

## **Geography and Economy of Colonial Regions in America**

### **Overview:**

This lesson is intended to build students' understanding of the development of the colonial regions in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. It includes components of economics, geography, and history. The goal is to shape students' understanding of how physical environments affect the way people make a living in different regions. Ultimately, this understanding will aid students' ability to comprehend sectional differences that would eventually lead to the American Civil War.

### **Minnesota Social Studies Standard:**

V. Geography

D. Interconnections

1. The student will give examples that demonstrate how people are connected to each other and the environment.
2. Students will analyze how the physical environment influences human activities.

### **Objectives:**

Students will identify regional characteristics of the Thirteen Colonies.

Students will discuss factors that determine how people make a living.

Students will analyze how the economies of the New England, Middle, and Southern Colonies were influenced by the soil, geography, and climate of each region.

**Grade Level:** 7-8

**Time:** 2 days (45-50 minutes each)

**Subject:** United States History; Geography; Economics

### **Required Materials:**

Creating America: A History of the United States (McDougal Littell; ISBN 0-618-37690-9)

The Nystrom Atlas of Our Country's History (ISBN 0-7825-0872-3)

Handout: Graphic Organizer

Fan-N-Pick Discussion Cards.

### **Suggested Procedure:**

- Opening:

Begin with an activity called Rally Table. Students work in pairs; each student needs a writing utensil and each pair needs one sheet of paper. Ask the students a series of questions/prompts (with multiple correct answers) to assess their background knowledge. Students will pass the paper back and forth, taking turns writing answers, with the goal of listing as many correct answers as possible in the time allotted.

  - Question 1. List the names of the Thirteen Colonies.
  - Question 2. Who lived in the colonies?
  - Question 3. Why did these people come to America?
  - Question 4. How did people in the colonies make a living?
  - Question 5. List terms that describe geography.
  - Question 6. List terms that describe climate.

After each question, partners will compare answers with another pair of students, adding to their lists as they share.

Use these questions as a springboard into the inquiry portion of the lesson where students will read maps, graphs, and text to identify and graphically organize various characteristics of each colonial region.

- Development:
  1. Hand out the graphic organizer with the following categories for each colonial region (New England, Middle, Southern) – colonies, people, economy, exports, imports, geography/climate/soil. Before reading the text and maps, check that students understand the definitions of each category. Students should write the definitions for new terms such as economy, import, and export.
  2. Review basic map reading skills (note importance of features such as the title, date, legend, etc.)
  3. Begin on page 22 in the Nystrom Atlas to locate the colonies that make up each region. As a class, complete the “Colonies” column on the graphic organizer. Next, use the “Colonists from Many Nations” map to identify people who lived in the colonies. Do the first region together, and then allow students to work together to complete the category.
  4. Continue to add information to the graphic organizer. Direct students to the appropriate maps and text and monitor their progress to determine when they should collaborate with classmates or work independently.

The following maps/texts correspond with the following categories:

Colonies: Atlas p. 22

People: Atlas p. 23

Economy: Creating America p. 110, 115, 120; Atlas p. 25, 27, 29

Exports: Creating America p. 111-112, 116, 124; Atlas. p. 31

Imports: Atlas p.31 (note: information for this category is not as obvious for each region. It may be helpful to discuss the possibilities based on students’ inferences from the text and maps)

Geography/Climate/Soil: Creating America p. 125

New England Region: Creating America p. 109-113

Middle Region: Creating America p. 114-118

Southern Region: Creating America p. 119-123

5. Review the correct answers and check students’ work for accuracy. Use an overhead transparency or white board to display correct answers.

6. The next step is to engage the students in substantive conversation about the information they have recorded. Use the activity “Fan-N-Pick”. Divide students into groups of four and give each group a set of cards with the following questions. One student begins by drawing a card and reading the question aloud. The student to his/her left answers the question. The other two students must provide feedback (in a positive manner) to the answer (e.g. Good idea; I agree; I see what you’re saying, but I also think that...; Another idea is...). Students rotate roles for each question until each card has been discussed, or they run out of time.

Questions:

1. Which is better for farming-- mountainous, rocky soil or flat, fertile soil? Why?
2. Why is fishing/whaling more dominant than grain production in the New England region?
3. What causes the length of the growing season to vary between regions?
4. Why did more African slaves live in North Carolina than Massachusetts? (Hint: Think about the type of work most slaves did)
5. What characteristics make the Southern Colonies suitable for farming?
6. Why are no crops or grain products exported from the New England Region?
7. Why were rivers that empty into the ocean important to farmers in the Middle Colonies?
8. Where is the most fertile land located?
9. What is the difference between *mixed farming* and growing *cash crops*?

- Closing:

After students have gathered, organized, and analyzed the data, the last step is to demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between the geography and economy of a region. Students will independently write their thoughts about the following question and then discuss it as a class: How does a region's geography/climate/soil affect its economy? (i.e.: How does the physical environment make a difference in the way people make a living? How does it determine what is imported or exported?)

It may be helpful to give an example that students can relate to. For instance, the economy of southern Minnesota is based on agricultural products such as corn and livestock. This relates to the flat, fertile prairie land in the southern portion of the state. In northern Minnesota, mining plays a major role in the economy due to the presence of iron ore, granite, limestone, etc. in the land.

**Assessment:** Students will construct a brief essay in response to the following prompt: Explain the relationship between the geography and economy of a region. Support your answer with two examples from the colonial time period.

**Credits:**

My name is Michelle Richter. I have taught seventh grade US History at Northdale Middle School in Coon Rapids for five years. I love teaching Social Studies because it incorporates such a variety of skills and disciplines such as geography, economics, reading, and writing

	Colonies	People	Economy (resources and types of jobs for making a living)	Geography (land forms)	Climate (Length of Growing Season)	Soil	Exports	Imports
New England Region								
Middle Region								
Southern Region								