

Chapter Summary



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The American Colonies and Their Government

Lesson 1 *Influences on American Colonial Government*

- The world's first democratic society was formed in ancient Greece in 400 B.C., although the origins of democracy can be traced back to ideas in ancient Judaism.
- The ancient Greeks created a direct democracy where the people governed themselves. The ancient Romans created the first "republic," where the people chose leaders to govern them.
- In 1215, English nobles made King John sign the *Magna Carta*, a document limiting the king's powers. By the late 1300s, a lawmaking body called Parliament had been formed.
- In 1688 Parliament transferred power from King James II to Mary and William in what is called the Glorious Revolution. Mary and William signed the English Bill of Rights, guaranteeing rights to English citizens.
- Enlightenment thinkers spread the idea that all people have natural rights to life, to freedom, to property ownership, and to choice of religion. These thinkers also said a social contract obligated governments to serve and protect the people.
- Beginning in 1619, the Jamestown settlers were allowed to elect leaders to a House of Burgesses, the first representative democracy in colonial America.
- The Pilgrims at Plymouth established the first direct democracy in North America in the Mayflower Compact.

Lesson 2 *Settlement, Culture, and Government of the Colonies*

- Colonists from England, Scotland, Wales, and other parts of Europe came to America seeking adventure, gold, a chance to earn a living, and/or religious freedom.
- Over time, thousands of Africans were brought to the colonies against their will to work for the European settlers.
- Climate and geography shaped the colonies into three economic regions: the New England Colonies, the Middle Colonies, and the Southern Colonies.

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Lesson 2 *Settlement, Culture, and Government of the Colonies, Cont.*

- New England had a cold climate and rocky terrain, so farms were small. Most people lived and worked in towns. Shipbuilding, fishing, and fur trading were important industries.
- In the Middle Colonies the soil was fertile, so farmers raised wheat and other cash crops for sale.
- The Southern Colonies' warm climate and fertile soil led to the creation of plantations worked by enslaved Africans
- Over time, England appointed governors in many colonies who protected British interests over those of the colonists. Many colonists resented this.

Lesson 3 *Disagreements with Great Britain*

- Beginning in 1740, the Great Awakening urged people to build a direct relationship with God and to challenge traditional religious authority. With the Enlightenment, this created a spirit of personal freedom in the colonies.
- In the 1700s, English colonists moved west into areas claimed by France. In 1763, Britain defeated France in the French and Indian War and took over French lands.
- To pay off its war debts, the British government imposed taxes on the colonists. Colonists protested and boycotted, with acts such as the Boston Tea Party (1773).
- In 1774, representatives from the colonies met at the First Continental Congress. The king responded to their requests and boycotts by threatening stronger measures.
- In 1775, the Second Continental Congress voted for independence and Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. This was the first document to call for a government based on the consent of the governed and has become a model for other nations.