

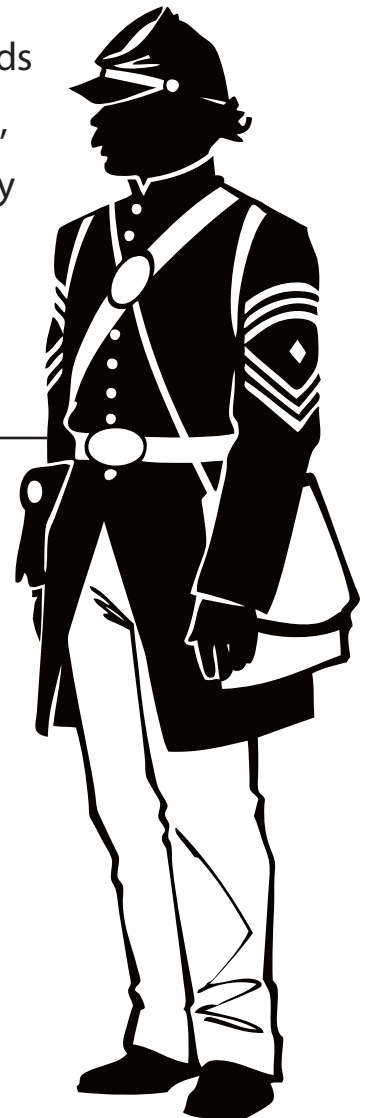
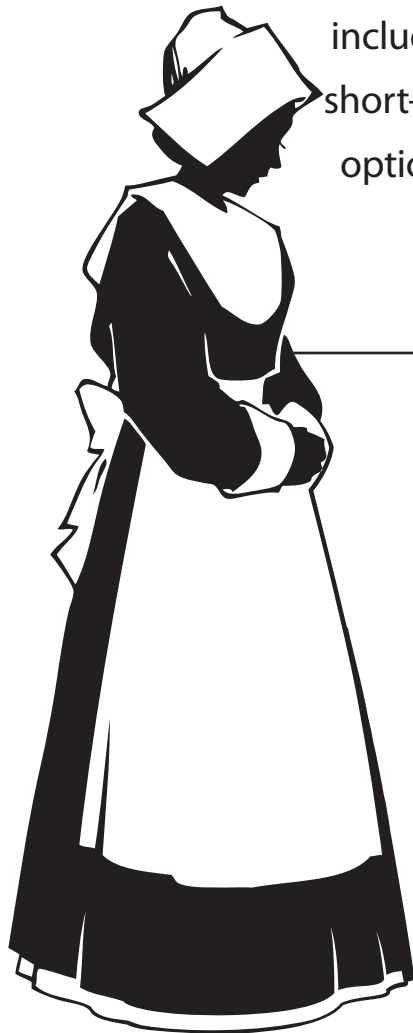
# Colonial Era to **the Alamo**

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Acting History. Bring History to Life with Original Plays

# Welcome to *Colonial Era to the Alamo!*

Students reenact history by performing dramas covering the first 200 years of American history. The plays address the rebellious Anne Hutchinson and Mary Dyer, Thomas Paine's fascinating life story, the controversial Andrew Jackson, and the Alamo from both perspectives. Teaching aids include full scripts, character assignments, short-answer questions, and a longer essay option. Activities can be accomplished in one or two class periods.



# ● Table of Contents ●

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Women Rebels:</b>	
<b>Anne Hutchinson and Mary Dyer</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Women Rebels: Anne Hutchinson and Mary Dyer .....	6
Anne Hutchinson and Mary Dyer Questions .....	15
Separation of Church and State Essay .....	16
Women Rebels Vocabulary Activity .....	17
<b>The Unfortunately Great Life</b>	
<b>of Thomas Paine</b> .....	<b>19</b>
The Unfortunately Great Life of Thomas Paine .....	20
Thomas Paine Questions .....	29
Personal Life Essay .....	30
Thomas Paine Vocabulary Activity .....	31
<b>There Are Two Sides to Every Bill:</b>	
<b>The Andrew Jackson Story</b> .....	<b>33</b>
There Are Two Sides to Every Bill: The Andrew Jackson Story .....	34
Andrew Jackson Play Follow-up .....	43
Andrew Jackson Essay .....	44
Andrew Jackson Vocabulary Activity .....	45
<b>The Alamo!</b> .....	<b>47</b>
The Alamo! .....	48
Alamo Questions .....	58
American and Mexican Perspectives on the Alamo .....	59
Alamo Vocabulary Activity .....	60
<b>Teacher Feedback Form</b> .....	<b>61</b>

# Women Rebels

## Anne Hutchinson and Mary Dyer

### Characters

- Narrator
- Anne Hutchinson
- Mary Dyer
- Statue of Anne Hutchinson
- Statue of Mary Dyer
- Nervous Woman
- Sarcastic Woman
- Random Woman 1
- Random Woman 2
- Random Man 1
- Random Man 2
- John Winthrop
- William Dyer
- John Endicott
- Follower
- The Executioner
- Captain John Everad
- Minister

### act 1, scene 1. Boston State House, Present Day

MARY DYER and ANNE HUTCHINSON (both ghosts) stand at the front of the room on the left gazing at THE STATUE OF ANNE HUTCHINSON. THE STATUE OF MARY DYER stands on the right side of the room. The statues should do their best to make no movements or sounds for the whole scene.

ANNE HUTCHINSON. Can you believe this? After all they did to me—to us. Now they have our statues up at their state capitol?

MARY DYER. You should be honored, my friend. It shows our message stood the test of time.

ANNE HUTCHINSON. Well yes, but you'd think they could've come to their senses a bit during our lifetime. They kicked us out of their state! And had you hung! A statue can't make up for that.

MARY DYER. But it does, and more. Yes, they won during *our* lifetime, but we have won for lifetimes still to come.

ANNE HUTCHINSON. Perhaps. Shall we see yours now?

MARY DYER *nods and they walk across the room to* THE STATUE OF MARY DYER.

MARY DYER. I'm honored, but I must admit it's a little disconcerting. And they got my ears all wrong.

MARY DYER *reaches out and pulls on* THE STATUE OF MARY DYER's ears.

MARY DYER. And my hair... (*She takes some of the statue's hair in her hands.*) I never wore it like this.

ANNE HUTCHINSON, *slapping her companion's hand away from the statue*. Stop manhandling the statue, my dear! I've never known you to be so vain!

MARY DYER. My apologies, I guess I should focus on how our views have been validated.

ANNE HUTCHINSON. Maybe, but do you really think these help get our message across? I mean, do you think schoolchildren today even know our story?

MARY DYER. Well, if not, they will now.

ANNE HUTCHINSON *and* MARY DYER *turn to face the audience.*

ANNE HUTCHINSON *and* MARY DYER, *speaking together.* Here begins the true story of how two colonial women risked everything for true religious freedom. Enjoy.

## act 1, scene 2. Anne Hutchinson Arrives

*At the front of the room, ANNE HUTCHINSON, NERVOUS WOMAN, SARCASTIC WOMAN, RANDOM WOMAN 1, and RANDOM WOMAN 2 sit in chairs facing each other. Next to them are two empty chairs.*

NARRATOR. Anne Hutchinson was born in England in 1589. Her father was a clergyman for the Church of England, but was jailed three different times for criticizing the church. Anne was homeschooled and followed in her father's footsteps by being both deeply interested in religion and willing to question it.

At age twenty-one, she married Will Hutchinson and eventually bore him fifteen children. They became big fans of a minister named John Cotton, who, like Anne's father, wanted to purify the Church of England. This religious group was now being called "Puritans" and many members were moving to Massachusetts to practice freely. Soon after John Cotton decided to move there, the Hutchinson family also made the move. There, Anne quickly made a name for herself in the community as an intelligent and kind woman. But she stirred up a major controversy when she began leading discussion groups at her house where they talked about what they'd learned that day at church.

ANNE HUTCHINSON. I'm so excited you all have decided to join me here today!

NERVOUS WOMAN. Yes, thank you for the invitation, but I'm still a little unclear about the purpose.

ANNE HUTCHINSON. A perfect place to start. We're here to discuss the sermon and explore some of the ideas brought up. For instance, I, for one, was greatly interested by...

NERVOUS WOMAN. I'm sorry to interrupt, but I'm confused as to what we would even discuss. The minister already told us what he believed.

SARCASTIC WOMAN, *impatiently.* And...?

NERVOUS WOMAN. And I'm not sure what we could possibly add. His relationship with God is one that none of us can understand.

**ANNE HUTCHINSON.** True, and nor can the minister understand mine or your relationship with God. In the end, I believe we all have our own personal relationship with God.

*The room goes silent.*

**ANNE HUTCHINSON.** Did I say something controversial?

**SARCASTIC WOMAN.** You think?

**NERVOUS WOMAN.** I just can't help but think this whole meeting is wrong. My husband told me that he heard women can damage their brains by thinking too hard about theology.

**ANNE HUTCHINSON.** You have the right to your own views, and I don't want anyone here to feel uncomfortable. We're going to continue to meet and there will be no hard feelings if you want to leave. But as to us damaging our brains by thinking too hard...

**SARCASTIC WOMAN.** It sounds like it may have happened to you already.

**RANDOM WOMAN 1, RANDOM WOMAN 2, and the SARCASTIC WOMAN** *all laugh. The NERVOUS WOMAN stomps out.*

**ANNE HUTCHINSON.** I had no idea expressing our religious beliefs would be so upsetting; so many of us came to America for religious freedom. But let's move on. I'd like to begin by looking deeper into the scripture John Cotton discussed today...

**RANDOM MAN 1, RANDOM MAN 2, and MARY DYER** *go to the front of the class and sit in the empty chairs.*

**NARRATOR.** The group continued to grow week after week, and soon featured two meetings a week, one of which included men and women. Mary Dyer and Anne Hutchinson also became friends and Dyer began helping Anne Hutchinson organize the groups.

**ANNE HUTCHINSON.** Let us begin today's meeting with a prayer.

*The group bows their heads and hold hands for a moment.*

**ANNE HUTCHINSON.** Now, the subject I wanted to discuss today is in Leviticus...

**JOHN WINTHROP, the governor of Massachusetts, marches to the front of the room.**

**JOHN WINTHROP.** Yeah—not going to happen. This meeting is over.

**ANNE HUTCHINSON.** Excuse me, governor, but did you just come into my house and tell everyone to leave? I don't believe I even invited you in.

**JOHN WINTHROP.** Annie, what you're doing here is wrong, dead wrong. Who do you think you are, a minister? These meetings are not tolerable in the sight of the Lord, and are not fitting of your gender.

**MARY DYER.** Are you saying that because she's a woman she can't lead a religious conversation?

JOHN WINTHROP. Do you see any women ministers? Women have an important role to play in this colony; interpreting God's message is not one of them. Also, I hear she's proclaiming she has her own relationship with God and even that He might be speaking to her. This is blasphemy and she's going to find herself excommunicated if she doesn't watch out.

ANNE HUTCHINSON. John, did you not come to America to practice your religion as you saw fit?

JOHN WINTHROP. Yes, that's why many of us came.

ANNE HUTCHINSON. Then you must see the irony of threatening to excommunicate me for doing just that.

JOHN WINTHROP *stands there dumbly, unable to think of a response.*

SARCASTIC WOMAN. Maybe men also get brain damage if they think too much about religion!

EVERYONE, *including ANNE HUTCHINSON this time, laughs.* JOHN WINTHROP *walks out the classroom door and slams it shut.*

### act 1, scene 3. Anne Hutchinson's Trial

JOHN WINTHROP *sits down at the front of the room, waving an imaginary gavel.* ANNE HUTCHINSON *stands before him. She is pregnant.*

JOHN WINTHROP. And now we begin the trial of Anne Hutchinson.

ANNE HUTCHINSON. You're the judge? Oh, this isn't looking good.

JOHN WINTHROP. You stand accused of blasphemy, encouraging dissent, and holding meetings with men and women in attendance.

ANNE HUTCHINSON. Speaking of standing, I'm in the middle of my fifteenth pregnancy. Can I please have a seat?

JOHN WINTHROP. Maybe you should have thought of that before you started your meetings. No, you will stand for as many hours as it takes, like any accused criminal would. And how do you plead?

ANNE HUTCHINSON. I believe what I'm actually being accused of is expressing my religious opinions at private meetings in my house. And of that, I am very guilty.

JOHN WINTHROP. Oh, your meetings, so innocent. I hear they're filled with men and (*with horror*) women questioning our head minister. And while the women are at your meetings, are they not ignoring their duties of family and house? And you, a mother of fourteen, why would you keep having children if you're going to neglect them?

ANNE HUTCHINSON. I do not neglect my children.

**JOHN WINTHROP.** It has also come to my attention that you are critical of this colony's policy towards the Native Americans. Are you now not only a minister, but also a politician?

**ANNE HUTCHINSON.** I've only expressed my opinion that enslaving the Indians and being racist towards them does not seem to fit the message of the Bible. But you're entitled to your own opinion on this.

**NARRATOR.** The trial continued like this for several days. Finally, Anne broke down.

**ANNE HUTCHINSON.** Clearly, you've already made your decision, but you have no power over me and can do me no harm. I am in the hands of my Savior and I fear none but him. And he has told me things. And I do believe that he will deliver me out of your hands and that he will ruin you, your posterity, and this whole state.

**NARRATOR.** At this, the whole court fell silent.

**JOHN WINTHROP.** Well, that outburst makes our job rather easy. I'll discuss the verdict with the jurors, but be prepared for excommunication from the Puritan faith and banishment from the state.

**ANNE HUTCHINSON.** I never doubted that you would give me this sentence, but it still saddens me.

**NARRATOR.** Anne Hutchinson, along with Mary Dyer, was excommunicated and banished from the colony. She left with her family, Mary Dyer, and some other followers. They moved to Rhode Island, a colony founded by Roger Williams, who had also been kicked out of Massachusetts for endorsing religious freedom and the separation of church and state. Additionally, she suffered a miscarriage of the baby she had been carrying during the trial. But in 1643, Anne Hutchinson and most of her family came to their untimely end after they were killed by Siwanoy Native Americans, being unwittingly pulled into a Native American war going on between the Dutch settlers and the Algonquians (of whom the Siwanoy were a part). The Siwanoy kidnapped Anne's redheaded daughter, Susanna, who was eventually released for a ransom. Anne Hutchinson was also survived by an older daughter, Bridget, who hadn't moved with the family.



**act 1, scene 4. Mary Dyer on the Move**

MARY DYER *is at the front of the room, kneeling with her head hung low and her hands held up as if in handcuffs. Occasionally, she yells out in agony.* JOHN ENDICOTT *stands at the front of the room facing the class.*

NARRATOR. In 1652, the Dyers traveled to England. William Dyer returned within the year, but Mary stayed for five years and converted to Quakerism, which matched many of the views she and Anne Hutchinson shared. While Mary was away, a new governor succeeded John Winthrop. The new governor was called John Endicott.

JOHN ENDICOTT. I'm going to make John Winthrop look like a nice and open-minded kind of guy. (*He laughs maniacally.*) First of all, this is a Puritan state, and we do not need radical Quakers here. I want them all arrested and banished. Oh, wait, what's that? There are no laws against being a Quaker? Well then, as our first of order business, let's pass an anti-Quaker law.

NARRATOR. Mary Dyer returned from England in 1657, having no idea about the new laws. They arrested her as she got off the boat and put her in jail for being a Quaker. She sat in a darkened cell with boarded up windows for two and a half months until her husband came to help her.

*Enter WILLIAM DYER.*

WILLIAM DYER, *angrily marching up to* JOHN ENDICOTT. It has come to my attention that you have my wife in a jail cell.

JOHN ENDICOTT. I might. Is she a Quaker?

WILLIAM DYER. And what does that have to do with anything?

JOHN ENDICOTT. That belief system is not allowed here; it is dangerous.

WILLIAM DYER. Dangerous? Quakers are against war and preach that everyone is equal. Have you already forgotten that this is how Puritans were treated in Britain? I want her to be released.

JOHN ENDICOTT. And who are you to be demanding this?

WILLIAM DYER. I am William Dyer, one of just eighteen people who signed the Rhode Island compact.

JOHN ENDICOTT. Oh, big surprise to hear you guys are from Rhode Island. Fine, you can have her back—but never return.

MARY DYER, *rising to her feet.* Weren't we banished from Massachusetts already?

WILLIAM DYER, *holding finger up to his lips.* Shhh! It is so good to see you darling! (*He walks towards her to embrace her.*)

JOHN ENDICOTT, *jumping between the other two*. Not so fast, lovebirds. I'm going to have her escorted by a guard out of this colony. She'll talk to no one and will never return.

MARY DYER, *under her breath*. Fat chance.

JOHN ENDICOTT. What was that?

WILLIAM DYER. She says that won't be a problem.

JOHN ENDICOTT *takes a seat in a chair at the front of the room*. WILLIAM DYER *walks to the right side of the room (now representing Rhode Island)*. The GUARD *comes to the front of the room and escorts MARY DYER around the room, from the Massachusetts side to her husband on the Rhode Island side*.

NARRATOR. Mary's stay in Rhode Island would be short.

MARY DYER. All right, honey, I'm off to see some friends.

WILLIAM DYER. Okay. Wait, where are these friends?

MARY DYER *runs around the room back to Massachusetts*.

NARRATOR. The two friends were Quakers who lived in Massachusetts. They were quickly arrested and Mary was banished—again.

*The GUARD walks MARY DYER around the room back to her husband.*

MARY DYER. Honey, I'm home

WILLIAM DYER, *looking at the GUARD*. Don't tell me you were...

MARY DYER. Banished again? Yes, this time "permanently." (*To the Guard.*) Thanks for escorting me, kind sir.

*Exit GUARD.*

MARY DYER. Has he gone? Yes? All right, sweetheart. Good seeing you. I have some business to attend to.

WILLIAM DYER. Please tell me this business is not in Massachusetts.

MARY DYER. Oh, it just happens to be. See you in a few weeks.

WILLIAM DYER *shakes his head*. MARY DYER *runs around the room again*.

NARRATOR. Back in Massachusetts, Mary was arrested again, this time for giving public speeches against the anti-Quaker law.

*Enter the GUARD and JOHN ENDICOTT. The GUARD goes up to MARY DYER and leads her to stand in front of JOHN ENDICOTT.*

JOHN ENDICOTT. You again? Do you have a death wish?

MARY DYER. Just the opposite.

JOHN ENDICOTT. Clearly you are not to be trusted. You are sentenced to death!

MARY DYER. The will of the Lord be done.

NARRATOR. At the last second, Mary was rescued from execution by her son and brought back to Rhode Island. But despite her family's protestations, Mary Dyer returned to Massachusetts yet again, and was again arrested and sentenced to death.

### **act 1, scene 5. Mary Dyer's Execution**

*At the front of the room are two chairs. On one stands the EXECUTIONER. MARY DYER and CAPTAIN JOHN EVERED stand in front of the two chairs facing the MINISTER. MARY DYER's hands are behind her back, and CAPTAIN JOHN EVERED holds them. The FOLLOWER will yell his/her comments from his/her seat.*

FOLLOWER. Mary, why do they lead you to your death?

MARY DYER. I die for a cause. Our Lord wishes it this way.

FOLLOWER, *to the* CAPTAIN. Her blood is on your hands! Why do you take this innocent woman to the gallows?

CAPTAIN JOHN EVERED. The blood is on her hands! We have warned and warned her, yet she insists on her death.

FOLLOWER. Don't let them do it, Mary. You can do so much more good in Rhode Island.

MARY DYER. My life is nothing compared to the liberty of truth.

CAPTAIN JOHN EVERED, *to the* FOLLOWER. Be quiet. The minister will give her one last chance to repent her Quakerism, but I doubt she'll see the light.

MINISTER, *stepping forward*. Mary, it's most unfortunate to see you here again. Do you repent these words of the Devil?

MARY DYER. I am not now to repent.

MINISTER. Then it is to be done.

MARY DYER *steps up onto the chair. The EXECUTIONER then pushes her off the chair. MARY jumps to the floor and poses as someone being hanged there. FOLLOWER and WILLIAM DYER weep from the audience.*

**act 1, scene 6. Boston State House Today**

*It's modern-day Boston again. MARY DYER and ANNE HUTCHINSON stand on the right side of the room looking at the STATUE OF MARY DYER. The STATUE OF ANNE HUTCHINSON stands on the left side of the room.*

ANNE HUTCHINSON. Do you ever regret what you did?

MARY DYER. Not for a moment. My life meant so little compared to fighting injustice. My only hope was that it would cause change.

ANNE HUTCHINSON. I considered myself a pretty gutsy woman, but I'm not sure I would've gone as far as you did. But change did follow you. A year after your death, the British king made it illegal to execute someone for being a Quaker. And thirty years later, a Toleration Law was passed.

MARY DYER. There were many other fine Quakers who led us in that direction.

ANNE HUTCHINSON. But few quite as well-known. *(She pinches the STATUE OF MARY DYER's cheek.)* Or as cute.

MARY DYER. Enough about me.

*They walk over to the STATUE OF ANNE HUTCHINSON.*

ANNE HUTCHINSON. And here is me.

MARY DYER. Is she growing on you?

ANNE HUTCHINSON. Yes, she might be. *(She reaches out to pat the STATUE OF ANNE HUTCHINSON on the head.)*

STATUE OF ANNE HUTCHINSON. Don't even think about it.

ANNE *retracts her hand.*

MARY DYER. Even our statues have attitudes!

ANNE HUTCHINSON. Ha! But it's unfortunate we had to cause so much trouble just to secure our basic rights.

MARY DYER. There will always be a need for people to stick up for what is right. In our time, it was being able to practice the religion of our choice. There will always be some issue that needs defending by women like us.

ANNE HUTCHINSON. All right, you've convinced me. I'm proud to stand here for eternity.

MARY DYER. Always feel free to walk around the corner and give me a visit.

ANNE HUTCHINSON and MARY DYER *high five each other. The class claps and starts chanting, "Anne and Mary Rock."*