

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Life in the American Colonies

By Anita Kim Venegas

Imagine sailing across the Atlantic Ocean in the early 1600s. With hopes of owning land and religious freedom, people sailed for 60 days or more. Babies cried, food rotted, sailors shouted, and families waited on deck to catch sight of the New World.

“Land!” someone shouted and everyone looked west to the horizon. Parents lifted their small children to look over the rail. The long journey was about to end. Stepping cautiously onto the rocky shores, families

noticed endless forests and wilderness. People needed food, fresh water, shelter, and safety. Men chopped trees for timber to build log shelters, women searched nearby for edible plants while children chased one another.



**Painting depicting the James Fort construction in May-June 1607.**



The first attempt at colonization in 1607 was a failure. Settlers in Jamestown were met with unfriendly Native Americans as well as a lack of fresh water. A second settlement in present-day Massachusetts became the setting and story of Thanksgiving. Colonists were fortunate to find fields ready for planting and a helpful Native American named Squanto to teach them to plant corn, beans, and squash. Even so, nearly half of the settlers died before the winter of 1620 ended. These first two settlements focused on survival while later settlements focused on making products and growing crops to sell to England.

**A Native American named Squanto helped teach colonists to plant crops in present day Massachusetts.**

Near present-day Boston, a third attempt to establish a colony was an economic success. Throughout the Massachusetts Bay Colony, families built homes and started businesses. The town needed craftsmen to work as blacksmiths and shipbuilders, as well as fishermen and fur trappers.

Climate and geography influenced the type of work settlers did. Settlers in the north cleared forests for timber to build furniture and export it to England. Farmers in the south grew tobacco to export to England on the ships that were built in the north. As trade expanded in different directions, the colonies imported sugar and molasses from the islands, then exported these products to England. In exchange, England exported cloth, iron, and glass to the colonies.

Native Americans befriended the newcomers when they could trade with them to attain new items from England. Natives traded furs in exchange for axes and guns from the settlers. Violence erupted when either the Native Americans or the settlers felt cheated in some way. Perhaps an agreement was made, and then broken. Perhaps one or the other felt they did not get a fair trade.

For many years, the colonies were profitable for England. Settlers sent goods across the Atlantic, and the British sold them in the European market. When England raised their prices for the colonists, and colonists found they could pay less than what England charged, the colonists bought from other countries. England reminded the colonies that they were established to make a profit for the King of England and not for themselves. England began imposing restrictions on colonists, writing laws that forbade the colonists to buy from other countries besides England.

After leaving their homeland in search of new opportunities and freedoms, the English laws angered the colonists. While they had no voice in the laws that were made, they were forced by England to obey the laws, and pay the taxes. Colonists were unhappy and began to speak of independence; at first in whispers, and then in public meetings. Revolution was coming to the North American colonies.



**Drawing showing Native Americans trading with the first settlers.**

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1. What is the author's purpose for writing this article?
  - a. to persuade readers to move to America
  - b. to teach readers how to establish a colony
  - c. to entertain readers with an amusing story in American history
  - d. to inform readers about the history of English colonists in America



2. List three items mentioned in the article that were exported from the American colonies to England.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_

3. List three items mentioned in the article that were imported from the England to the American colonies.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_

4. Which statement about life in the American colonies is an opinion?
  - a. Life was difficult for all settlers in the American colonies.
  - b. Native Americans traded furs in exchange for axes and guns from the settlers.
  - c. England imposed laws and taxes on the American colonists.
  - d. Farmers in the southern American colonies grew tobacco.

5. Reread the following sentence from the article.

**Climate and geography influenced the type of work the settlers did.**

What do the words climate and geography mean?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Life in the American Colonies

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Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| _____ 1. New World   | a. having to do with money  |
| _____ 2. failure     | b. buying and selling goods                                       |
| _____ 3. settlers    | c. lucky  |
| _____ 4. fortunate   | d. land in North and South America                                |
| _____ 5. economic    | e. people who makes things from iron                              |
| _____ 6. blacksmiths | f. not a success  |
| _____ 7. trade       | g. people who live in England                                     |
| _____ 8. revolution  | h. people who make a home in a new place                          |
| _____ 9. British     | i. an event in which citizens attempt to overthrow the government |

## ANSWER KEY

# Life in the American Colonies

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1. What is the author's purpose for writing this article?
  - a. to persuade readers to move to America
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2. List three items mentioned in the article that were exported from the American colonies to England.

**timber (wood)**, **tobacco**, and **sugar**  
(Also accept: ships, molasses, and furs)

3. List three items mentioned in the article that were imported from the England to the American colonies.

**cloth**, **iron**, and **glass**

4. Which statement about life in the American colonies is an opinion?

- a. Life was difficult for all settlers in the American colonies.**
- b. Native Americans traded furs in exchange for axes and guns from the settlers.
- c. England imposed laws and taxes on the American colonists.
- d. Farmers in the southern American colonies grew tobacco.

5. Reread the following sentence from the article.

**Climate and geography influenced the type of work the settlers did.**

What do the words climate and geography mean?

**Climate is the general weather patterns in an area over a long period of time.**

**Geography is the location of an area and its features.**

## ANSWER KEY

# Life in the American Colonies

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Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <u>d</u> 1. New World   | a. having to do with money  |
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Colonial American Jobs



Match each colonial occupation with its description. If you're not sure of the answers, use a computer or dictionary to look up the words.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ blacksmith
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ cobbler
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ cooper
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ wheelwright
  5. \_\_\_\_\_ silversmith
  6. \_\_\_\_\_ miller
  7. \_\_\_\_\_ milliner
  8. \_\_\_\_\_ tanner
  9. \_\_\_\_\_ apothecary
  10. \_\_\_\_\_ tailor
  11. \_\_\_\_\_ gunsmith
  12. \_\_\_\_\_ printer
- a. ground corn and wheat to make flour
  - b. made and repaired clothing, such as suits and dresses, from fabric
  - c. made clothing and blankets from animal hides; made saddles for horses
  - d. printed newspapers and signs with a printing press
  - e. made horseshoes and farm equipment from iron and steel
  - f. made and repaired wagons and wheels
  - g. made and sold hats
  - h. repaired, altered, and made firearms
  - i. made and fixed shoes
  - j. made dishes, spoons, and cups from pewter (silver)
  - k. made barrels out of wood
  - l. mixed herbs to make medicine for the sick

## ANSWER KEY

# Colonial American Jobs



Match each colonial occupation with its description. If you're not sure of the answers, use a computer or dictionary to look up the words.

- e** blacksmith
- i** cobbler
- k** cooper
- f** wheelwright
- j** silversmith
- a** miller
- g** milliner
- c** tanner
- l** apothecary
- b** tailor
- h** gunsmith
- d** printer
- a.** ground corn and wheat to make flour
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# Colonial America Scavenger Hunt Activity



**Materials:** Colonial America questions worksheet (pages 2-3)  
18 Colonial America fact cards (pages 4-8)  
Tape and scissors

**Preparation:** Print the fact cards on card stock or brightly-colored paper and cut them apart along the dotted lines.

Make copies of the Colonial America questions worksheet (2-sided). Each student will need his or her own copy.

Hide the 18 Colonial America fact cards around your classroom where students will be able to find them. You can put them on chairs, on the computer keyboard, on the back of your classroom door, on the sides of student desks, on the chalkboard, or wherever you like.

**Activity:** Students receive a copy of the question worksheet. They have to search the room and find all of the fact cards to answer the questions.

After they have completed the question sheet, you can go over the answers together with the class.

**Management tips:** You may want to make this a silent activity so students don't share answers with each other.

You can have students work alone or with a classmate.

Don't be afraid to hide the facts in tough places. Students usually find the game more fun when they have to search around a little.

Examples of good hiding spots might include:

- the back of the classroom door
- laying flat on the bookshelf
- on the side of your computer monitor
- sticking out of a book, like a bookmark

Have a plan for students who finish early. You may want to have an assignment for them to complete when they're done, or you may have them help other students find fact cards.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Colonial America Scavenger Hunt



**Fact Card #1:** What was the name of the ship that the Pilgrims traveled on when they came to America in 1620?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Fact Card #2:** What was the name of the colony formed by Pilgrims in 1620?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Fact Card #3:** Georgia was named after which British king?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Fact Card #4:** What grades were taught in a one-room schoolhouse during colonial times?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Fact Card #5:** What is the full name of Rhode Island?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Fact Card #6:** New York used to be a Dutch colony called...

\_\_\_\_\_

**Fact Card #7:** Today's U.S. state of Maine was once part of...

\_\_\_\_\_

**Fact Card #8:** What does the word Pennsylvania mean?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Fact Card #9:** Name the four New England Colonies.

\_\_\_\_\_

# Colonial America Scavenger Hunt



**Fact Card #10:** Name the four Middle Colonies.

---

**Fact Card #11:** Name the five Southern Colonies.

---

**Fact Card #12:** Name three crops that were grown on southern plantations.

---

**Fact Card #13:** Slaves in colonial America were people who were kidnapped from...

---

**Fact Card #14:** What famous colonial American was an author, publisher, politician, scientist, and inventor?

---

**Fact Card #15:** What was a cooper's job?

---

**Fact Card #16:** Someone who made wagons and wheels was a...

---

**Fact Card #17:** Name three things colonial Americans made from corn.

---

**Fact Card #18:** What famous document was signed in 1776, marking the end of colonial America?

---

Colonial America

## Scavenger Hunt

Fact Card #1

In 1620, Pilgrims came to America aboard a ship called the *Mayflower*. They came for religious freedom.

Colonial America

## Scavenger Hunt

Fact Card #2

When the Pilgrims came to America in 1620, they formed a settlement called Plymouth Colony.

Colonial America

## Scavenger Hunt

Fact Card #3

Georgia was named after King George II of England.

Colonial America

## Scavenger Hunt

Fact Card #4

In colonial times, many children attended school in small, one-room schoolhouses. Children in 1st through 8th grades would all be in the same classroom learning together.

Colonial America  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #5

The colony (now state) of Rhode Island actually has a longer name. The full name is *Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*.

Colonial America  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #6

New York used to be a Dutch colony called New Amsterdam.

It was later named New York, after King Charles II's brother, the Duke of York.

Colonial America  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #7

Today's U.S. state of Maine was once part of Massachusetts Bay colony.

Colonial America  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #8

Pennsylvania was named after a man named William Penn. The word *Pennsylvania* means "Penn's Woods."



Colonial America  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #9

The northern colonies  
(Massachusetts, Connecticut,  
Rhode Island, and New  
Hampshire) were known as *New  
England*.

Colonial America  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #10

New York, Pennsylvania, New  
Jersey, and Delaware were  
known as the *Middle Colonies*.

Colonial America  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #11

Virginia, Maryland, North  
Carolina, South Carolina, and  
Georgia were known as the  
*Southern Colonies*.

Colonial America  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #12

The Southern Colonies had many  
large farms, called plantations,  
which grew tobacco, cotton, and  
rice.

Colonial America  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #13

Many African people were kidnapped and brought to the colonies. They were forced to work as slaves on small farms and large plantations.

Colonial America  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #14

Benjamin Franklin lived in America during colonial times. He had many jobs, including author, publisher, politician, scientist, and inventor.

Colonial America  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #15

People in Colonial America had many different jobs.

A cobbler made and repaired shoes. A tanner made saddles and leather clothing from animal skins. A cooper made large barrels from wood.

Colonial America  
**Scavenger Hunt**  
Fact Card #16

A blacksmith was a person who made and repaired things made from iron. He made horseshoes, and farming tools.

A wheelwright made wagons and wheels.

Colonial America

## Scavenger Hunt

Fact Card #17

Native Americans taught the early colonists how to grow corn. The corn was used to make cornbread, corn pancakes, and corn pudding.

Colonial America

## Scavenger Hunt

Fact Card #18

Colonial America ended in the year 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was signed. When this document was signed, the United States of America was formed.

# ANSWER KEY

## Colonial America Scavenger Hunt

**Fact Card #1:** What was the name of the ship that the Pilgrims traveled on when they came to America in 1620?

Mayflower

**Fact Card #2:** What was the name of the colony formed by Pilgrims in 1620?

Plymouth Colony

**Fact Card #3:** Georgia was named after which British king?

King George II

**Fact Card #4:** What grades were taught in a one-room schoolhouse during colonial times?

1st through 8th

**Fact Card #5:** What is the full name of Rhode Island?

Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

**Fact Card #6:** New York used to be a Dutch colony called...

New Amsterdam

**Fact Card #7:** Today's U.S. state of Maine was once part of...

Massachusetts Bay colony

**Fact Card #8:** What does the word Pennsylvania mean?

Penn's Woods (named for William Penn)

**Fact Card #9:** Name the four New England Colonies.

Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire

# ANSWER KEY

## Colonial America Scavenger Hunt

- Fact Card #10:** Name the four Middle Colonies.  
New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware
- Fact Card #11:** Name the five Southern Colonies.  
Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia
- Fact Card #12:** Name three crops that were grown on southern plantations.  
tobacco, cotton, and rice
- Fact Card #13:** Slaves in colonial America were people who were kidnapped from...  
Africa
- Fact Card #14:** What famous colonial American was an author, publisher, politician, scientist, and inventor?  
Benjamin Franklin
- Fact Card #15:** What was a cooper's job?  
He made wooden barrels.
- Fact Card #16:** Someone who made wagons and wheels was a...  
wheelwright
- Fact Card #17:** Name three things colonial Americans made from corn.  
cornbread, corn pudding, and corn pancakes
- Fact Card #18:** What famous document was signed in 1776, marking the end of colonial America?  
the Declaration of Independence