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**King Philip, Bacon, and Colonial Conflict**

Historians often study causation‒cause and effect relationships‒in historical events. Studying causation allows us to see how and why certain events or developments occurred and what impact they had on other historical events and developments. Causation also involves studying history as a process of **human** **action and decisions. History does not simply happen**‒the actions of individuals and groups affect the events and outcomes of history.

Historians have asked for your help investigating the **causes**of two important events in colonial America in 1675-1676: Bacon’s Rebellion and King Philip’s War. Bacon’s Rebellion was an uprising in 1676 in the Virginia Colony, led by Nathaniel Bacon, and King Philip’s War, which was a war between New England colonists and Native Americans in 1675-1678. Your job is to determine the causes and similarities of these events in order to better understand what impact they had on the development of the colonies.

For this activity, split your groups in half. Assign half of your group mates document A and the other half document B. For both King Philip’s War and Bacon’s Rebellion the two group members reading documents A will be in charge of being experts on just the documents labeled A and the two group member reading documents B will be in charge of being experts on just the documents labeled B.

**Day 1 -** [**King Philip’s War**](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.google.com/url?q%3Dhttps://docs.google.com/document/d/1of42VGrACgQLFndDOaWoJQLRyUDUwQ6LCZsDz4YAUSU/edit?usp%253Dsharing%26amp;sa%3DD%26amp;ust%3D1566434017088000&sa=D&ust=1566434017137000&usg=AFQjCNH5rSfquOsTNYlAUhJ1n0i1z8phmA)**:**The first event you will analyze is King Philip’s War. In studying this event, historians hit a snag when their sources from the war got separated. You and your group mates have different documents about the causes of the war. In order to determine the causes, you will have to analyze your document and work together to figure out a cause.

**Part 1: Complete the following chart based on your document:**

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| **Name of your document (A or B):**  |  |
| **Who wrote the document (name & who they were)** |  |
| **Was it written before or after the war?** |  |
| **Was it written for a specific purpose? Is it trying to convince readers of something?** |  |
| **According to this document, what caused the war?** |  |
| **How trustworthy or reliable do you think the document is and why?** |  |

**Part 2: Compare your document with your partner. According to their document, what caused the war?**

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| **Document Letter**  | **According to this document, what caused the war?** | **How trustworthy or reliable do you think it is and why?** |
| **Document:** |  |  |

**Part 3: Compare the two documents. How are their arguments similar and different and why? Does one seem more reliable than the other?**

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| **Similarities: How are they similar and what might cause these similarities?** | **Differences: How are they different and what might cause these differences?** | **Does one source seem more trustworthy than the other? Why or why not?** |
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**After working with your classmates, come to a final conclusion. What caused King Philip’s War? You must use and cite evidence from the documents.**

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**Day 2 -** [**Bacon’s Rebellion Analysis**](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.google.com/url?q%3Dhttps://docs.google.com/document/d/1LLyARRqv7e3ilC6nH3Va4h5ZI-pkMp-kqOdeZHzpS8k/edit?usp%253Dsharing%26amp;sa%3DD%26amp;ust%3D1566434017107000&sa=D&ust=1566434017142000&usg=AFQjCNHKg_gi2Vjq5AFqt_sop7eaoQxs9w)**:** What caused Bacon’s Rebellion? Why and how did Bacon enlist followers to join him in his rebellion against Governor Berkeley and the Virginia government? Read the four documents, keeping in mind the **source**-when/why it was written, who wrote it, etc.

Now that you’ve practiced analyzing different perspectives with your group mates, now you are ready to try this out on your own. Do as much of the analysis on your own, but feel free to talk out your thinking with the other members of your tables. In the end, your responses should be your own!

**Bacon’s Rebellion: Background**

Bacon’s Rebellion was a Virginia uprising of poor farmers, indentured servants, and free and enslaved Africans against Governor Berkeley and the Virginia government. The leader, Nathaniel Bacon, was a plantation owner and planter who disliked Governor Berkeley and who wanted to benefit from the profitable fur trade that was often controlled by local Native American tribes. When Governor Berkeley did not act after a group of Doeg Indians allegedly killed a local farmer’s pig, Bacon led attacks on local Native Americans in an attempt to drive them off western lands that could be opened up to more farmers. Bacon was then elected to the House of Burgesses and passed new laws to limit the power of the governor and give more rights to poor men who did not own land. Bacon also demanded that he be given command of a militia (army) against Native Americans. When Governor Berkeley refused, Bacon and his followers began attacking Native American villages and marched on Jamestown, burning the Virginia capital. The question is, why did these men join Bacon in his rebellion? What were their motives?

Several events and developments surrounded the rebellion:

* More indentured servants were living out their contracts, meaning they were owed 50 acres of land to start their own farms
* Governor Berkeley proposed building defensive forts to protect against Native American attacks, but said they would have to raise taxes to build them
* The price of tobacco, the major crop of Virginia, had decreased, meaning planters were not making as much money off their tobacco harvests

**Aftermath:**Shortly after the rebellion began, Nathaniel Bacon died of dysentery. Governor Berkeley quickly put down the rebellion and had 23 of the rebels executed by hanging.

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| **Document**  | **According to this document, what were the causes of Bacon’s Rebellion?** | **Does this document seem trustworthy or reliable? Why or why not? (consider who wrote the document, when, why, etc)** |
| **Document 1: Bacon’s List of Grievances (Complaints)** |  |  |
| **Document 2: Robert Beverly on Bacon’s Rebellion** |  |  |
| **Document** | **According to this document, what were the causes of Bacon’s Rebellion?** | **Does this document seem trustworthy or reliable? Why or why not? (consider who wrote the document, when, why, etc)** |
| **Document 3: Governor Berkeley, The State of the Colony [of Virginia], 1673** |  |  |
| **Document 4: A Narrative of the Indian and Civil Wars in Virginia, In the Years 1675 and 1676.** |  |  |

**Analysis:** What would you tell historians? What caused Bacon’s Rebellion? **Use evidence from at least 2 documents.**

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**Bacon’s Rebellion: Documents**

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| **Document 1: Bacon’s List of Grievances (Complaints)** *Nathaniel Bacon wrote a list of complaints of the rebels against Governor Berkeley and the Virginia government.***A People’s Declaration**  We the people of Virginia who have signed our names below accuse Sir William Berkeley and the Jamestown government of the following: * For raising unjust taxes upon the common citizens in order to advance private interests of the wealthy
* For not having provided or built proper forts or maintaining defense against the Indians, allowing the frontiers and most weakly exposed places to be regularly victims of savage attacks…
* For taking monopoly (control) of the beaver (fur) trade, preventing the common man from participating…
* For...falsely claiming the Indians are peaceful….never making the Indians pay by any means for their many invasions, robberies, and murders committed upon us…and for allying with those Indians who terrorize us...for trading with them despite the fact that they harm us...
* For not allowing us to defend ourselves to defeat the Indians and labelling us rebels….
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| **Document 2: Robert Beverly on Bacon’s Rebellion***Robert Beverly was a wealthy plantation owner in Virginia who was present for the rebellion. He wrote this account of its causes in 1705.*Four things may be said to have been the main causes in this commotion: * First, The extreme low price of tobacco and the falling profits from it...
* Secondly, The splitting the colony into privately owned properties for the nobles, leaving little for anyone else...and the high taxes to buy such property...
* Thirdly, The heavy restrictions on trade by act of Parliament in England.
* Fourthly, The irritation and turmoil with the Indians

Bacon’s goal was in effect to secure a Monopoly of the Indian [fur] Trade for himself and his Friends....the people, being frustrated by the Governor and won over by the words of Bacon, vowed (pledged) to join him in his march on Jamestown... |

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| **Document 3: Governor Berkeley, The State of the Colony [of Virginia], 1673***Governor Berkeley wrote about what he felt were particular problems facing the colony in 1673, three years before the rebellion.* A large part of the people are so desperately poor that they may reasonably be expected ... to revolt in hopes of bettering their condition…” |

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| **Document 4: A Narrative of the Indian and Civil Wars in Virginia, In the Years 1675 and 1676.***An unknown author describes the events of Bacon's Rebellion in 1676.*The people chose Bacon as their Generall for his stand against the Indians. He was a man of quality and merit, brave...and loved not for what he had done, but for what they expected he would do as their guardian angel, to protect them from the cruelties of the Indians...and from the annual (yearly) taxes laid upon them... |

**King Philip’s War: Document A**

King Philip, also known as Metacom, was a Wampanoag chief. His father, Massasoit, had helped the Pilgrims when they first arrived in 1620, and the colonists and Wampanoags had signed a treaty that led to relative peace between the groups. However, by the 1670s, things were changing. More colonists arrived from England each year and some Puritans had set up praying towns, where they converted Native Americans to Christianity and forced them to give up traditional Indian ways of life. Tribal lands were sold or sometimes taken through false or broken treaties, and settlers sometimes allowed their cows and pigs to roam freely and wander into Native American farmland, where they would trample or eat crops. The tipping point that sparked the war was the death of a local Native American, Sassamon, who had converted to Christianity. It was unclear whether Sassamon drowned or was killed, but the New England colonists hanged three Wampanoag Indians who they thought were guilty of murder.

Soon, the Wampanoag Indians joined with the Nipmucks, Pocumtucks, and Narragansetts in a bloody uprising to try to drive the colonists out of New England. Some Native American groups, such as Mohegan, Pequot, Massachusetts, and Nauset Indians, sided with the English. The fighting lasted 14 months and marked the last attempt of the Native Americans to drive the English out of New England.

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| Document A: John Easton's Account, 1675*John Easton, a Rhode Island official, met Metacomet on June 16, 1675, to try to prevent war between the colonists and the Native Americans. However, the negotiations failed and fighting broke out within days.*In the winter in the year 1674, an Indian was found dead in a pond. The dead Indian was called Sassamon. He was a Christian who could read and write. It was said that he was a bad man and that he tried to cheat King Philip. One Indian informed the English colonists that three other Indians had murdered Sassamon, knowing that it would please the English. The three Indians were hung by colonists. It was reported that before his death Sassamon had informed the colonists of the Indian Plot to destroy the English for their wickedness. So the English were afraid and Philip was afraid and both increased their arms. About a week before war broke, we suspected it would. To try to prevent it, we sent a man to Philip, to ask if he would meet with us. King Philip agreed to come to us. He and his men said that they had done no wrong but that the English wronged them. We said we knew the English said the Indians wronged them, but our desire was to avoid fighting. The Indians acknowledged that fighting was the worst way to solve the problems. . . . They said when the English first came, their king’s father (Massasoit, father of Metacom/King Philip) was as a great man...he prevented other Indians from harming the English, and gave them corn and showed them how to plant, and let them have 100 times more land than now the king had for his own people. They believe their people now are being poisoned (ruined or harmed) by the colonists. Another **grievance** (complaint) was, when their king sold land, the English would say he owed them more than they had agreed to.Another grievance was that the English cattle and horses are so numerous that the Indians could not keep their corn from being eaten or spoiled, since they never had to use fences, and thought that the English would have kept their cattle upon their own land…Another grievance was that the English were so eager to sell the Indians liquors that most of the Indiansspent all in drunkenness... |

**King Philip’s War: Document B**

King Philip, also known as Metacom, was a Wampanoag chief. His father, Massasoit, had helped the Pilgrims when they first arrived in 1620, and the colonists and Wampanoags had signed a treaty that led to relative peace between the groups. However, by the 1670s, things were changing. More colonists arrived from England each year and some Puritans had set up praying towns, where they converted Native Americans to Christianity and forced them to give up traditional Indian ways of life. Tribal lands were sold or sometimes taken through false or broken treaties, and settlers sometimes allowed their cows and pigs to roam freely and wander into Native American farmland, where they would trample or eat crops. The tipping point that sparked the war was the death of a local Native American, Sassamon, who had converted to Christianity. It was unclear whether Sassamon drowned or was killed, but the New England colonists hanged three Wampanoag Indians who they thought were guilty of murder.

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| **Document B: Edward Randolph’s Report on the Causes of King Philip’s War, 1675***The English government sent Edward Randolph to New England to investigate the causes of King Philip’s War. This is an excerpt from his report to the English government.*There are various opinions of the causes of the present Indian war. Some blame it to an inappropriate **zeal** (enthusiasm) in the officials of Boston to Christianize the Indians . . . and forcing on them the strict observation of colonial laws, which, to a people so uneducated has proven intolerable . . . and that while the officials, for their profit, severely enforce the laws against the Indians, the colonists, on the other side, for money and gain, provoke the Indians to break them. . . . Some believe there have been Catholic priests who have made it their business to turn the Indians against the English. . . . Others blame the cause on some injuries against the King Philip, for he possessed a tract of land called Mount Hope. . . . Some English wanted it, so they complained of injuries done by Philip and his Indians to their stock and cattle, whereupon Philip was often called before the judge, sometimes imprisoned, and never released without  a considerable part of his land being taken. But the government of Massachusetts declares these are the sins for which God has allowed the **heathen** (non-Christians) to rise against the colonists: for breaking the fifth commandment . . .; for men wearing long hair and wigs made of women’s hair; for women cutting, curling and laying out their hair, and disguising themselves by following strange fashions; for the people not attending their meetings, and others leaving before the blessing is pronounced; . . . for allowing the Quakers to live among them. . . . The loss to the English in the several colonies is **reckoned** (believed) to amount to 150,000 pounds. . . . There having been about 1,200 houses burned, 8,000 head of cattle killed, and many thousand bushels of wheat and other grain burned . . . and upward of 3,000 Indian men, women and children destroyed, who if well managed would have been very serviceable to the English. |