

## COLONIAL PERIOD: THE PEOPLE

The term "Colonial Period" refers to the period of time when England had colonies in America. The Colonial Period began when English settlers founded Jamestown in 1607 and ended when the Revolutionary War began in 1775.



### Reasons for Coming to America

Most of the colonists who came to America were from England. But thousands of others came from Holland, France, Germany, Scotland, Ireland, and Sweden. None of these people were happy living in Europe. They were determined to make a better life for themselves in the New World.

Before leaving Europe, the settlers knew that life would not be easy in America. They realized that they would face dangers and hardships that only strong willed people could endure. But, for the reasons listed below, they felt that the chance to start a new life was more important than other considerations.

1. Poor working people and those who could not find jobs in Europe were sure to find work in America. The rich farm land, dense forests, and plentiful fish and game offered a real opportunity for those ready to work hard to get ahead.
2. Some people were persecuted in England and other European countries because of their religious beliefs. Such groups included the Pilgrims, Puritans, Quakers, Roman Catholics, Huguenots, and Jews. These settlers would be able to enjoy freedom of religion in America.
3. Free or inexpensive land attracted many settlers. Land ownership generally meant a good life for the landowner and his family. Landowners were guaranteed certain rights in the community, usually including the right to vote.
4. Settlers could look forward to having a voice in their government. In Virginia, the colonists elected representatives to the House of Burgesses. This was the first example of representative government in America. In many of the Thirteen Colonies, the people had the right to choose governors and lawmaking assemblies. New England became famous for its town meetings.

Despite the dangers and hardships, most American settlers had better living conditions and more freedom than any other people in the world.

### Questions

- (1) As you have just read, settlers came to America for four main reasons. In your opinion, which two of the reasons described above probably attracted the most people to the English Colonies? Give reasons for your choices.
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- (2) Most of the early settlements were made by trading companies and individuals who wanted to make money and expand English trade and industry. They tried to get as many Europeans as possible to migrate to the colonies. As more people settled in America, trade would increase between the colonies and England. The more trade increased, the more profits increased for businessmen.

Pretend that you are a merchant who owns shares of stock in an English trading company. Merchants often used advertisements to persuade many people to go to America. Your company has decided to promote America as a land of opportunity. You are trying to convince people to settle on lands that your company controls in Virginia. Your company -- the London Company -- offers settlers transportation, land, and tools and other supplies. On the next page, design an advertisement that you think will encourage Europeans to settle in Virginia.

The Thirteen Colonies

The chart on the right lists the Thirteen Colonies and the dates of their first permanent settlements. Use the information to answer these questions.

- (1) Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in America, was located in the \_\_\_\_\_ colony.
- (2) The second permanent English settlement was made by the Pilgrims at Plymouth, \_\_\_\_\_.
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ was the last of the colonies to be settled.
- (4) Settlements had been made in ten of the colonies by the year \_\_\_\_\_.
- (5) The Thirteen Colonies were founded over a period of \_\_\_\_\_ years.

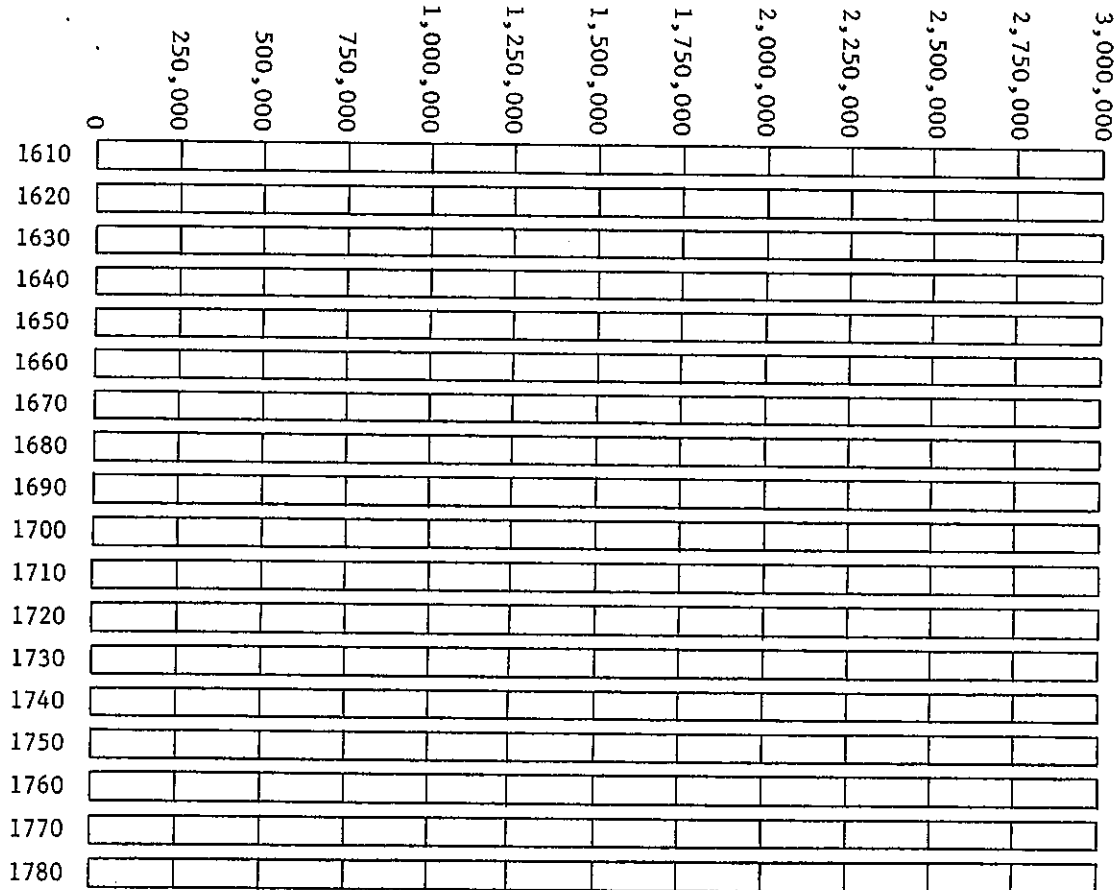
Virginia	1607
Massachusetts	1620
New Hampshire	1623
New York	1624
Connecticut	1633
Maryland	1634
Rhode Island	1636
Delaware	1638
Pennsylvania	1643
North Carolina	1653
New Jersey	1660
South Carolina	1670
Georgia	1733

Population Growth

The population of the colonies grew slowly in the 1600's, but expanded rapidly during the 1700's. By 1770, more than two million people were living in the Thirteen Colonies. America during the 1700's had one of the highest birth rates in the world. Tens of thousands of immigrants added to the growing population figures.

Although no census was taken in the United States until 1790, estimates of the population have been made for the years 1610 through 1780. These figures are given below. Use the numbers to construct a bar graph that shows the population during the Colonial Period.

<u>1610</u> : 350	<u>1650</u> : 50,400	<u>1690</u> : 210,400	<u>1730</u> : 629,400	<u>1770</u> : 2,148,100
<u>1620</u> : 2,300	<u>1660</u> : 75,100	<u>1700</u> : 250,900	<u>1740</u> : 905,600	<u>1780</u> : 2,780,400
<u>1630</u> : 4,600	<u>1670</u> : 111,900	<u>1710</u> : 331,700	<u>1750</u> : 1,170,800	
<u>1640</u> : 26,600	<u>1680</u> : 151,500	<u>1720</u> : 466,200	<u>1760</u> : 1,593,600	



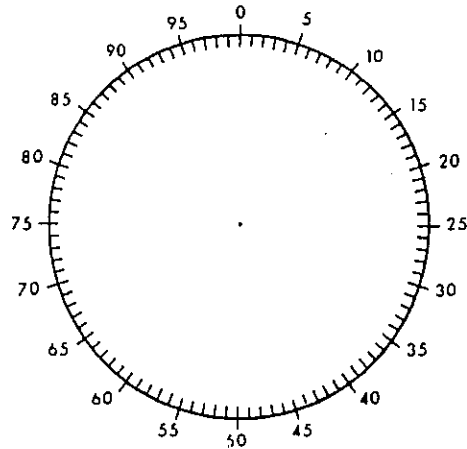
Questions Refer to the bar graph that you have constructed and the chart on the preceding page.

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Did the population of the Thirteen Colonies always increase from one ten-year period to the next? (yes or no)
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_ The 350 people who lived in America in 1610 all lived in what colony?
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ During which 10-year period did the population double -- 1620-1630, 1670-1680, or 1760-1770?
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_ By how much did the population increase between 1700 and 1780?
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_ How many English settlers lived in Pennsylvania in 1640?

Population Distribution

Construct a circle graph that shows the distribution of people between the New England Colonies, Middle Colonies, and Southern Colonies in 1770.

New England Colonies 27%  
 Middle Colonies 25%  
 Southern Colonies 48%



- (1) About 1 out of every 2 people lived in the \_\_\_\_\_ Colonies.
- (2) The region with the smallest population was the \_\_\_\_\_ Colonies.
- (3) Did more people live in the Southern Colonies than in the New England and Middle Colonies combined? (yes or no) \_\_\_\_\_

The colonies and cities having the most people in the mid-1700's are given in the following tables. Use the information to answer the questions below.

Virginia	447,000
Massachusetts	266,000
Pennsylvania	240,000

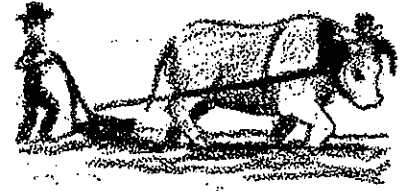
Philadelphia	40,000
New York City	25,000
Boston	16,000
Charleston	12,000
Newport	11,000

True or False?

- (4) \_\_\_\_\_ More than twice as many people lived in Virginia as in Pennsylvania.
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_ Philadelphia was located in the colony that had the largest population.
- (6) \_\_\_\_\_ Charleston was the only large city in the Southern Colonies.
- (7) \_\_\_\_\_ None of the largest cities were located in the colony that ranked first in population.
- (8) \_\_\_\_\_ Philadelphia had almost as many people as New York City and Boston combined.
- (9) \_\_\_\_\_ Massachusetts was the most populous of the New England Colonies.
- (10) \_\_\_\_\_ Of the people who lived in Pennsylvania, 1 out of every 6 lived in Philadelphia.

## COLONIAL PERIOD: THE ECONOMY

Over 90% of the people who lived in the English Colonies earned a living from farming. Farmers used such hand tools as the ax, hoe, scythe, sickle, and spade. Some farmers made wooden plows that were pulled through fields by a team of horses or oxen. The colonists planted the same crops on the same plot of land for several years without using fertilizers. When the soil wore out, they simply cleared more land. German immigrants were the first to rotate their crops and add fertilizers to the soil.



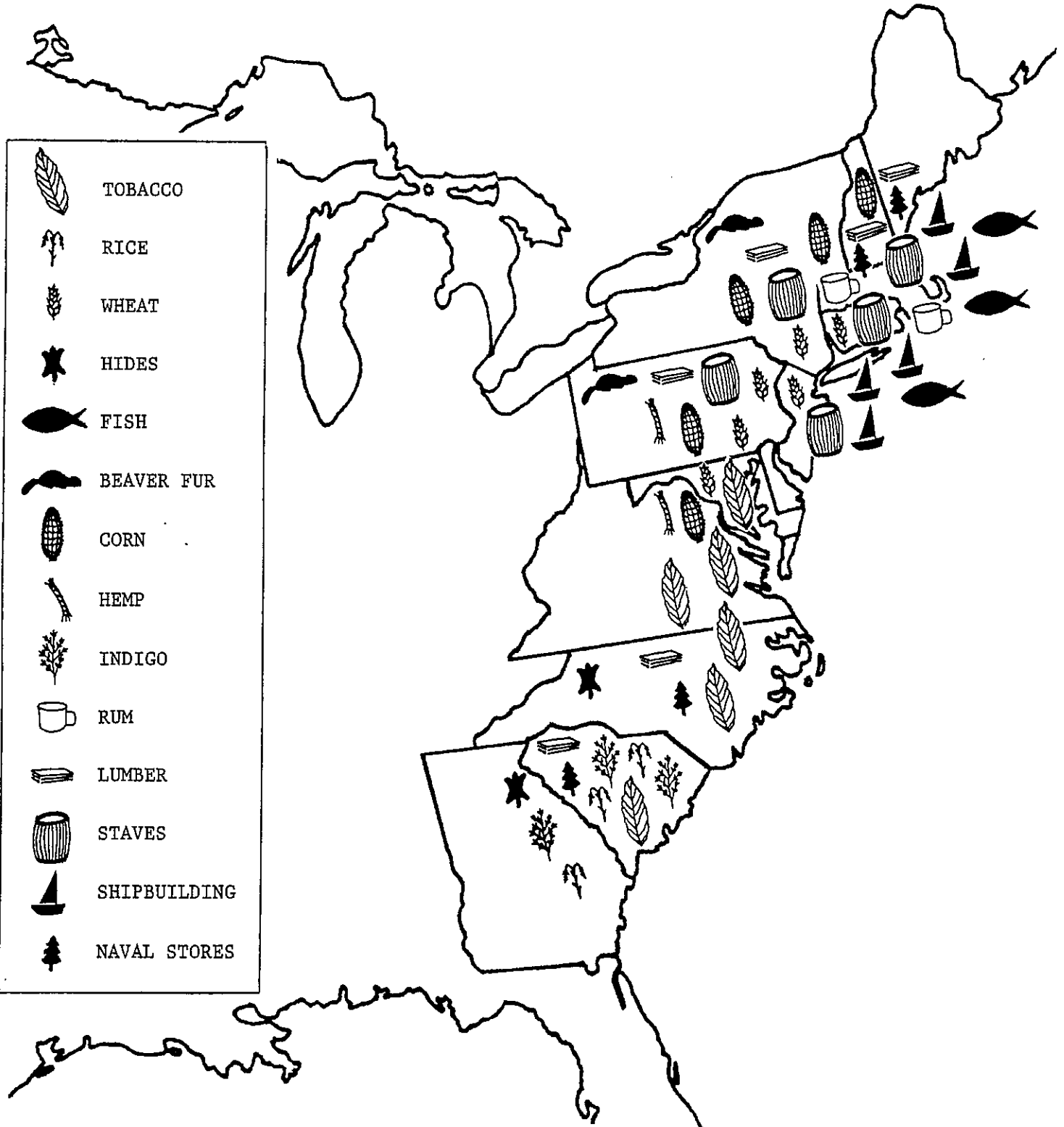
Farmers in the Middle Colonies and Southern Colonies benefited from the fertile soil and longer growing season there. In New England, the soil was rocky and the growing season short. But even the New England farmer was able to produce enough vegetables, grain, and meat to feed his family. And sometimes he even had extra crops to sell or exchange for things that he did not grow or make himself.

Many colonists who were not farmers earned a living as skilled craftsmen. Blacksmiths, shoemakers, tanners, and other craftsmen provided needed goods and services to the townspeople.

Map Exercise Use the information on the map on the next page to answer the following questions.

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ The Indians showed the colonists how to plant and cultivate this crop, and how to grind the kernels into meal. It was the most important crop during early colonial times. What was it?
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Wheat eventually became the chief grain in the colonies. Farmers in one section exported so much wheat and wheat flour that they were called the "bread colonies." Was this section the New England Colonies, Middle Colonies, or Southern Colonies?
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ Planters in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina specialized in a crop that they sold to England. This "golden weed" brought huge profits to the planters who had a difficult time keeping up with the overwhelming demand for it. What was this money crop?
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_ Irrigation methods were used by farmers in South Carolina and Georgia in order to grow what food crop?
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_ Clothing manufacturers in England bought large quantities of a blue dye that was made from a plant grown in the Southern Colonies. What plant was the source of this blue dye?
- (6) \_\_\_\_\_ Which crop did some settlers begin to grow in the mid-1700's that was used in making rope?
- (7) \_\_\_\_\_ Strips of wood were placed edge to edge and fastened together to make barrels. They were also used to make the sides of wooden ships. What were these strips of wood called?
- (8) \_\_\_\_\_ Tar and pitch were products taken from the pine trees that grew in the great forests of the Appalachian Mountains. Tar was applied to wood and ropes to keep them from rotting. Pitch was used to keep the wooden ships watertight. What term was given to these products?
- (9) \_\_\_\_\_ Saddlers, harness makers, and certain other craftsmen specialized in making leather goods. The leather that they worked with came from what product?
- (10) \_\_\_\_\_ Were the colonial fishing and shipbuilding industries centered in the New England Colonies, Middle Colonies, or Southern Colonies?

- (11) \_\_\_\_\_ Did men who were trappers earn a living along the Atlantic Coast or on the frontier?
- (12) \_\_\_\_\_ Which product was used by the colonists to construct houses?
- (13) \_\_\_\_\_ Indigo was a major product in how many of the colonies?
- (14) \_\_\_\_\_ What product was made from molasses?
- (15) \_\_\_\_\_ Were colonial farms found mainly on the Atlantic Coastal Plain, in the Appalachian Mountains, or in both plains and mountain areas?



COLONIAL PERIOD: TRADE AND COMMERCE

During the 1700's, a busy trade developed between the New England Colonies, Middle Colonies, and Southern Colonies. Farmers and merchants in one section sent their products to the other colonies that needed them. Since there were few good roads and bridges, most products were carried by boats. Ships called schooners, brigs, and sloops transported goods up and down the Atlantic Coast from Maine to Georgia.

Most villages and towns had weekly trade fairs and markets which provided settlers with needed goods. Before coins came into common use, trading was done by "barter" -- exchanging one kind of goods for another. In outlying areas, peddlers distributed goods on foot or on horseback. The peddlers carried articles in packs on their backs. They also spread news to the most distant corners of the colonies.

Almost all foreign trade was done with England. According to England's economic policy, called "mercantilism," the English Colonies were supposed to trade mainly with the mother country. Parliament, the lawmaking body in England, tried to carry out the system of mercantilism by passing the Navigation Acts. By 1761, the Navigation Acts included 29 "acts," or laws, to restrict colonial trade. Among other things, these laws said that: (1) the colonies were supposed to sell many products (mainly raw materials) only to England (2) the colonies were to buy many articles (mainly manufactured goods) only from England, and (3) goods were to be carried only on English or American ships. England wanted to become rich by establishing a monopoly over trade with its colonies.

For many years, the Navigation Acts were not strictly enforced. Many of the colonists ignored the laws by regularly smuggling goods. The colonists found that they could buy certain goods cheaper from other countries. They also could make more money by selling certain products to other countries besides England. When England decided to tighten its enforcement of the laws during the 1760's, the colonists became angry. They bitterly resented the practice of forcible searches of their homes by British soldiers looking for smuggled goods. Colonial businessmen were among the first to call for revolution. The continued restrictions on trade became one of the main reasons for the Revolutionary War in 1775.

Contest Rules See how many of the following products you can identify. Write the missing letters in the spaces provided. DO NOT LOOK AT THE MAPS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES DURING THE CONTEST.

Major Products Sent from the New England Colonies to the Other Colonies

1. \_ \_ s h
2. l \_ v e s \_ \_ \_ k
3. \_ \_ u \_

Major Products Sent from the Middle Colonies to the Other Colonies

1. \_ e a \_
2. w h \_ \_ \_
3. f \_ o \_ r

Major Products Sent from the Southern Colonies to the Other Colonies

1. \_ \_ c e
2. \_ \_ d i g \_
3. \_ \_ b \_ c c \_

Goods Carried by Peddlers to Outlying Areas

1. c l \_ \_ k s
2. k n \_ \_ \_
3. \_ a t \_ \_ e t s
4. b \_ o k \_
5. \_ \_ o o m s
6. \_ i n s
7. \_ a s k \_ t s
8. r \_ b b o \_ s
9. \_ \_ t c h e s
10. m \_ d \_ c \_ n \_

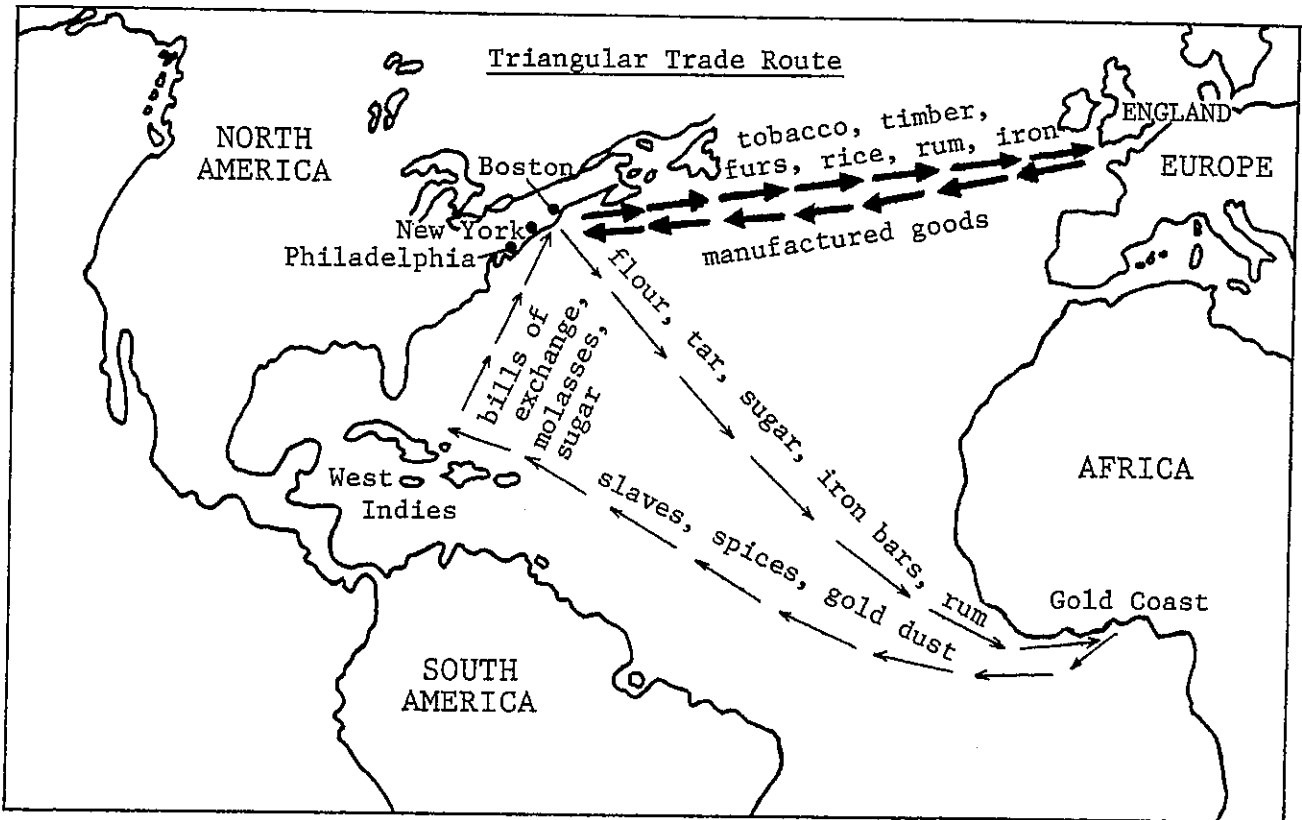
Leading Exports (Most of Which Went to England)

1. w h \_ l e o i \_
2. \_ i \_ h \_
3. i \_ o n
4. \_ o t \_ o \_
5. \_ u m \_ \_
6. w \_ e \_ t \_
7. \_ \_ m \_
8. r \_ \_ e
9. t \_ \_ \_ o
10. i n d \_ \_ \_

Leading Imports (Most of Which Came from England)

1. \_ \_ o e s
2. f \_ r \_ i \_ u \_ e
3. c \_ \_ \_ \_ g
4. \_ r u i \_
5. \_ i n e \_
6. \_ \_ g a r
7. \_ o l \_ s \_ s \_ s
8. \_ i l k
9. g \_ \_ d
10. s a \_ t

Trade Routes Use your knowledge of colonial trade, and the information on the map below, to complete the sentences at the bottom of the page.



The English Colonies traded almost entirely with the country of (1) \_\_\_\_\_ . The colonists were required to send many products only to the mother country as a result of laws passed by Parliament called the (2) \_\_\_\_\_. The laws also stated that the colonists were to buy many articles, especially (3) \_\_\_\_\_ goods, only from England. These trade laws were used by the king to carry out an economic system known as (4) \_\_\_\_\_. According to this system, the (5) \_\_\_\_\_ existed for the benefit of the mother country. England and several other European countries wanted to have a (6) \_\_\_\_\_ over trade with their colonies. For many years, the American colonists got around the trade laws by (7) \_\_\_\_\_ goods into the colonies.

In exchange for manufactured goods, the colonists sent such products as furs, rice, rum, timber, iron, and (8) \_\_\_\_\_ to England. The leading American trading centers were the cities of Boston, New York, and (9) \_\_\_\_\_ .

A three-way trade developed between the colonies, Africa, and the (10) \_\_\_\_\_. Merchants in the (11) \_\_\_\_\_ Colonies sent ships to the African (12) \_\_\_\_\_ carrying, as a typical cargo, flour, tar, sugar, (13) \_\_\_\_\_, which were used by the Africans as money, and (14) \_\_\_\_\_. These products were exchanged for (15) \_\_\_\_\_ -- or occasionally for spices and (16) \_\_\_\_\_, which were then sold at a profit in the (17) \_\_\_\_\_. The ships returned to America with (18) \_\_\_\_\_ and sugar, produced in the West Indies, along with (19) \_\_\_\_\_ which could be used to buy products from England. This three-cornered system of trade followed what came to be known as a (20) \_\_\_\_\_ trade route.

## SLAVES COME TO AMERICA

During the 1400's, European traders found that slaves could be bought along the African coast from tribal rulers who had taken prisoners of war. The African rulers would sell their prisoners in return for rum, cloth, guns, and iron. Between 1450 and 1865, European traders transported an estimated 10 to 15 million slaves to North and South America where they were sold to owners of sugar and cotton plantations. Trading companies from England, France, Portugal, Holland, and Denmark were earning tens of thousands of dollars on each voyage to America.



For the slaves, the voyage from Africa to America was a horrible experience. Slaves were packed so tightly into the hold of the ship that they could hardly move. Chains were sometimes put around their hands and feet. The cramped, filthy conditions made it easy for sickness to spread from one person to another. Thousands died during the ocean crossings from disease and brutal treatment by the slave traders. Some slaves even killed themselves, preferring death to their ordeal.

The slaves usually had no idea where they were being taken or what would happen to them. Most had never seen a ship before and did not understand what made it move through the water. Some of the prisoners wondered if their cruel captors would make them live forever on board the ship. Many were so frightened that they were unable to eat. Those who refused to eat were beaten. The traders wanted them to eat so that they would be strong and healthy and bring high prices when sold in America.

The Africans did not understand the white man's language and did not know what he was saying. Slaves often could not understand each other either. A slave ship usually included blacks from different parts of Africa where different languages were spoken.

Once in America, the slaves saw many things which were new to them. They had never seen brick buildings before, or houses with more than one floor. They had never seen cities or roads, or a man on horseback. Some slaves thought these white people must have magical powers. Ways of living in America were very different from ways of living in Africa.

The first slave ship arrived in America in 1619. It landed at Jamestown, Virginia, just twelve years after the first Englishmen had settled there. Hundreds of other slave ships made the long voyage from Africa to America during the 1600's and 1700's. There was a growing demand for a cheap and plentiful labor supply, especially in the Southern Colonies. Plantation owners needed large numbers of farm workers to help raise tobacco and other crops.

The number of slaves coming to America increased from several hundred per year during the 1600's to several thousand each year during the 1700's. In some of the Southern Colonies, slaves outnumbered white settlers by 2 to 1. Of the 2,500,000 people living in American colonies in 1775, 700,000 were Negroes. The overwhelming majority lived in the South. In the northern colonies, the poor soil and climate restricted the growing of tobacco and other money crops. In the Southern Colonies, slave uprisings sometimes occurred, but harsh laws were passed to severely punish those involved in the rebellions.

### Gustavus Vassa Crosses the Atlantic

One of the few first-hand descriptions of a slave ship crossing the ocean is given in the following account by a slave named Gustavus Vassa. He was taken from the coast of Africa to the island of Barbados in the West Indies. He tells about conditions on board ship and the method by which blacks were sold into slavery.



1. The first thing I saw when I got to the coast was the sea. I also saw a slave ship which was waiting for its cargo. These filled me with so much astonishment and terror, that I still cannot fully describe my feelings at the time.
2. Once I was on the ship I saw a large furnace and a great many black people chained together. I did not doubt my fate once I saw the sadness and horror which their faces expressed. Overcome with horror and grief, I fainted on the deck.
3. I was put down under the decks, and with the terrible smells that I encountered there and the crying, I became so ill and dejected that I had neither the desire nor the ability to eat. I wished for Death to relieve me. Soon, two white men offered me food. When I refused to eat, one of them held me by the hands and laid me across the windlass. My feet were then tied and I was whipped severely....
4. Shortly after, I found some people from my own nation among those who were chained. I asked them what was to be done with us. They told me that we were to be taken to the white people's country where we would be made to work for them. I was then a bit revived and thought if it were no worse than working, my situation was not as desperate as I had first imagined. However, since the white people looked and acted so savagely, I still feared that I would be put to death.
5. I could not help expressing my fears to some of my countrymen. I asked them if the white people had a country. I thought perhaps that they lived in this hollow place. My countrymen told me that the white people came from a distant land. I then asked what made the ship go. My countrymen said that they could not tell but that there was cloth attached to the masts by ropes and that the ship went on....
6. One day two of my countrymen who were chained together jumped into the sea. They preferred death to a life of such misery. Then another followed their example. I believe that many more would have done the same if they had not been prevented by the ship's crew who were immediately alarmed. The most active of us were then put under the deck. There was much noise and confusion with the people of the ship shouting to stop the ship and go back to those who had jumped into the water. Two of the poor creatures were drowned. The other was saved but afterwards he was whipped unmercifully for having preferred death to slavery....
7. Finally, we came in sight of the island of Barbadoes. . . . Many merchants and planters now came on board. They put us into separate groups and examined us with great attention. We thought that we would be eaten by these ugly men. When we were all put down under deck again, there was much dread and trembling among us; and our bitter cries could be heard all through the night. Finally, the white people sent some slaves from the land to calm us. These slaves told us that we were not going to be eaten but would be taken to the land to work and we would see many of our country people. This report gave us ease and soon we were taken to the land where we were led immediately to the merchant's yard. There, without regard to age or sex, we were herded together like sheep. What struck me was that the houses were made of bricks, in stories, and were completely different than anything I had ever seen. I was even more astonished to see people on horseback. I did not know what this could mean. I thought that these white people were filled with magical arts.
8. In a few days we were sold in the merchant's usual manner which is as follows: On a signal given by the beat of a drum, the buyers rush into the yard where the slaves are kept. They choose the one they like best. The noise and clamour which accompany this and the eagerness visible in the

faces of the buyers serve to increase the fears of the terrified slaves.... In this manner relatives and friends are separated, most of them never to see each other again. I remember that in the ship in which I was brought over there were several brothers who were sold in different lots. It was very moving to see and hear their cries as they were parted. Why are parents to lose their children, brothers their sisters, or husbands their wives? Surely this is a new refinement in cruelty, which adds fresh horrors to the wickedness of slavery.

### Questions

- (1) Why was Gustavus Vassa frightened when he was taken on board the slave ship?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (2) Why do you think the white men whipped Vassa for not eating?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (3) Why did several Africans jump overboard?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (4) In paragraph 7, line 3, why do you think the merchants and planters examined the slaves "with great attention"?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (5) After reaching the island of Barbados, why did the white people send slaves from the land onto the ship?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (6) What prompted Vassa to say, "I thought that these white people were filled with magical arts"? (paragraph 7)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (7) Briefly describe the way in which slaves were sold.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (8) What happened to relatives and friends as a result of the slave sale?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_