

Lesson 4: Religious Freedom and Early New England Settlements

Big Ideas of the Lesson

- The Separatists, or Pilgrims, wanted to start a settlement in North America for religious reasons. They were looking for religious freedom.
- The Pilgrims started the colony of Plymouth in what is now the state of Massachusetts.
- The Pilgrims signed the Mayflower Compact which was an agreement that set up their government. It was based on the core democratic value of the common good.
- The Pilgrims received lots of help from Native Americans.
- The first harvest festival the Pilgrims celebrated became the basis for our holiday of Thanksgiving.

Lesson Abstract:

In this lesson, students explore the quest for religious freedom as they learn about the Plymouth Colony. They study a variety of resources including historical maps, data, and literature. They examine the foundations of self-rule in the English Colonies through an analysis of the Mayflower Compact. As a culminating activity they complete a chart and Venn diagram comparing Jamestown and Plymouth.

Content Expectations

- 5 – U2.1.2: Describe significant developments in the New England colonies, including:
- patterns of settlement and control including the impact of geography (landforms and climate) on settlement
 - relations with American Indians (e.g., Pequot/King Phillip's War)
 - growth of agricultural (small farms) and non-agricultural (shipping, manufacturing) economies
 - the development of government including establishment of town meetings, development of colonial legislatures and growth of royal government
 - religious tensions in Massachusetts that led to the establishment of other colonies in New England.

Common Core State Standards:

- RI.5.2:* Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.

Key Concepts

cause and effect
colonization
migration
push and pull factors
role of religion

Instructional Resources

Equipment/Manipulative

Chart paper
Document camera/projector
A world map

Student Resource

Bower, Burt, et al. *America's Past*, Social Studies Alive Program. Palo Alto, CA: Teacher's Curriculum Institute, 2010 or a similar fifth grade social studies textbook. Pp. 77-79.

McGovern, Ann *If You Sailed on the Mayflower*. New York: Scholastic, 2000. (optional)

Van Leeuwen, Jean. *Across the Wide Dark Sea: The Mayflower Journey*. New York: Dial Books, 1995. (optional)

A Walking Tour of Plymouth Plantation. 5 Oct. 2011
<<http://archnet.asu.edu/archives/historic/plimoth/plimoth.html>>.

Waters, Kate. *On the Mayflower: Voyage of the Ship's Apprentice and a Passenger Girl*. New York: Scholastic, 1996. (optional)

- - -. *Samuel Eaton's Day: A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Boy..* New York: Scholastic, 1993. (optional)

- - -. *Sarah Morton's Day: A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Girl*. New York: Scholastic, 1989 (optional)

- - -. *Tapenum's Day: A Wampanoag Indian boy in Pilgrim Times..* New York: Scholastic, 1996. (optional)

Yero, Judith Lloyd. *The Mayflower Compact*. Documents of Freedom series. Washington, D.C: National Geographic, 2004. (optinal)

You are the Historian: Investigating the First Thanksgiving. 5 Oct. 2011<http://www.plimoth.org/education/olc/index_js2.html>.

Teacher Resource

Children on the Mayflower. The Pilgrims & Plymouth Colony, 1620. 5 Oct. 2011
<<http://www.rootsweb.com/~mosmd/mfchild.htm>>.

Egbo, Carol. *Supplemental Materials (Unit 3, Lesson 4)*. Teacher-made material. Oakland Schools, 2012.

John Smith's 1614 Map of New England. The Pilgrims & Plymouth Colony, 1620. 5 Oct. 2011
<<http://www.rootsweb.com/~mosmd/nemap.htm>>.

Wampanoag Country in the 1600s. 5 Oct. 2011
<http://www.plimoth.org/education/olc/Map_Wampanoag.pdf>.

Lesson Sequence

1. Write the term “Pilgrims” on an overhead transparency or board. Ask how many students are familiar with this term. Tell students to take out their social studies journals and write a list of words that come to mind when they think of the word “Pilgrims.” Give students time to write and then discuss what they wrote. Make a master list of their words on an overhead transparency or board. Common words students think of will probably include: Thanksgiving, Mayflower, Native Americans, Plymouth Rock, etc. Using Word Card #21, explain that in this lesson they will learn more about the group known as the Pilgrims and the colony they began in a region that became known as New England.
2. Briefly review the Jamestown settlement and the Virginia Colony. Explain to students that as Jamestown and the surrounding colony became more prosperous, more English people were interested in going to North America. Ask students what pull factors may have attracted people to Virginia. Discuss students’ responses. Possible answers include that people were making a lot of money on tobacco profits and that there was the chance to own your own land in Virginia. Explain that another factor that encouraged immigration to North America was a book written by John Smith who had been a leader at Jamestown. In the book he included maps of the coastline, descriptions of the land and other information. He called the land “New England.” Display “John Smith’s Map of New England”, located in the *Supplemental Materials, (Unit 3, Lesson 4)* and explain that this is one of the maps from his book.
3. Remind students that the majority of people who went to Jamestown went for economic reasons. In the beginning, people hoped to find gold and other riches. Later they hoped to make a profit selling cash crops like tobacco. Explain that the Pilgrims came to North America mainly for religious, not economic reasons. Use Word Card #22 to discuss the term ‘religious freedom.’
4. Explain that in the early 1600s, people in England had to belong to the Church of England, which was headed by the King of England. Those who refused to join that church were persecuted which meant they were often put in jail or mistreated. One group of people who did not want to attend the Church of England decided to separate from the church. They became known as the Separatists. Share the following information about the Separatists:
 - In 1608, they decided to move to Holland so they could follow their religion freely.
 - In Holland they had religious freedom but began to worry that their children would not learn English ways. (Point out Holland on a world map)
 - They decided to go to North America where they hoped to live among English colonists and still be able to follow their own religion.
 - In time these people became known as Pilgrims because a pilgrim is a person who makes a journey for religious reasons.
5. Review the term ‘push and pull factors’ and ask students what push and pull factors influenced the decision of the Separatists, or Pilgrims, to migrate to North America. Guide students in understanding how religion was both a push and pull factor. Religious persecution pushed the Separatists out of England and the hope of religious freedom pulled them to North America.

6. Explain that early in 1620, this group requested and won a charter from the Virginia Company to begin a new settlement in the northern section of the area known as Virginia. They began to make plans for their journey. Some of their members, however, were afraid to go. In the end, less than 40 Separatists planned to go. Ask students: Do you think this was a large enough group to begin a new settlement? Why or why not? Discuss student responses. Answers should focus on the idea that even with one hundred settlers it was difficult to found Jamestown.
7. Explain that the Separatists, who became known as the Pilgrims, needed more people to join them so they signed up other English people who did not share their religion. The Separatists called these people the “Strangers.” They wanted to go to North America to try and find a better life. Two ships, the *Speedwell* and the *Mayflower*, were chosen and loaded with supplies for both the voyage and for the new settlement. Ask students which of these ships they are familiar with. Most students should recognize the *Mayflower* as the ship that brought the Pilgrims to New England. Ask students what they think happened to the other ship. Discuss student predictions. Then, reveal the answer using “The Journey, Information Sheet,” located in the *Supplemental Materials, (Unit 3, Lesson 4)*. Discuss the journey using these questions:
 - How do you think the decision to sail with only one ship affected the people and their journey?
 - How do you think they felt as the journey went on and things became more difficult?
 - Do you think they stayed in Massachusetts or tried to reach the Virginia Colony? Why or why not?
8. To enrich this section of the lesson, read students one of the following books or assign one as independent reading:
 - *If You Sailed on the Mayflower* by Ann McGovern
 - *Across the Wide Dark Sea* by Jean Van Leeuwen
 - *On the Mayflower: Voyage of the Ship’s Apprentice and a Passenger Girl* by Kate Waters
9. Divide students into pairs and give each pair a copy of “Children on the Mayflower”, located in the *Supplemental Materials, (Unit 3, Lesson 4)*. Have pairs of students work together to draw some conclusions based on the information on the chart. Possible answers include:
 - There were 31 children on board the Mayflower.
 - Some of the children had names that are not common now such as Remember, Love, Humility, Oceanus, and Resolved.
 - We do not know the first names of some of the children.
 - One child was born on the journey.
 - Eleven of the children died during the first winter.As a writing assignment, have students write a journal entry from the perspective of a child their age traveling on the Mayflower. Have them share their writing in small groups.
10. Explain to the class that the Pilgrims decided to stay in the area of Massachusetts instead of trying to get to the Jamestown area of the Virginia Colony. This presented them with a problem. They were in an area with no government. While still on the ship, they decided to write an agreement that would create a government for them and keep order. This type of

agreement was called a “Compact.” Using Word Cards #23 and #24, discuss the terms ‘compact’ and ‘Mayflower Compact.’

11. Display “The Mayflower Compact”, located in the *Supplemental Materials, (Unit 3, Lesson 4)*. Remind students that, like many primary sources, this document presents some problems. For example, it is written in the language of the times, which can be hard to understand now. Using a highlighter, guide the students in highlighting any important words and phrases they are familiar with. These should include: King James, Christian faith, first colony, Virginia, combine ourselves, better ordering, preservation, equal laws, constitutions, good of the colony, and promise.
12. Using Word Card #25, ask students which core democratic value this document appears to be based. Discuss students’ responses and guide students to the idea that one major purpose of this document was to benefit the common good, which the document described as the “good of the Colony.” Using Word Card #26, review the term ‘common good.’
13. Using “Understanding the Mayflower Compact”, located in the *Supplemental Materials, (Unit 3, Lesson 4)* further explore the meaning of the document. Using Word Card #27, explain that this is a very important document because it was the first example of self-rule in the English Colonies. Explain that this was a time when kings and queens ruled and the idea of self-rule was a very new idea. Note that National Geographic publishes a short, very information book on the Mayflower Compact, which is listed in the Student Resource section of this lesson.
14. Explain that the group now began to look for a place to settle. Share the following information regarding this:
 - They wanted a place with a safe harbor, fresh water, and good soil.
 - While most people stayed onboard some began to look for a good place.
 - Late in December they found a clearing with old cornfields. This turned out to be an abandoned settlement of the Wampanoag Native Americans.
 - On December 26, 1620 the group went ashore. This was officially the beginning of the Plymouth Colony, which was also known as the Plymoth Plantation.
15. Ask students what they know about this landing at Plymouth. Note that many will be familiar with the idea that they landed at Plymouth Rock. Explain that this is really more of a legend. No Pilgrim records left behind make any mention of the rock. It was a legend that developed over time. At this point have students add the founding of Plymouth to the timeline they are creating in this unit.
16. Display John Smith’s map again which was used in Step 2. Point out the area where the Pilgrims ended up. You will actually see the word “Plymouth” on John Smith’s map and be able to point out Cape Cod to students. Display the map of “Wampanoag Country in the 1600s”, located in the *Supplemental Materials, (Unit 3, Lesson 4)*. Ask students what this map shows. Discuss students’ responses and guide them to the idea that Native Americans of the Wampanoag nation had been living in this area for a long time. Point out Patuxet on this map and explain that this had been the name of the former Wampanoag settlement where the Pilgrims began the Plymouth Colony. Share this additional information about the map:

- The Wampanoag territory in the 1600s was made up of about 67 villages.
- This map shows some of them.
- The large print shows the Wampanoag name of a village.
- The small print gives the modern name.

17. Ask students the following question: How would the fact that they landed in late December affect them? Discuss students' ideas. Possible answers include it would be cold in that area, it would be too late to plant crops, and it would not be a good time to find food. Give each student a copy of "The First Winter and Spring" text selection. Explain that students should read the selection and then identify key ideas for each paragraph and write them on the chart beneath the text.

18. Give students time to read the text and complete the chart. Then, discuss the early days of Plymouth using the following questions.

- How do you think so many deaths affected the colony?
- How were these events like those of Jamestown?
- How were they different?
- Why do you think Tisquantum, or Squanto, decided to help the people even though he had been taken and sold as a slave by Europeans before?

19. Explain that the Pilgrims and Wampanoags, under the leadership of their chief, Massasoit, lived in peace during this time. This benefited both groups. Explain that students will learn later that this changed over time as more English came to settle in Massachusetts.

20. Explain that in the fall of 1621, the Pilgrims gathered in their first harvest. It was decided to celebrate the harvest and give thanks for it. A festival was held for three days that included the 53 English colonists and 90 Wampanoag men. It included feasting and what they called at the time "recreations." Ask students what this festival became known as. Guide them to the idea that this is often thought of as the first Thanksgiving. Share the following information with students and then ask if they agree that this festival was "First Thanksgiving."

- In 1598, a group of Spanish settlers had a celebration of thanks for safely reaching the Rio Grande River.
- The Wampanoag like many Native Americans had celebrated ceremonies of thanks for hundreds of years. These celebrations were called Nickommoh and were often held after a successful harvest.

Explain that Thanksgiving became a national holiday in 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln declared the last Thursday in November as a "day of thanksgiving and praise."

21. For an excellent enrichment, have students take part an activity in which they investigate myths involving the First Thanksgiving at the following website: *You are the Historian*. 5 Oct. 2011 <http://www.plimoth.org/OLC/index_js2.html>.

22. Explain that the Plymouth Colony continued to grow and prosper through fishing, farming, and fur trading. Unlike Jamestown, the farms remained small due to a colder climate and rocky soil. It remained a separate colony until it became part of Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1691. This

was a larger colony that had formed later also for religious reasons. Explain that students will learn more about this colony in the next lesson.

23. Note that this lesson can be supplemented with a textbook selection relating to the founding of Plymouth such as the one listed in the Student Resources.

Assessment

As an assessment, provide each student with a copy of the “Sequence Activity” located in the *Supplemental Materials, (Unit 3, Lesson 4)*. Have them cut apart the cards and place them in the correct sequence. Note that a sheet showing the correct sequence has also been included in the *Supplemental Materials, (Unit 3, Lesson 4)*. For an alternative or additional assessment have students complete the “Comparison Chart” comparing Plymouth and Jamestown, located in the *Supplemental Materials, (Unit 3, Lesson 4)*. Then have students use the chart to create a Venn diagram comparing the two settlements. Note that a Completed Chart and a Completed Venn Diagram with possible answers has been included in the *Supplemental Materials, (Unit 3, Lesson 4)*.