The First English Settlements

Objectives
- Explain why England wanted to establish colonies in North America.
- Describe the experience of the settlers who founded the first permanent English colony in Jamestown.
- Explain how the Pilgrims managed to survive their first years in the Plymouth Colony.

Why It Matters
As Spain, France, and Holland sought colonies in the Americas, England entered the competition, too. The English established colonies on the east coast of North America.

England Seeks Colonies
Like most of Europe in the age of exploration, England was a monarchy. However, in England, the power of the king or queen was limited by law and by a lawmaking body called Parliament. Ever since the 1200s, English law had limited the king’s power to punish people without trial. The law guaranteed the right to trial by jury. Other provisions limited the king’s power to impose new taxes. The king could set new taxes only with Parliament’s consent. Still, the king’s powers were much greater than those of Parliament.

England began to establish colonies in North America in the late 1500s. Colonies would provide new markets for English products and important raw materials for English industries.

Two of the earliest English efforts to establish colonies took place during the 1580s. Both were set up on a small island off the coast of what today is North Carolina. The first colony at Roanoke Island was established in 1585, but it was abandoned a year later. The second colony is one of the great mysteries of American history. It was set up in 1587. The next year, England found itself at war with Spain. No ship was able to visit the Roanoke colony until 1590. By then, the colony was abandoned. It had disappeared without a trace.

Section Focus Question: How did the English set up their first colonies?

Prepare to Read

Build Background Knowledge
This section describes England’s earliest efforts to establish colonies in North America. Ask students to list all the reasons someone might move to a new, previously unexplored land. Use the Give One, Get One strategy (TE, p. T25) to elicit responses. (Possible responses include: for freedom, for opportunity, for financial gain, to escape trouble, to find out about new people and places)

Set a Purpose
- Read each statement in the Reading Readiness Guide aloud. Ask students to mark the statements True or False.
- Have students discuss the statements in pairs or groups of four, then mark the worksheets again. Use the Numbered Heads participation strategy (TE, p. T24) to call on students to share their group’s perspectives. The students will return to these worksheets later.

Answer
- It hoped to get new customers and raw materials for industry.
Founding Jamestown

In 1607, a group of wealthy people pooled their resources and made a new attempt to establish an English colony in North America. Eager to gain a share of the wealth of the Americas, they formed the Virginia Company of London. Some of the founders hoped to discover gold or silver. Others expected the colonists to trade with the Indians for furs, which could then be sold in Europe at a profit. Lumber also could be cut from North America's vast forests. Farmers could plant vineyards to grow grapes or mulberry trees to produce silk. England needed all of these products.

England's King James I backed the project. The king granted the merchants a charter to establish a colony called Virginia. A charter is a document issued by a government that grants specific rights to a person or company. It gave the Virginia Company authority over a large portion of North America's Atlantic coastline.

The first colonists arrived in Virginia in the spring of 1607. About 100 men sailed into Chesapeake Bay and built a fort they named Jamestown. It would prove to be England's first permanent settlement in North America.

Jamestown barely survived its first year. It was located on a swampy peninsula where insects thrived in warm weather. During the first summer, many colonists caught diseases, such as malaria, and died.

The colony had another serious problem. Many of the colonists had no intention of doing the hard farmwork needed to grow crops. Those men who came to the colony were not farmers. They were skilled in other trades. They spent their time looking for gold, expecting to get the food they needed from the Native Americans. The colonists found no gold. The local people, led by a chief named Powhatan, supplied some food to the colony. But it was not enough. By the fall of 1608, only 38 of the original colonists were still alive.

John Smith Takes Charge Conditions in Jamestown were extremely bad, in part because the colony was poorly led. Then, in the fall of 1608, John Smith was sent out from London to lead the colony. Smith lost no time taking command. He drew up new rules demanding everyone work for the colony. The colony became more established during his year as leader.

Under Smith's firm leadership, the Jamestown colonists cut timber, put up new houses, and supplied food to the settlers. Smith said the colony was "He who works not, eats not."

Draw Conclusions Why were the first colonies located along the Atlantic coast? Use the information below to teach students this section's high-use words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High-Use Word</th>
<th>Definition and Sample Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>establish, p. 67</td>
<td>v. to set up, found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sustain, p. 68</td>
<td>v. to support, to keep going</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jamestown Prospers

Instruction

- Have students read Jamestown Prospers. Remind students to look for the sequence of events.
- Ask: Why do you think the Virginia Company gave settlers the right to self-government? (Possible answer: Company leaders in England realized they were too far away to make day-to-day decisions about governing the colony.)
- Have students complete the worksheet Proceedings of the Virginia Assembly, 1619. Discuss the historical importance of the principles established by the House of Burgesses. (The House of Burgesses established principles of self-government that later found their way into the Constitution.)

Independent Practice

Have students continue to fill in the worksheet Proceedings of the Virginia Assembly, 1619, p. 78.

Monitor Progress

As students fill in the Notetaking Study Guide, circulate to make sure that they understand the importance of the changes that led to Jamestown’s prosperity. Provide assistance as needed.

Jamestown Prospers

During the hard times, the Virginia Company did not give up. It continued to send new colonists and offered free land to keep old colonists from leaving. Most important, it sent new leaders from England to restore order in the colony. These measures would not have succeeded if the colonists had not found a dependable source of income to sustain the colony. What they found was tobacco, a crop native to the Americas. By the 1580s, smoking tobacco had become popular in several European countries, including England.

Vocabulary Builder

sustain (suh stin)n. to support; to keep going

Explore More Video

To learn more about the Jamestown Colony, view the video.

The House of Burgesses

On July 30, 1619, the 22 elected members of the House of Burgesses first met together at the Jamestown church. That hot day marked the beginning of representative government in what is now the United States.

Critical Thinking: Link Past and Present

How would a lawmaking body today be similar? What differences would you expect to see?

Discovery School Video

Show the Jamestown video to tell the story of the founding of Jamestown and the struggles of that colony in its early years.

Answers

- Checkpoint: Jamestown setters initially struggled due to a poor location, laziness, a harsh winter, a lack of skills, and poor leadership.
- Link Past and Present: Similarities: Members are elected. Members meet together to make laws. Differences: Members would not meet in a church. Today there are many more lawmakers.
Farmers in Jamestown and nearby settlements in Virginia began planting tobacco in 1612. By the early 1620s, Virginia farmers were selling all the tobacco they could grow. Their success drew new colonists from England.

The House of Burgesses During these years, Virginia developed a tradition of representative government—the form of government in which voters elect people to make laws for them. In 1619, Virginia’s lawmaking body, the House of Burgesses, was elected and met for the first time. The House of Burgesses could pass laws and set taxes. However, it shared power with Virginia’s appointed governor, who could veto its acts. The House of Burgesses marked the start of representative government in North America.

Africans Come to Virginia In the summer of 1619, a Dutch ship arrived in Virginia from the West Indies. On board were 20 Africans, who had been captured and taken from their homeland. The Africans were sold to the Virginia colonists as slaves. However, that did not necessarily mean they would be enslaved for the rest of their lives. In the early days of the colony, enslaved people had a chance to earn their freedom after working a certain number of years. Some enslaved Africans were able to do this. Permanent slavery for Africans was not established in Virginia until the last part of the 1600s.

Checkpoint What were the responsibilities of the House of Burgesses?

The Plymouth Colony

In England during the 1500s, people could be punished for their religious beliefs. In the 1530s, when King Henry VIII declared himself head of the Church of England, everyone was expected to follow the ways of the Church of England. About the time Jamestown was founded, a group of people in eastern England left their homes and settled in Holland. They wanted to separate from the Church of England and practice Christianity in their own way. These people, called Separatists, were often persecuted or treated badly because of their religion.

Between 1607 and 1609, several groups of Separatists settled in Holland. Although they were allowed to worship as they pleased, they still were not happy. In 1620, one group of Separatists decided to leave Holland and settle in Virginia. They are the people we know today as the Pilgrims. A pilgrim is a person who takes a religious journey.

The Mayflower Compact In September 1620, about 100 Pilgrims sailed for Virginia aboard a ship called the Mayflower. After a long voyage, they arrived safely in North America. However, storms had blown them off course, and they landed far to the north in what today is Massachusetts. They called their new home Plymouth, after a port city in England.

The House of Burgesses After the Jamestown Colony struggled to succeed in its early years, King James I sent Sir Thomas Dale to act as governor. To establish order, Dale controlled almost every aspect of the settlers’ lives under martial law. Each woman, man, and child was assigned a military rank, and was punished severely for failing to perform his or her assigned duties. Dale’s “Laws Divine, Moral, and Martial” did in fact bring order to the colony, but they also discouraged new colonists from settling there. When George Yeardley took over the position of governor in 1618, he helped establish the House of Burgesses, setting the course for self-government in the English colonies.

History Background

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The Plymouth Colony

p. 69

Instruction

- Have students read The Plymouth Colony. Remind students to look for causes and effects.
- Ask students to suggest reasons why the Pilgrims had to come all the way to North America to practice their religion. (King Henry VIII had made it illegal to disobey the ways of the Church of England.)
- To help students better understand the concept of self-government, which is important to the understanding of this section, use the Concept Lesson Self-Government. Provide students with copies of the Concept Organizer.

Independent Practice

Have students complete the Study Guide for this section.

Monitor Progress

- As students complete the Notetaking Study Guide, circulate to make sure students understand the importance of the Mayflower Compact. Provide assistance as needed.
- Tell students to fill in the last column of the Reading Readiness Guide. Probe for what they learned that confirms or invalidates each statement.

Answers

Checkpoint to pass laws and to set taxes

Reading Skill They wanted to separate from the Church of England and be free to practice Christianity in their own way.
Assess and Reteach

Assess Progress
Have students complete Check Your Progress. Administer the Section Quiz.

To further assess student understanding, use the Progress Monitoring Transparency.

Progress Monitoring Transparencies, Chapter 3, Section 1

Reteach
If students need more instruction, have them read this section in the Interactive Reading and Notetaking Study Guide and complete the accompanying question.

Interactive Reading and Notetaking Study Guide, Chapter 3, Section 1 (Adapted Version also available.)

Extend
Have students work in small groups to create a plan for establishing a new colony. Each member of the group may be assigned a particular aspect of colonization, including political, social, economic, and geographic. Have them draw upon their knowledge of the successes and failures of early English colonies when developing their plans. Have groups present their plans to the class.

Progress Monitoring Online
Students may check their comprehension of this section by completing the Progress Monitoring Online graphic organizer and self-quiz.

Answer
✓Checkpoint It was the first document in which Americans claimed the right to self-government.

Because they had landed outside Virginia, the Pilgrims believed they were not bound by the rules of the Virginia Company. But they needed rules of some sort. Before going ashore, 41 adult men signed the Mayflower Compact. It called for a government that would make and follow “just and equal laws.” Officeholders would be elected by the colony’s adult males.

Thus, a year after the creation of Virginia’s House of Burgesses, the Pilgrims had taken a second step toward self-government in the Americas. The Mayflower Compact was the first document in which American colonists claimed a right to govern themselves.

The First Thanksgiving The Pilgrims had a very difficult first winter in Plymouth. They had arrived too late to plant crops and did not have enough food. During the winter of 1620–1621, half the colonists died from hunger or disease.

Conditions improved in the spring of 1621. As had happened at Jamestown, help from local Native Americans sustained the Pilgrims. A local chief gave the Pilgrims some food. Another Native American, named Squanto, brought the Pilgrims seeds of native plants—corn, beans, and pumpkins—and showed them how to plant them. He also taught the settlers how to catch eels from nearby rivers.

In the fall of 1621, the Pilgrims set aside a day to give thanks for their good fortune. Today’s Thanksgiving holiday celebrates that occasion.

Checkpoint Why was the Mayflower Compact important?

Looking Back and Ahead
challenges before they were able to claim success. In the next section, you will read how English settlers established additional colonies in New England.

Section 1 | Check Your Progress

Comprehension and Critical Thinking
1. (a) Recall What actions did John Smith take to help Jamestown? (b) Identify Alternatives What other methods do you think Smith could have used to save the colony?
2. (a) Identify Who were the Pilgrims? (b) Analyze Cause and Effect How did the Pilgrims’ experiences in England affect the government they established in the Plymouth Colony?
3. Identify Contrasts How did the government of the Jamestown settlers differ from that of the Plymouth settlers?

Key Terms
Fill in the blanks with the correct key terms.
4. The English king gave the merchants of the Virginia Company a ______ to establish a colony called Virginia.
5. English colonies in North America established a form of ______ based on elections.

Reading Skill
6. Imagine that you are preparing a news report about the founding of Jamestown Colony. Make notes providing background information about this development. Your notes should include the economic benefits of colonialism and the particular details about how Jamestown Colony was founded.

Writing
6. Students’ notes should include economic benefits and complete details about how Jamestown was founded.

Section 1 Check Your Progress

1. (a) John Smith developed tough rules, including one that required people to work if they wanted to eat.
   (b) Possible answers: Smith could have asked Native Americans to teach them to survive and developed friendly trade relationships with them.
2. (a) People who came to North America to separate from the Church of England.
   (b) They established self-government to prevent persecution from their leaders.
3. The Plymouth settlers self-governed. The House of Burgesses was beholden to the king.
4. charter
5. representative government
6. Students’ notes should include economic benefits and complete details about how Jamestown was founded.