

New England Colonies in the Seventeenth Century

I. Protestant Reformation and the eventual rise of Puritanism

- A. 1517, Martin Luther began his break from the Catholic church; signaled the birth of Protestantism
1. Luther declared the Bible alone was the source of God's word.
 2. Faith alone would determine salvation; he denounced the authority of the pope.
 3. The Reformation came to dominate European politics well into the next century.

B. **John Calvin** elaborated on Luther's ideas and founded **Calvinism** in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536)

1. God was all powerful and all-good.
2. Humans, due to original sin, were weak and wicked.
3. **Predestination**
 - a. God was all-knowing and knew beforehand who was going to heaven or hell.
 - The "elect" were chosen by God to have eternal salvation.
 - b. "Good works" (such as following the sacraments of the Catholic Church) did not determine salvation.
 - c. However, one could not act immoral since no one knew their status before God.
 - d. A conversion experience (an intense identifiable personal experience with God) was seen to be a sign from God that one had been chosen.
 - "Visible saints": After conversion, people expected to lead "sanctified" lives as a model for the community.

C. **Church of England** and the Puritans

1. King Henry VIII broke ties with Roman Catholic church in the 1530's and became head of the newly formed **Church of England** or **Anglican Church**.
2. Puritans were Protestants seeking to reform the Anglican Church by removing its Catholic elements and excluding people who were not committed.
3. Separatists: extreme group of Puritans who wanted to break from the Anglican Church altogether— later called **Pilgrims**.
4. James I was concerned that Separatists challenged his role as leader of the Church and threatened to force them out of England.

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for Notes

D. Stuart Line of Monarchs: Backdrop to 17th-century colonial history

- James I (r. 1603-1625)
- Charles I (r. 1625-1642)
- 1642-1649 -- English Civil War
- Interregnum under Oliver Cromwell (1649-1658)
- Restoration: Charles II (1660-1685)
- James I (r. 1685-1688)
- "Glorious Revolution" (1688): William & Mary; Bill of Rights (1689)

II. The **Plymouth Colony** and the **Pilgrims**

A. **Pilgrims**: the first wave of **Separatists**

1. Separatists left Britain for Holland for freedom to practice Calvinism.
 - a. Led by the Rev. **John Robinson**
 - b. Later, became unhappy by the "Dutchification" of their children.
 - c. Sought opportunity to practice their religion as Englishmen without interference.
2. Secured rights with the Virginia Company to settle within its jurisdiction in Virginia.
 - a. Pilgrims agreed to work for 7 years in return for the support of the joint stock company which was comprised of non-separatist investors.
 - b. Profits were to be shared among the settlers and investors after 7 years.
3. **Mayflower** landed off the New England coast with 102 persons.
 - a. Fewer than half were Separatists.
 - b. Some historians suggest the Pilgrims "hijacked" the ship and gained consent of non-separatists by issuing the *Mayflower Compact*.
4. Plymouth Bay was eventually chosen as the settlement site.
 - a. Plymouth had been an Amerindian community that had been ravaged by a great plague just a few years earlier.
 - b. Plymouth was outside the jurisdiction of the Virginia Company.
 - c. Settlers thus became squatters: no legal right to land and no recognized gov't (thus, never gained a charter from the crown).
5. **Mayflower Compact** (not a constitution but an agreement)
 - a. Purpose: legitimize Pilgrims' settlement outside Virginia by creating a secular document recognizing James I as their sovereign and creating a body of all the settlers with power to devise laws and elect leaders.
 - Because Plymouth Colony never possessed a charter, it was later merged with Massachusetts Bay Colony.
 - b. The agreement provided for majority rule among the settlers (excluding servants and seamen) and became an important seed

of democracy.

- c. Adult male settlers assembled to make laws and conduct open-discussion town meetings.
6. Despite a terrible first winter where over ½ the people died, no one left Plymouth Plantation.

B. Relations with Amerindians

1. **Squanto** served as a liaison between the Pilgrims and the **Wampanoags** (Pokanokets) who controlled the region.
2. The Wampanoags helped the Pilgrims by demonstrating corn cultivation, where to fish, and introducing them to **Massasoit**, leader of the tribe.
3. By fall of 1621, 20 acres of Amerindian corn provided food for survival.
 - a. **Thanksgiving** -- Autumn, 1621: Pilgrims adopted the Amerindians' traditional custom of giving thanks at the time of harvest, believing their survival was God's will
 - b. The ritual lasted 3 days and became an annual event.
4. An alliance was formed by the Pilgrims and Wampanoags for mutual protection against other Amerindian tribes.
 - The peace between the Pilgrims and Wampanoags lasted 41 years until Massasoit's death in 1662.

C. Success of the Pilgrims

1. Developed an economy of fur trade, fishing, and lumber.
2. Religion remained paramount in the community.
3. William Bradford served as the elected governor for many years.
 - To encourage farming, he distributed land among the settlers.
4. Miles Standish: military leader who was hired to protect the Pilgrims.
 - a. Led expedition against the Massachusetts Indians at the behest of Massasoit; later scolded by the Rev. John Robinson
 - b. Despite Puritan attacks from further north, Massasoit honored his treaty with the Pilgrims until his death in 1662.

D. 1691, the small Plymouth colony of 7,000 people merged with the large Massachusetts Bay Colony.

1. The Pilgrims did not have their own charter.
2. Massachusetts Bay had its charter revoked and the Crown sought to unify both colonies for administrative purposes.

III. The **Massachusetts Bay Colony** (founded in 1629)

- A. **Puritans** came to America to escape religious persecution
1. Charles I had dismissed Parliament in 1629 and sanctioned anti-Puritan persecution.
 2. **Archbishop Laud** opposed any separation from the Church of England.
 3. Hitherto, moderate Puritans had gathered support in Parliament for reforms.
 4. King refused to guarantee power of Parliament or basic rights for people.
- B. MBC founded in 1629 by non-Separatist Puritans out of fear for their faith and England's future.
1. **Cambridge Agreement:** signed in England; turned the corporate charter into a government that served as the MBC's constitution for many years.
 2. Puritans were now far from royal authority and the archbishop.
- C. The "**Great Migration**" (1630's)
1. By 1631, 2,000 colonists had arrived in Boston and had settled a number of towns around it as well.
 2. Turmoil in England resulted in 15,000 more immigrants coming to New England (60,000 others scattered throughout North America & West Indies).
 3. English Civil War (1642-1649) ended the Great Migration.
 - a. Puritans remained in England to fight the Royalist forces.
 - b. Puritans in England led by Oliver Cromwell took control of gov't between 1642 and 1660.
 - c. Charles I was beheaded in 1649.
- D. **John Winthrop** - Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony
1. **Covenant Theology:** Winthrop believed Puritans had a covenant with God to lead a new religious experiment in the New World.
 - Wrote "**We shall build a city upon a hill**" in *A Model of Christian Charity* as he was sailing to Massachusetts Bay
 2. His strong leadership helped the colony to succeed.
- E. Massachusetts became biggest and most influential of New England colonies.
- Economy: fishing, shipbuilding, fur trade, lumbering; some dairy farming, and small farming of wheat and corn

IV. Religion and politics in Massachusetts Bay Colony

A. Governing was open to all free adult males (2/5 of population) belonging to Puritan congregations.

1. Percentage of eligible officeholders was more than in England.
2. Eventually, Puritan churches grew collectively into the **Congregational Church**.
3. Puritan men gained the right to vote in 1631.
 - Non-religious men and all women could not vote.
4. **Townhall meetings** emerged as a staple of democracy.
 - a. Town governments allowed all male property holders and at times other residents to vote and publicly discuss issues.
 - b. Votes were conducted by majority-rule (show of hands).

B. Purpose of government: enforce God's laws (covenant theology)

1. Provincial gov't under Governor Winthrop was not a democracy.
2. Only Puritans (the "visible saints") could be freemen; only freemen could vote.
 - Hated democracy and distrusted non-Puritan common people.
3. Congregational church was "established": Non-church members as well as believers required to pay taxes to the gov't-supported church.
4. Religious dissenters were punished
 - New England became the least tolerant regarding religion (with the exception of Rhode Island).

C. Church leadership

1. Controlled church membership by conducting public interrogations of people claiming to have experienced conversion.
2. **John Cotton** was devoted to defending the government's duty to enforce religious rules yet advocated a civil government.
3. Clergymen were not allowed to hold political office.
 - a. Congregation could hire and fire ministers and set salaries.
 - b. In effect, a form of separation of church and state.
 - c. Puritans in England had learned their lesson when they suffered at the hands of the "political" Anglican clergy in England.
4. **Cambridge Platform (1648):** Four Puritan colonies--MBC, Plymouth, Connecticut and New Haven -- organized a congregational form of church gov't
 - a. Significance: Congregational church became more uniform throughout New England.
 - b. Represented an increased regional identity throughout much of New England.

D. Representative legislative assembly formed in 1634 and after 1642, the assembly met separately as a lower house and was the most influential organ of the government.

E. Religious dissenters in the Massachusetts Bay Colony

1. **Quakers**, who believed in an inner light and not in theology, flouted the authority of the Puritan clergy and were persecuted.
 - A few were publicly executed
2. **Anne Hutchinson**: believed in **antinomianism**
 - a. Accordingly, the "elect" didn't need to obey man's law because they were predestined for salvation.
 - b. She held prayer meetings at home to discuss John Cotton's sermons with other women; this was taboo for a non-clergy member to do within the Congregational Church.
 - c. Clergy accused her of heresy and brought her to trial in 1638.
 - She claimed direct revelation from God, even a higher heresy.
 - She was banished from colony; set out for Rhode Island
 - Her trial may have been political since some who supported Anne politically opposed the present leadership of the colony
3. **Roger Williams**
 - a. Extreme Separatist who challenged the legality of the Plymouth and MBC charters because land had belonged to Amerindians and was not the king's land to grant.
 - Claimed the MBC took land from Amerindians without fair compensation
 - b. **"liberty of conscience"**
 - Williams denied the authority of the civil gov't to regulate religious behavior.
 - Claimed gov't could only punish civil crimes while the church alone had responsibility for religious discipline.
 - Argued that no man should be forced to go to church, in effect, challenging the basis of the Massachusetts Bay government.
 - Used "wall of separation" metaphor for church and state separation.
 - Thomas Jefferson would later use this metaphor to disestablish religion in Virginia which later influenced the "No Establishment" clause of the U.S. Constitution (First Amendment)
 - c. General Court banished him from colony in October 1635 and Williams fled in winter of 1636 to Narragansett Bay, sheltered by Amerindian friends.
 - d. He purchased lands from Amerindians and founded the community of Providence, accepting all settlers regardless of their beliefs.

F. The decline of Puritanism

1. First-generation Puritans began losing their religious zeal as time went on.
 - a. Large population influx dispersed Puritan population onto outlying farms away from control of church and neighbors.
 - b. After the wave of dissention in the 1630s and 1640s (e.g. Hutchinson and Williams) conversions decreased dramatically.
 - Children of non-converted members could not be baptized.
 - c. The **jeremiad**, taken from the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, was used by preachers to scold parishioners into being more committed to their faith.
 - d. Conversions continued to abate as second-generation Puritans had trouble getting their conversions authenticated by the church, thus preventing their children from being baptized.
2. "**Half-Way Covenant**," 1662: sought to attract more members by giving partial membership to the unconverted (who had been baptized as children).
 - Children of Half-Way members were allowed to be baptized.
3. Eventually, Puritan churches opened baptism to anyone
 - a. Distinction between the "elect" and other members of society subsided.
 - b. Strict religious purity was sacrificed for wider religious participation.
 - Women made up a larger percentage of congregations.
4. **Salem Witch Trials**, 1692: Symbolized the decline of the Puritan clergy
 - a. Massachusetts suffered political, religious, and military upheaval that led to widespread paranoia and unrest.
 - Many Europeans and colonists in 16th and 17th centuries believed the devil worked through witches in the real world.
 - b. First accusations began when young girls, after listening to voodoo tales from a black servant, began behaving oddly.
 - Witch hunt resulted in a reign of terror after certain older women were accused of being witches.
 - The young female accusers were from the poor western part of the community and accused the more prosperous people in the eastern part.
 - c. After the witch trials, 20 people were executed (and a dog).
 - d. **Cotton Mather**, one of most prominent clergymen in Massachusetts, tacitly supported the witch trials, thus weakening the prestige of the clergy.

V. Completing the New England Colonies

A. Rhode Island (1644)

1. Complete freedom of religion, even for Jews, Catholics and Quakers.
 - a. No oaths required regarding one's religious beliefs
 - b. No compulsory attendance at worship
 - c. No taxes to support a state church
2. Provided simple manhood suffrage in the colony from the outset.
 - Opposed to special privilege of any sort
3. Rhode Island gained immigration dissenters from the MBC which led to the most individualistic and independent population (along with North Carolina).
4. Given a charter from Parliament in 1644; squatters now had rights to land.
5. Williams built a Baptist church at Providence (some claim it is the first Baptist church in America).

B. Connecticut (founded in 1636)

1. May 1636, group of Boston Puritans led by Rev. Thomas Hooker moved into the Connecticut River valley area and founded the town of Hartford.
 - a. Three valley towns of Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield established Connecticut colony.
 - b. Hooker believed MBC gov't was too arbitrary and oppressive.
 - c. His congregation also wanted more lands that the MBC was unwilling to grant.
2. New Haven founded in 1638
 - a. Founded by Puritans wanting stricter and closer church-gov't alliance than Massachusetts (in contrast to Hooker's ideas).
 - b. When the colony harbored two judges who condemned Charles I to death, Charles II sought revenge by granting a colonial charter to Connecticut which merged New Haven with the more democratic settlements in Connecticut Valley.
3. **Fundamental Orders** were drafted in 1639 by the new Connecticut River colony.
 - a. First modern constitution in American history
 - b. Established a democracy controlled by wealthy citizens
 - Gov't should be based on the consent of the people.
 - Patterned after Massachusetts' gov't
 - Foundation for Connecticut's colonial charter and later, its state constitution

C. Maine was absorbed by the MBC in 1677

- Remained part of Massachusetts for nearly 150 years until the Compromise of 1820.

- D. New Hampshire (1679): had been absorbed in 1641 by Massachusetts Bay Colony
1. Primarily a fishing and trading economy
 2. 1679, Charles II arbitrarily separated NH from MBC after being annoyed with MBC's apparent greed in land acquisition. NH became royal colony.

VI. Relations with American Indians

A. **Pequot War (1636-1637)**

1. Despite the Puritan victory over Amerindians, the New England colonies realized collective security was necessary for future defense.
2. Relations between Puritans and Pequots were strained in years preceding the war in southern Connecticut and Rhode Island as Puritans wanted Amerindians to move.
3. Connecticut towns sent 90 men who opted to attack a smaller village of non-combatants where 400 Indian men, women and children were slain.
4. By summer's end, most remaining Pequots were either captured, sold as slaves to the West Indies, or fled for shelter to their former enemies.
5. Puritans used Biblical passages to justify extermination of the Pequots.

B. **New England Confederation** was founded in 1643: MBC, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven

1. Response to the Pequot War
2. Purpose: defense against foes (e.g. Indians, French, and Dutch).
3. Significance: First milestone on road to colonial unity.
4. English Civil War in 1640s left colonies to fend for themselves.
5. Organization
 - a. Exclusively Puritan (Maine and Rhode island not allowed)
 - b. Helped to solve intercolonial problems (e.g. runaway servants and criminals)

C. **King Philip's War** (1675)

1. New England Confederation put to the test during war with Indian chieftain **King Philip (Metacom)** -- Wampanoag Chief, son of Massasoit
2. 52 of 90 Puritan towns attacked; burning or other damage ensued; 13 destroyed
 - Indians copied the Puritan attacks on noncombatants in the Pequot War.
3. Colonists victorious; many Indians sold into slavery in Bermuda
 - Metacom was executed and his head was cut-off and displayed for 20 years.

4. Impact of the war:

- a. Bloodiest conflict ever fought on New England soil.
- b. Native Americans effectively removed from MBC, Connecticut, and Rhode Island
- c. Success of New England Confederation can be seen perhaps as the beginning of American identity as separate from Britain (as Britain did not help the colonists in the war)
- d. New England's success caught the attention of the British Crown that sought to cash in on the region's success
 - Massachusetts' charter revoked a few years later

VII. **Dominion of New England**

A. **Charles II** clamped down on the New England Confederation.

1. Relative autonomy among the colonists disturbed Charles, the royalists, and the Church of England.
 - Puritan hopes of purifying the Anglican Church were destroyed.
2. MBC charter was revoked in 1684 in response to its resisting royal authority.

B. **Dominion of New England** established by James II in 1686

1. England sought to enforce its policy of **mercantilism** in which the colonies existed solely for the benefit of the mother country: wealth, prosperity, and self-sufficiency for the empire.
2. 1685, Lords of Trade created the Dominion of New England to unite the colonies from Nova Scotia to the Delaware River under one gov't.
3. Purpose of DNE:
 - a. Enforce the **Navigation laws** created to protect England's mercantilist system
 - b. Trade with non-English colonies and allies was forbidden
 - c. Bolstered colonial defense against Amerindians, Dutch, and French.
4. 1686, James II appointed **Sir Edmund Andros** to lead the DNE to oversee all of New England and later New York and East and West Jersey.
 - a. Colonists despised his autocracy and allegiance to the Anglican Church.
 - b. Town meetings were forbidden; all land titles were revoked.
 - c. Heavy restrictions placed on the courts, press, and schools.
 - d. Taxed the people without consent of their representatives.
 - e. Enforced the unpopular Navigation Laws and suppressed smuggling
 - Smuggling in the colonies thus became common and even honorable as a way of resisting the crown.

C. England's "**Glorious Revolution**" triggered the "**First American Revolution**"

1. Catholic James II was dethroned in England and replaced by his daughter Mary and her Dutch-born Protestant husband William III (William of Orange).
 - Parliament created a constitutional monarchy: forbade the king from levying taxes or ruling without its consent.
2. News of James II's removal prompted Boston leaders to arrest Andros and ship him back to England.
3. Unrest spread from New England to the Carolinas.
4. DNE collapsed and enforcement of the Navigation Laws was disrupted.

D. Post-Glorious Revolution New England

1. 1691, Massachusetts was made a royal colony with a new charter and a royal governor.
2. Plymouth Colony was merged with Massachusetts
3. Tighter administrative control by the crown over the colonies resulted.

VIII. New England's economy

A. Impact of geography and demography

1. Lack of good soil forged the Puritan characteristic of frugality and hard work.
 - a. Subsistence farming was common; very little cash crop farming
 - b. Dairy farming also become important
2. Trade was the cornerstone of region's economy: fishing and shipbuilding
3. Lumbering, shipping, and fur trade also became important due to abundant forests and harbors.
 - Excellent ports such as Boston and Newport became important in the developing Atlantic trade.
4. Some iron production developed in the 1640s but it was later restricted by the Navigation Acts as England did not want its colonists competing against English iron foundries.
5. Due to its thriving economy, by 1700 Boston was the largest city in the colonies with 8,000 inhabitants.

B. Less ethnic diversity

1. European immigrants were less attracted to the soil-depraved region than to the middle colonies.
2. Relatively few slaves lived in New England (although ironically, Newport Rhode Island was a major slave trading port).
3. Lack of plantation agriculture (e.g. tobacco) meant few indentured servants came to New England.
4. New England's population thus became the most homogenous

among the three colonial regions.

C. The early New England economy was inspired by the **Protestant work ethic** fostered by Calvinists.

1. Early New Englanders worked tirelessly to create the “city on a hill” and economic success often was the result.
2. Puritan industriousness was partly due to the lack of fertile land which necessitated the pursuit of alternate economic activities.

IX. New England Society

A. Puritan contribution to American character

1. Democracy (within the Congregational church) via town meetings and voting rights to church members (starting in 1631)
 - a. Led to democracy in political gov't ("Body of Liberties" in 1641 may have been world's first bill of rights).
 - b. Townhall meetings where freemen met together and each man voted was democracy in its purest form.
 - c. New England villagers regularly met to elect officials, appoint schoolmasters and attend to civic issues (e.g. road repair).
2. **Perfectionism**
 - a. Puritans sought to create a perfect society based on God's laws.
 - b. Argued against slavery on moral grounds.
 - c. Ideas lay the foundation for later reform movements: abolition of slavery, temperance and prohibition of alcohol, public education, prison reform, etc.
3. **Protestant work ethic**: those who were faithful and worked hard and succeeded were seen favorably by God.

B. Education was a major feature of New England society.

1. **Harvard College** founded in 1636 to train the clergy; first college in the colonies.
 - a. Demonstrated the desire of Puritans to have a highly trained clergy.
 - b. By contrast, Virginians did not found a college until 1693 (College of William and Mary).
2. **Massachusetts School of Law** (1642 and 1647)
 - a. Towns with more than 50 families were required to provide elementary education to enable children to read the Bible.
 - b. New England became most literate region of the country.
 - c. A majority of adults knew how to read and write.

C. Small villages and farms formed the basis for a tightly knit society.

1. Necessary to provide security from bordering Amerindians and French and Dutch traders and settlers.
2. After 1640s, outsiders were generally not welcome in villages.
3. Lived an extremely strict and conservative lifestyle.

D. New England Family

1. New England's climate less deadly than in southern Colonies
 - a. Cooler weather and clean water meant far less disease
 - b. Added 10 years to life spans compared to England; life expectancy was 70 years
2. Puritans tended to migrate to New England as families rather than as individuals
 - In contrast, 75% of immigrants to the Chesapeake in the 17th century came as unmarried indentured servants.
3. Families tended to have many children.
4. Strong family stability produced healthy adults and strong social structure.

Review of Main Ideas:

1. What political and religious circumstances in England led to the formation and development of New England?
 - Persecution of Puritans in England resulted in the migration of Pilgrims and Puritans in the 1620s
 - English Civil War significantly reduced migration to New England.
 - English Civil War preoccupied English gov't and left the colonies to fend for themselves (e.g., New England Confederation).
2. How did religion play a role in the development of the New England colonies?
 - Pilgrims came for religious freedom in 1620
 - Puritans came starting in 1629 to "build a city on a hill"; Covenant Theology
 - Rhode Island founded by a religious dissenter, Roger Williams
 - Connecticut River colonies founded by Puritan communities
 - Protestant work ethic resulted in a diverse and successful economy
 - Puritan clergy had much power until the late 17th century.
 - Education important so that people could read the Bible; high literacy rate
 - Creation of tightly-knit communities
3. How did New England differ socially, economically and politically from the southern colonies?
 - Socially: emphasis on Puritanism (little religious toleration), education, strong family and community ties
 - Economically: diverse economy -- trade, fishing, shipbuilding, shipping, fur trade, some dairy farming, some corn and wheat farming; relatively small numbers of slaves
 - Politically: church members could vote, not as aristocratic, strong communities

4. How did Puritanism in New England lead towards democracy?
 - Townhall meetings
 - Church members could vote
5. Trace the decline in the prestige of the Puritan clergy in 17th century New England:
 - Jeremiad
 - Halfway Covenant (1662)
 - Dominion of New England (1680s)
 - Salem Witch Trials (1692)
 - By 1700, Puritan church became the Congregational Church that was open to all comers.

Terms to Know

Protestant Reformation John Calvin Calvinism predestination the "elect" "visible saints" Church of England Puritans Separatists Pilgrims Plymouth Colony John Robinson <i>Mayflower</i> <i>Mayflower Compact</i> Wampanoags (Pokanokets) Thanksgiving Squanto Massasoit Massachusetts Bay Colony Archbishop Laud "Great Migration" John Winthrop covenant theology <i>A Model of Christian Charity</i> Congregational Church townhall meetings "established" John Cotton Cambridge Platform	Quakers Anne Hutchinson antinomianism Roger Williams "liberty of conscience" jeremiad Half-way Covenant Salem Witch Trials Cotton Mather Rhode Island Connecticut Thomas Hooker <i>Fundamental Orders</i> Pequot War New England Confederation King Philip's War Metacom Dominion of New England Charles II mercantilism Navigation Laws Sir Edmund Andros "Glorious Revolution" "First American Revolution" perfectionism Protestant work ethic Harvard College Massachusetts School of Law
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Essay Questions

Note: This sub-unit has been a very high probability area for the AP exam. The new Curriculum Framework provides extensive coverage of the material contained herein. In the past 10 years, 6 questions have come wholly or in part from the material in this chapter. Below are some questions that will help you study the topics that have appeared on previous exams.

1. Analyze the role of religion in the development of the New England colonies
2. Compare and contrast the New England colonies and the Southern colonies politically, economically and socially.
3. What was the role of geography in the development of the New England colonies?
4. Analyze the relationship between the New England colonies and Amerindians

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