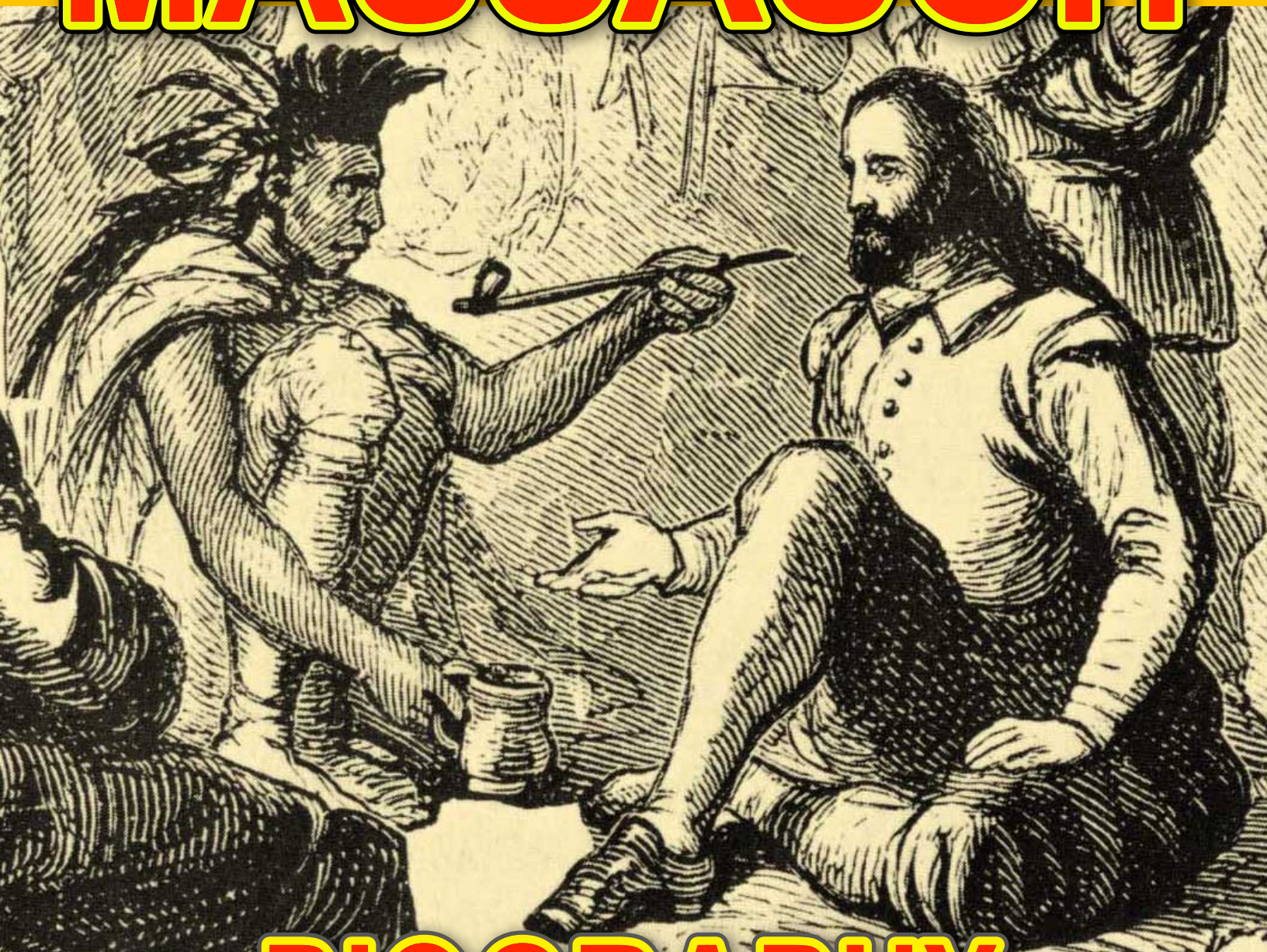


CHIEF MASSASOIT



BIOGRAPHY

CHIEF MASSASOIT

Massasoit was chief of the Wampanoag Native Americans. He was a powerful leader in charge of peoples over much of what later became known as New England. In the early 1600s, waves of European explorers and settlers had brought disease and destruction to the area. Massasoit's people had greatly suffered, and were in need of help.

In 1620, the Mayflower Pilgrims reached North America after their long journey from Europe. They settled at Plymouth in Massachusetts, but they struggled to survive at first. Massasoit saw that he could trade with these people and they could help each other out. So he was friendly to the Pilgrims, and he signed a treaty of alliance with them in the summer. In exchange for assistance with defense against their enemy – the Narragansett tribe – Massasoit supplied the Pilgrims with some additional food.

After the first harvest in 1621, Massasoit and about ninety other Native Americans joined the forty Pilgrims for a Harvest Festival. They celebrated for several days, dining on venison, goose, duck, turkey, fish, and corn bread. More than two hundred years later, this feast began to be remembered in the American Thanksgiving holiday.

After the first governor elected by the colonists died, William Bradford took his place. He remained governor for thirty years. Bradford was keen to keep good relationships with the Native Americans. When Massasoit fell ill, the colonists at Plymouth sent help to him, even though he lived two days' journey away in what is now Rhode Island.

Between 1649 and 1657, Massasoit sold large areas of land in the Plymouth colony because the English were keen to gain more territory. After that, Massasoit gave leadership of the Wampanoags to his eldest son.

Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'alliance'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'alliance' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'alliance'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'alliance'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'alliance' means.

Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: disease	illness

Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

In the end, Massasoit sold some land to the English, and made his son the next Wampanoag leader.

Massasoit was chief of the Wampanoag Native Americans in the early 1600s.

After the first harvest, Massasoit joined the Pilgrims in a celebration.

In 1620, the Mayflower Pilgrims arrived and settled at Plymouth, Massachusetts.

The Pilgrims would help defend the Wampanoags from their enemies, and the Wampanoags would provide extra food.

Massasoit was friendly to the newcomers, and they became allies.

During this time, many of his people had been wiped out by diseases brought by European explorers and settlers.

Get to the facts

1 Which Native American tribe was Massasoit chief of?

2 Who arrived in 1620?

3 Where did the Pilgrims settle?

4 What did they eat at the harvest festival?

5 Which holiday celebrates the Pilgrims' first harvest?

Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

Massasoit falls ill

Imagine you are one of the Pilgrims in Plymouth colony. One day you hear news that chief Massasoit is ill... (now complete the story)

Below is a plain text version for printing:

Understanding words:

- a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'alliance'.
- b From that sentence, suggest what 'alliance' means.
- c Write a new sentence using the word 'alliance'.
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Finding key words:

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – disease Synonym – illness

Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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Chief Massasoit

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