Easy Reader Biographies: Squanto

A Friend to the Pilgrims

Guided Reading Level I
Squanto was a Native American. He lived at the time when the Pilgrims came to America. Squanto helped the Pilgrims in many ways. Read on to learn about his life.
Squanto was born around the year 1585 in the village of Patuxet. He was a Wampanoag. His real name was Tisquantum, but people called him Squanto.
When Squanto was a boy, only Native Americans lived in America. As he grew older, **traders** and **explorers** came to America from Europe.
In 1614, some of the traders forced Squanto to go to Spain. They planned to sell him as a *slave*. But Squanto got away and went to England.
Squanto returned home after five years. But when he got to his village, everyone was gone. All the people there had died of a terrible disease.
In 1620, a group of settlers arrived in Patuxet. These Pilgrims had sailed from England to America to start a new life. They called their home New Plimoth.
Life in their new home was hard for the Pilgrims. They did not know how to hunt or plant crops. They did not know how to build warm homes.

The first winter was long and cold. Many Pilgrims died.
When the winter was over, Squanto visited the Pilgrims. He went with another Native American named Samoset.
Squanto showed the Pilgrim men how to hunt deer, wild turkeys, and other animals. He also showed them the best places to catch fish and clams.
Squanto showed the Pilgrims the best ways to farm. He taught them how to put fish in the soil with the seeds. This would help the crops grow.
Squanto taught the Pilgrims how to plant corn, beans, and squash. He knew that these crops grow well together.
In the fall, the crops were ready to be picked and eaten. The Pilgrims were happy. They had lots of food.
The Pilgrims wanted to celebrate their great harvest. They held a huge feast. About 90 Wampanoag came to the celebration.
The celebration lasted three days. The Pilgrims and Wampanoag ate many meals. They also played games.
The Pilgrims were thankful for their harvest. And they were thankful for Squanto and all his help.
Glossary

**celebration** (noun) a happy gathering

**crop** (noun) a plant grown in large amounts, often for food

**explorer** (noun) a person who goes to faraway lands to see what is there

**harvest** (noun) crops that have been gathered from orchards or fields

**settler** (noun) a person who moves to a new land or country

**slave** (noun) a person who is owned by another person

**trader** (noun) a person who gives items in return for other items

**Wampanoag** (wahm-puh-NO-ag) (noun) a Native American people in southeastern Massachusetts and eastern Rhode Island
Squanto
A Friend to the Pilgrims

Squanto, a Wampanoag, lived from about 1585 to 1622 in Patuxet—now known as Plymouth, Massachusetts. When the Pilgrims arrived in 1620, Squanto showed them how to hunt and plant crops. The Pilgrims had a bountiful harvest and shared a feast with Squanto and 90 Wampanoag. Today we commemorate this feast by celebrating Thanksgiving.

Introducing the Book

Build background by helping children make personal connections to Squanto’s story. Ask: If new students joined our class, what could you do to help them settle in? Would you tell them where materials are kept or give them other helpful advice about the classroom or school? What else could you do to make newcomers feel welcome?

Explain to children that they will be reading about a Native American named Squanto. He welcomed the Pilgrims when they came to America by showing them how to survive in their new home. Explain that the United States was not yet a country.

Spotlight Nonfiction Feature: Diagram

Explain that a diagram is a kind of picture that shows the parts of something or how something works. Diagrams often have labels with arrows that connect to parts of the picture. Diagrams are useful because they help readers visualize the information they present.

Have children turn to the diagram on page 11. First, read the text at the bottom of the page. Next, read the caption and the diagram’s labels. Have children trace the arrows’ path from the labels to the diagram parts.

Ask: What information do you get from the main text on this page? (Corn, beans, and squash grow well together.) What extra information does the diagram give you? (The squash was planted a little apart from the other crops. The bean plants climbed the cornstalks.)

Using the Reproducible

Give children copies of the reproducible on page 43. Encourage them to pretend they are Pilgrims who received help from Squanto. Then invite them to write Squanto a thank-you note. Encourage children to use the idea bank for topics and include details they learned from the book. You might have them sign the letter with a typical Pilgrim’s name, such as Humility or Resolved.

Book Links

For more information on Squanto, try these titles:

* **Giving Thanks: The 1621 Harvest Feast**
  by Kate Waters (Scholastic, 2001)
* **Squanto and the First Thanksgiving**
  by Eric Metaxas (Rabbit Ears Books, 1996)
* **Squanto’s Journey: The Story of the First Thanksgiving**
  by Joseph Bruchac (Harcourt, 2000)
Thank You, Squanto

Imagine that you are a Pilgrim. Write a letter to Squanto thanking him for his help. You can use the idea bank to help you write.

Idea Bank

cold winter  hunting  great harvest
good teacher  catching fish  delicious feast
staying warm  planting crops  giving thanks

Dear Squanto,

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Sincerely,

________________________________________________________________________

a thankful Pilgrim
Sequencing Timeline

Write the person’s name on the line. Then write important events in the order in which they happened.

Important Events in ___'s Life
Vocabulary Chart

Record new words on the chart. First, write the vocabulary word. Next, write what it means. Then, use the word in your own sentence.

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<th>What It Means</th>
<th>Sentence Using Word</th>
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Write one person's name over each circle. Write facts about this person in that circle.

In the center, write what the two people had in common.

Name ___________________

Name ___________________

Both

Date