

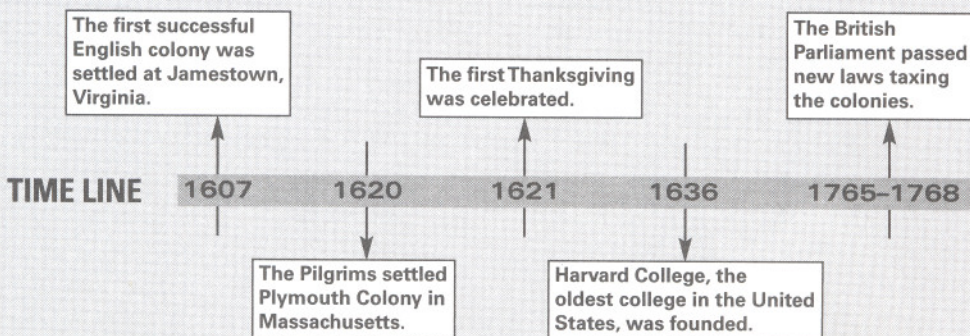
BIRTH OF A NATION

1600–1800

In this chapter, you will learn that the early settlers of the United States were a diverse group of people who valued independence and freedom.

MAKE A CONNECTION

What was happening in your country in the 1600s and 1700s?



The Early Years of the United States

Today the United States is a mixture of people, cultures, and ideas from all over the world. The mixing started 500 years ago when European countries began sending explorers to the “New World.” By the 1500s, Spain, France, Britain, and several other European countries had established colonies in North America.

Relationships with Native Americans

In the 1500s, North America was a vast wilderness inhabited by various groups of Native Americans. At first, the Native Americans welcomed the colonists and taught them how to hunt, farm, protect themselves from the weather, and use herbs as medicine. The colonists owed much of their early success to help from the Native Americans. Tragically, many Native Americans died in battle with the colonists and from diseases such as smallpox that the colonists brought with them. As time went on, the colonists took over more and more land, forcing the Native Americans to move farther and farther away from their homelands.

Why the Colonists Came to North America

The colonists who settled in North America came from a variety of cultural traditions, and they had many different reasons for leaving their homelands. Some wanted religious or political freedom and the freedom to express

The first battles of the Revolutionary War took place at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts.

1775

The Declaration of Independence was signed.

1776

France entered the Revolutionary War on the American side.

1778

The Treaty of Paris was signed, ending the Revolutionary War.

1783

The U.S. Constitution became law.

1788

George Washington was elected the first president of the United States.

1789

The Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution.

1791

themselves without fear. Others came because they wanted to own land, which they could not do in Europe. Still others were excited by the adventure of moving to a new part of the world. However, not everyone came freely. About 350,000 Africans were brought to North America and sold as slaves. More than anyone else, the English colonists first shaped the character of the United States. They brought their language, institutions, values, and customs with them.

The Separation from Great Britain

By the mid-1700s, Great Britain had established thirteen colonies along the Atlantic coast of North America, from New Hampshire to Georgia. For many years, the colonists lived quite happily under British rule. But by 1764, serious disagreements between the colonies and the British government had developed. The main problem was that the colonies wanted more independence, but Britain wanted more control. The colonists especially disliked the heavy taxes they had to pay to Britain. The situation got worse, and in 1776, the colonists declared their independence from Britain. The American Revolution began.

Answer the questions.

1. What are some reasons that people came to the New World?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

2. Where did Britain establish her thirteen colonies?

3. What was the main problem between the colonies and Britain during the 1700s?

BUILD YOUR MAP-READING SKILLS

This map shows where the European powers held territories in the New World in the late seventeenth century. Use the map to answer the questions.

America in 1750



1. In the late seventeenth century, which European countries owned territories in the New World?

2. Which European country owned the largest territory in what is now the United States?

3. Which European country owned Florida?



The oldest city in the United States, St. Augustine, Florida, was established in 1565 by the Spanish.

READING 1 Colonial America

The first successful British colony was founded in 1607. During the next 125 years, Britain established twelve more colonies along the east coast of North America. Life in the thirteen British colonies differed from region to region. In the New England and Middle Atlantic colonies, the economy was based on small businesses, trade, and small farms. In contrast, the southern colonies developed a plantation economy that was dependent on slavery. In this article, you will read about some of the problems and successes of the early British colonists.

BEFORE YOU READ

To get an overview of the article, first read the first sentence of each paragraph. This sentence will give you an idea about the main point that will be discussed in the paragraph. Write each sentence on the lines provided. Then read the article.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Colonial America

1 England emerged as the dominant colonial power in the present-day United States by the mid-1700s. Thirteen English colonies, with 1.3 million settlers, stretched along the Atlantic from New Hampshire south to Georgia. At that time, about 200,000 slaves lived in the colonies, mostly

in the South. Other colonial powers, such as the French, the Spanish, and the Dutch, had smaller settlements in North America.

2 Most English colonists were hard-working, thrifty people who made the long, dangerous Atlantic voyage because of the promises America offered. Land in



Daily life in colonial times

the colonies was cheap, and the soil was fertile. The possibility existed for a free man to arrive on American shores penniless and become a prosperous farmer within a few years. No other place on earth offered an Englishman such rapid opportunities for advancement.

- 3 From the beginning, settlers established a form of democracy in the English colonies. Sheriffs and other township officers were elected. The New England colonies had meetings to discuss community projects such as road building and bridge construction. Yet large classes of people were excluded from this democratic process. Voting was limited to free adult

males who owned property. Women, slaves, and the very poor had no vote.

- 4 Colonial life was a mixture of trials and triumphs. The greatest danger the farming communities faced was epidemics of diseases such as smallpox and yellow fever. Doctors were rare in colonial America, and sick people were nursed with teas made from roots and herbs. In villages, weddings were gigantic feasts that sometimes lasted two or three days. For recreation, colonial men raced horses, while groups of women talked together and stitched blankets in "quilting bees." Most colonists were deeply religious, and much of their social activity revolved around the church.

CHECK YOUR COMPREHENSION

Circle the letter of the choice that best completes each sentence.

- In the mid-1700s, the French, Spanish, and Dutch had _____.
 - sent over 2,000 slaves to the colonies
 - small settlements in North America
 - thirteen colonies along the Atlantic coast
 - abandoned their colonies in America
- English people came to America because _____.
 - it offered rapid opportunities for advancement
 - colonial life was full of trials
 - the voyage was dangerous
 - they enjoyed horse racing and quilting bees
- The greatest danger farming communities faced was _____.
 - infertile land
 - poor transportation systems
 - religious fanaticism
 - epidemics of disease
- _____ were allowed to participate in the democratic process in the colonies.
 - Free adult men
 - Rich women
 - Adult slaves
 - Very poor men

5. For recreation, colonial men _____.
- a. farmed the fertile land
 - b. raced horses
 - c. made blankets
 - d. nursed the sick

BUILD YOUR READING SKILLS: Recognizing Main Ideas

The most important skill good readers need to develop is the ability to recognize main ideas. English writing is divided into paragraphs. Each paragraph is usually about one topic, which is the main idea of the paragraph. The main idea of the paragraph is often (but not always) stated in a sentence called the *topic sentence*. Identifying the topic sentences of the paragraphs in an article will help you recognize the main ideas. The topic sentence of a paragraph is usually the first sentence. As you saw in Reading 1, the topic sentence of each of the four paragraphs is the first sentence.

Read the list of main points from the article. Write the number of the paragraph that discusses each point.

- _____ a. why British colonists came to America
- _____ b. government in the British colonies
- _____ c. problems and successes of colonial life
- _____ d. the size and location of the thirteen British colonies

BUILD YOUR READING SKILLS: Understanding Details

You just learned that a paragraph is usually about one topic called the main idea, which is often stated in the topic sentence. What about the rest of the sentences in the paragraph? What is their purpose? The other sentences in a paragraph give details to support or explain the main idea.

Below is a list of details the author uses to support the main topics in Reading 1. Write each supporting detail under the appropriate topic on page 9.

- a. Land in the colonies was fertile.
- b. Diseases such as smallpox and yellow fever killed many settlers.
- c. Thirteen British colonies were established along the Atlantic coast.
- d. Doctors were rare in the colonies.
- e. Land in the colonies was cheap.
- f. Leaders were elected by the people.
- g. Other colonial powers such as France and Spain had smaller settlements.
- h. Settlers could become prosperous farmers quickly.
- i. The colonists developed recreation such as horse racing and quilting bees.

- j. There were 1.3 million English settlers.
 - k. Town meetings were held to discuss community projects.
 - l. Women, slaves, and poor people could not vote.
1. England was the dominant colonial power in the United States by the mid-1700s.

 2. Most English colonists came to America because of the promises it offered.

 3. The people established a form of democracy in the English colonies.

 4. Colonial life was a mixture of trials and triumphs.

EXPAND YOUR VOCABULARY

Match each word from the reading with its synonym.

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| ___ 1. dominant | a. combination |
| ___ 2. prosperous | b. huge |
| ___ 3. rapid | c. uncommon |
| ___ 4. excluded | d. most important |
| ___ 5. mixture | e. frugal |
| ___ 6. triumph | f. wealthy |
| ___ 7. rare | g. fast |
| ___ 8. gigantic | h. achievement |
| ___ 9. trials | i. left out |
| ___ 10. thrifty | j. difficulties |

TALK ABOUT IT

What was life in the New World like for the colonists? What kinds of problems did they face? What did they do for recreation?

LINKING PAST TO PRESENT

The rebellious spirit of the colonists gave birth to the strong sense of independence that still characterizes the people of the United States today. Americans value their independence and like to rely on themselves instead of others. Many young Americans move out of their parents' houses when they graduate from high school or college because they want to feel independent. Parents often encourage financial and emotional independence in their children.

REACT AND RESPOND Is it common for young people in your country to move out of their parents' houses before they get married? Why or why not? Do parents in your country encourage financial and emotional independence in their children?



Until the early 1700s, the person who received a letter was the one who had to pay for the stamp.

WRITE ABOUT IT

Pretend that you were a settler in one of the thirteen original colonies. On a separate piece of paper, write a letter to a friend or relative back home describing your new life. Write about your work and recreation. Discuss your hopes, dreams, and problems.

BUILD YOUR READING SKILLS: Understanding How to Scan

We read for several different reasons. We also read in different ways. Sometimes we read something quickly in order to find a specific piece of information. This is called scanning.

Scan the chart to answer the following questions. Then look at the map on page 12 to see where the thirteen original colonies were located.

1. In what year was Rhode Island founded? _____
2. Which was the first colony? _____
3. How many middle colonies were there? _____
4. Which colony was founded in order to give religious freedom to Catholics?

5. Which colony was founded in 1733? _____

6. How many colonies were founded for the purpose of trade?

7. What colony was founded for people who had debts? _____
8. Why was New Hampshire founded? _____

COLONY CHART

COLONY	DATE FOUNDED	REASON FOUNDED
The New England Colonies		
Massachusetts	1620	Religious freedom for Protestants
New Hampshire	1630	Political, religious, and economic freedom
Connecticut	1636	Religious freedom
Rhode Island	1636	Religious freedom
The Middle Colonies		
New York	1626	Trade
Maryland	1634	Religious freedom for Catholics
Delaware	1638	Trade
New Jersey	1664	Trade
Pennsylvania	1681	Religious freedom for Quakers
The Southern Colonies		
Virginia	1607	Trade
North Carolina	1653	Trade
South Carolina	1670	Trade
Georgia	1733	Colony for people who had debts