this* one!

5.Religion

Speakers:

Playwright
Mother Mrs. Hopkins
Father Mr. Hopkins
Son John (10 years old)
Daughter Rachel (8 years old)
Grandma Granny

Playwright: I fear there's not much hope for *me* then!

Mrs. Hopkins: Now, don't despair, young man. You can still redeem yourself.

Playwright: And if I don't *want* to?

Granny: Hell and damnation! That's what!

Mrs. Hopkins: I'm sure you wouldn't want that?

Playwright: Well, tell me about the alternative.

Mr. Hopkins: This is what you've got to do.

Mrs. Hopkins: Make sure every waking hour is filled with pure thoughts

Rachel: Say your prayers several times a day

John: Read your bible at least once a day, maybe in the evening

Granny: Don't go singing any songs – unless they're hymns

Mr. Hopkins: Observe the Lord's Day every Sunday

Mrs. Hopkins: That means going to church, morning and afternoon

John: Sitting for sometimes up to 5 hours at a time!

Playwrights: That's a long time! I wonder how many of the congregation managed to stay awake!

Rachel: Well, for starters those wooden pews were hardly comfortable –it's kind of difficult to doze off when you're sitting bolt upright!

Granny: And your feet often got so painfully cold – even with those foot warmers!

John: And then the tithing man always made it his business to flick a feather around your face if you looked like you might drop off

Rachel: Or rap you over the head with the other end of his rod if you'd actually gone to sleep!

Mrs. Hopkins: Luckily for *you*, we haven't brought him along with us tonight!

