



# Geography, Social Factors, and Economics of the Colonial Regions

8.1.2(B), 8.2.10(A), 8.2.10(B), 8.2.11(A), 8.4.12(A), 8.4.12(B)

## Understand the TEKS

The geography of the New World played a large role in shaping the way people settled and lived in the 13 English colonies. People came to the colonies for a variety of reasons, including politics, economics, and religion. How they lived and worked was decided by where they settled. Think about the push and pull factors for the colonists who immigrated to each region of the 13 colonies.

### The New England Colonies

The New England colonies, which included Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, had rocky ground and cold winters. These conditions reminded people of parts of England, so they named this area “New England.” The coast had natural harbors, like Boston’s, which meant New England’s main economic activities were fishing, trade, and building ships. These natural harbors helped many cities and towns grow along the coast.

The New England colonies were mainly started by Pilgrims and Puritans who wanted **religious freedom**, or the right to choose and practice their religion how they wanted without anyone stopping them or punishing them for it. In 1620, the Pilgrims arrived on the Mayflower and began the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts. Even though many got sick and did not make it through the first winter, they worked with the Native Americans and kept going.

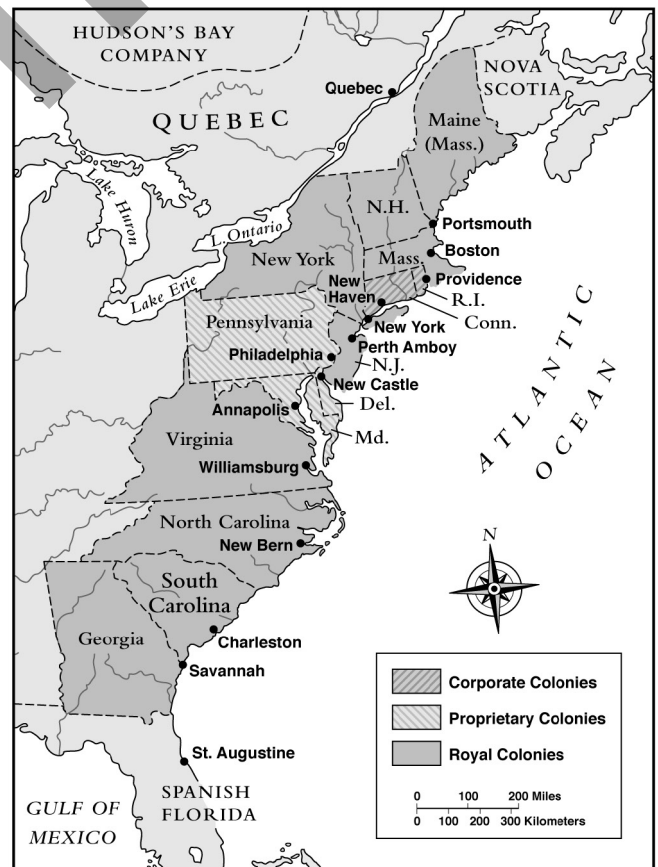
In 1628, the Puritans sought refuge by founding the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Over time, the leaders of this colony felt people were forgetting the right way to live, so they made stricter rules. Some people did not agree with these rules and got into trouble. One of those people was Roger Williams, who believed the church and government should be separate. In 1636, he was kicked out and started Rhode Island. This was a place where people like Anne Hutchinson, who was put on trial and banished for challenging the teachings and leadership of the colony, went to seek even more religious freedom.



### Did You Know?

The Appalachian Mountains were a natural barrier to the westward movement of the early American colonies. The rugged terrain and dense forests of the Appalachians made travel difficult, and Native American tribes often resisted colonial expansion into their territories.

THE THIRTEEN ENGLISH COLONIES  
AROUND 1750





## The Middle Colonies

The Middle colonies, which included New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, were between the North and South colonies. This area had good soil for farming, especially for growing crops like wheat and other grains. These colonies also were great spots for trading because they were in the middle. This did not just apply to trade with the other colonies but sending goods back to England, too. **Mercantilism** is an idea that countries get rich by having more exports (things they sell to other countries) than imports (things they buy from other countries). Countries wanted their colonies to send raw materials, like wood or cotton, back to them. Then, they would make products from these materials and sell them back to the colonies or to other places. The Middle colonies would send their farm goods back to England and get finished products, like clothes or tools, in return.

People from many places, like the Dutch and the English, moved to the Middle colonies. This made the colonies a mix of different cultures and traditions. One special thing about these colonies was how they treated religion. For example, Pennsylvania was started by Quakers who believed in religious freedom in a different way than the Puritans. Their leadership meant that people of different religions could live together without problems.

## The Southern Colonies

The Southern colonies were Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Two of these colonies, Virginia and Maryland, were located near Chesapeake Bay. These places had great weather and good soil that was perfect for big farms. This helped them focus on cash-crop agriculture, which means they grew crops mainly to sell and make money. Because of this, the area started using more land for farming, which is called **agricultural expansion**. The Chesapeake Bay was also important because it helped with trade, making these colonies richer.

Virginia began with Jamestown, set up in 1607. England hoped that its settlers would find gold, but it would eventually become clear that the cash crop tobacco was the way to riches. At first, Jamestown settlers struggled due to a lack of food and the harsh winter. It was only through trade with the Native Americans that the colony survived. But as the colony started making a **commercial profit**, which means they earned more money than it cost to set up and run their business, more people came to live there. Maryland Colony, on the other hand, was started in 1632 by Lord Baltimore. He made it a safe place for Catholics from England who were treated badly because of their beliefs.

The other Southern colonies (North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia) also had a warm climate, long growing season, and fertile soil. This created the right conditions for cash crops such as tobacco, rice, and indigo. These crops generated a large amount of **revenue**, or the money made from selling a product or service before any expenses are taken out. The South kept their expenses low by using slave labor, which helped the owners of plantations become some of the richest people in the colonies.

At first, North and South Carolina were one big colony. But in 1712, they split into two because of some disagreements and a desire to expand. This split made the colonies easier to govern,

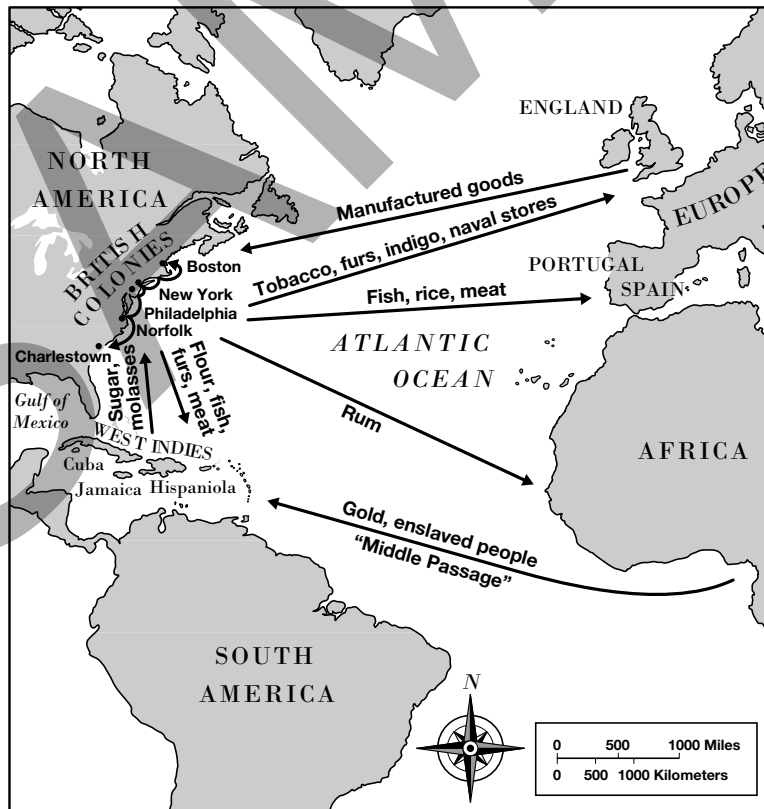
and their cash crop cultivation led to strong economies. Georgia was set up by General James Oglethorpe, who wanted the colony to be a place where Englishmen who were in prison because of their debt could start fresh. England saw more benefit in having a buffer colony between the wealthy Carolinas and Spanish-held Florida.

### Slave Trade in the Colonies

Slavery began in the English colonies in 1619 when a Dutch ship brought the first group of enslaved Africans to Jamestown. To make big-scale farming possible, settlers needed many workers. Instead of hiring workers, they decided to use slaves. They got these slaves through the transatlantic slave trade, where people were captured from the West African coast and brought to the colonies. Once in the colonies, these slaves were forced to work on plantations. As the need for more crops grew, the number of slaves increased too. Though the northern colonies did not have the vast plantations seen in the South, they still had enslaved people. Slaves in the North typically worked as domestic servants, artisans, or laborers. Additionally, some northern ports profited from the buying and selling of enslaved people.

Slavery in the colonies was part of a larger system called the Colonial transatlantic trade. Also known as the Triangular Trade, routes were established between Europe, Africa, and the Americas. The Americas would transport rum to Africa as payment for enslaved Africans. Enslaved Africans would be transported to the Americas and put to work. The products of their labor would be transported to European countries for manufacture. Manufactured goods would then be transported to the colonies in America.

COLONIAL TRIANGULAR TRADE ROUTES





★ Practice

Read and answer each question carefully.

1 This excerpt is from a sermon.

For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world.

—John Winthrop, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1630

Based on the excerpt and the text, which of the following **BEST** reflects the reason for the settlers creating this colony?

- Ⓐ To seek out individual wealth and economic opportunities
- Ⓑ For the ability to practice their own religion and practice their values freely
- Ⓒ Isolating themselves from all other communities
- Ⓓ To trade furs and crops with the Native Americans

2 Circle the correct answer from each drop-down menu to complete the sentences.

The New England colonies  
Middle colonies  
Southern colonies relied

heavily on enslaved people for large-scale agriculture.

Slaves in the North were primarily used for

cultivating cash crops  
domestic work and manual labor  
soldiers in the military

3 How did physical characteristics of the environment influence the economy of the Southern colonies?

- Ⓐ The rocky soil of the Southern colonies was not good for large-scale agriculture, so they focused on shipbuilding instead.
- Ⓑ The Southern colonies' proximity to Spanish-held Florida allowed them to trade peacefully with Spanish settlers.
- Ⓒ The fertile soil and long growing season of the Southern colonies enabled the cultivation of cash crops such as tobacco, rice, and indigo.
- Ⓓ The Southern colonies had a harsh climate with cold winters, which limited their agricultural output.

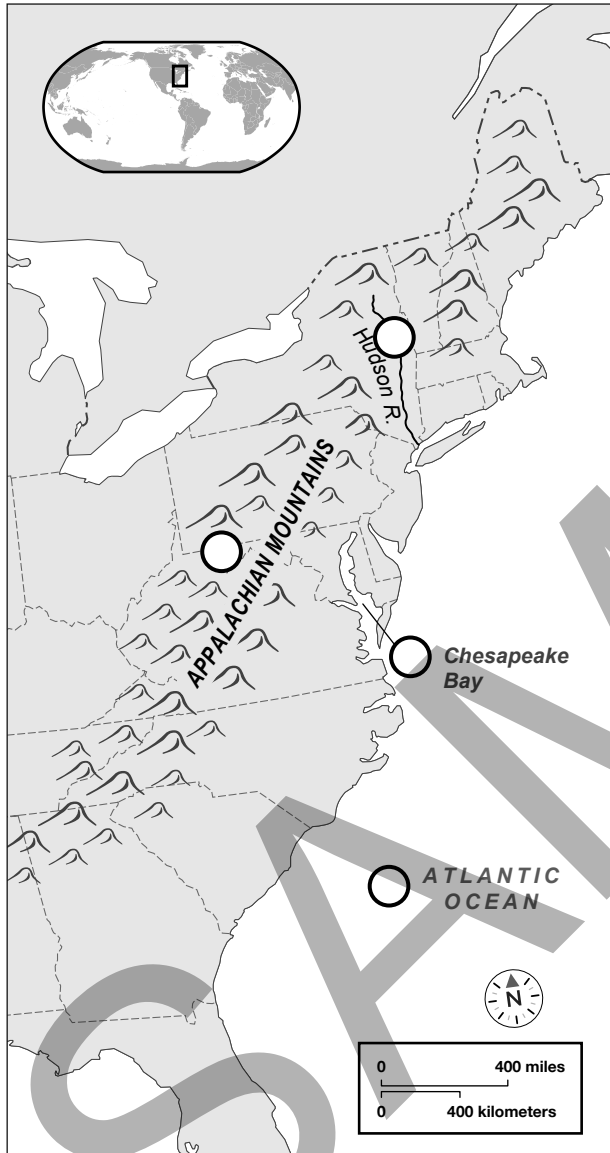
4 Which of the following **BEST** compares the characteristics and primary motivations for settlement of the New England colonies and the Southern colonies?

- Ⓐ Both the New England and Southern colonies were settled for religious freedom and both had a predominantly agriculture-based economy.
- Ⓑ Both the New England and Southern colonies were established due to religious persecution in England, and both were predominantly influenced by Pilgrim and Puritan settlers.
- Ⓒ The New England colonies primarily focused on trade and shipbuilding due to their natural harbors, while the Southern colonies were focused on the conversion of Native Americans.
- Ⓓ The New England colonies were mainly settled by those seeking religious freedom, while the Southern colonies prioritized cash-crop agriculture.

- 5** This map shows the topography of the eastern United States.

Which location on the map acted as a natural barrier to westward expansion for colonists?

Select the correct answer.



- 6** This excerpt is from a letter written in 1619.

All our riches for the present do consist in Tobacco, wherein one man by his own labor hath in one year raised to himself to the value of 200 pounds sterling; and another by the means of six servants has cleared at one crop a thousand pound English.

—John Pory, Secretary of Virginia, to Sir Dudley Carleton

Based on this excerpt and the text, which aspect of colonial economic history is indicated by this letter?

- (A) Jamestown needed more workers to make more profit from cash crops like tobacco.
- (B) Virginia became rich through the mining of silver and gold.
- (C) The leaders of Virginia relied on Native American labor in their tobacco fields.
- (D) Jamestown became overpopulated in 1619 because riches attracted people from around the world to the region.