

# Puritan essay

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



In the early 16th century, a ship reached Cape Cod shores and out stepped a large number of puritans that today, to the average American, they would be called pilgrims. When one thinks of the pilgrims, they will think of how they were one of the first people to colonize on the East coast and of the men and women who feasted with the Indians nearly 400 years ago. Despite the time difference between the two cultures, puritan and contemporary American society are similar in regards to our laws and punishment, they differ concerning the views on marriage and women in society. Both 16th century puritan settlements and modern American cities deal with a vast amount of citizens who commit or attempt to commit rape, adultery and fornication. The societies are similar in regards to how they had a hard time maintaining the law and punishing the criminals of these illicit actions. Due to the inability to learn of the truth, the puritans would be lenient on handing out the punishment the law depicts and instead giving the perpetrator a lighter sentence which is alike to the contemporary American justice system and their incapability to hold a criminal without evidence. This shows that both societies put up a front that tells the public that they will punish sin just as the laws says but in reality they are lenient on penalizing the criminals since they know it's in human nature to sin. But unlike the similarities in the laws of the two cultures, their views on marriage complete opposites. In the current American family household, the children have the opportunity to choose who and when they marry but in a puritan household, the parents would choose the spouse for their children at a young age. While the average American parents try to give their children the freedom to choose their own lifelong partner, the puritan parents would marry the children off

young so as to prevent their children from committing fornication or other types of sins. These views on marriage confirm with the different societies ideals; for modern America, it's the idea of freedom and for puritans, it's the idea of not sinning and honoring God. For the puritans, divorce was not an option. They had laws that forced the couple to stay together while for current American citizens, they could have an unlimited number of divorces. This is another way the puritans prevented themselves from committing sins. The difference in the ideas of freedom and oppression in the two societies are also apparent in their views of women. Generally in the 16th and 17th century, the role of women was housewives and their duties were to take care of the children and the house and preparing all of the food and clothing for the family. In the 21st century, women have the choice to choose if they want to be a professional at a job or to be a stay at home mom. While modern society listens and respects what women have to say, back in the puritan's world, if a women was too independent thinking they would call her a witch and burn her at the stake. Just because the puritans didn't think of women as evil but as " necessary good" didn't mean they thought of men and women as equals; the men thought of women as property that they owned and women had to obey their husbands no matter what. The discrepancy in the concepts of independence and domination is what divides these two cultures. Even though there is a gap of about 400 years between the two societies, they share the similarity of their laws and the powerlessness to totally rid their people of sin. But in contrast, their views on marriage and the role of women in their cultures are entirely contradictory.

So essentially, the puritans and contemporary America are both alike and different.