

Boston Common

1634 | Grade 4 · Explain with evidence

Words to know

public — connected to people as a whole

space — an area or room; also the universe beyond Earth's atmosphere

change — become different

Look closely



Modern topic illustration created for Massachusetts History Explorers. It is not a historical artifact.

Read the story

Boston set aside the Common in 1634. Cows once grazed there. People used the open land for work and gatherings. Today people walk and play there. It is commonly called the nation's oldest public park.

The Common was not designed like a modern park. Its uses included grazing, military activity, protest, and punishment. Ask who could use a public space safely in different periods.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. State the main idea. Support it with two details from the reading.
2. Explain a change or challenge described in the text. Which words support your answer?
3. Use one vocabulary word in a new sentence about this event.
4. What can the image and caption help explain? What can they not tell you?

Follow-up reading: Boston Latin School opens

1635

Boston Latin School began in 1635. Boys studied subjects such as Latin. It is the oldest public school in what is now the United States. Girls did not have the same chance to attend.

Education existed in Native communities long before this institution. An old school is not proof of equal access. Investigate who attended, who paid, and whose knowledge was valued.

Compare the two readings. Explain one similarity or difference using a detail from each. Their order does not prove that one caused the other.

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.4.1: refer to details; RI.4.2: main idea and summary; RI.4.3: explain events; RI.4.7: interpret visual information; W.4.2 and SL.4.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: Boston set aside the Common in 1634. Cows once grazed there. People used the open land for work and gatherings. Today people walk and play there. It is commonly called the nation's oldest public park. The Common was not designed like a modern park. Its uses included grazing, military activity, protest, and punishment. Ask who could use a public space safely in different periods.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

Image: Original site illustration.

[Image source and rights record ↗](#)

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's [HTML page](#). External sources may need adult guidance.