

Reasons for the Establishment of the Thirteen English Colonies

TEKS History 8. 2B

Compare political, economic, religious, and social reasons for the establishment of the 13 English colonies.



London in 1616

Instructions from the Virginia Company of London to the First Settlers (1606)

The Virginia Company of London was a joint-stock company. In 1606, King James I granted the company a charter, giving it permission to establish an English colony. The King believed that a colony in North America would bring both economic and political benefits to England. The company, rather than the royal government, would pay for the venture. Investors in the company hoped to make profits. The Virginia Company drew up detailed instructions for the first colonists, who set sail for Virginia in three ships on December 20, 1606.



Captain John Smith's map of Jamestown (circa 1609)

Before Reading:

Think about the challenges the first English colonists would have faced in going to North America. What instructions would you have given them?

During Reading:

As you read, number the paragraphs and circle any evidence you find that relates to either economic or political factors affecting the colony. Write an "E" or a "P" in the margin next to those sections indicating whether they refer to an economic or a political factor. Political factors include obtaining control of new lands, expanding the nation's power, and protecting colonists from attacks by other nations. Economic factors include making a living and obtaining new wealth.

Instructions from the Virginia Company of London to the First Settlers (1606)

[Y]ou shall . . . find out a safe port in the entrance of some navigable river . . .

When you have made choice of the river on which you mean to settle, . . . first let Captain Newport discover how far that river may be found navigable [so] that you [choose] the strongest, most fertile and wholesome place . . .

Word Helper

[Do not let] any of the natural people of the country . . . inhabit between you and the sea coast for . . . they will grow discontented with your habitation and be ready to guide and assist any nation that shall come to invade you . . .

Habitation = a settlement or living area

[D]ivide your . . . men into three parts whereof one forty of them you may appoint to fortify and build . . . your storehouse for victual[s]. Thirty others you may employ in preparing your ground and sowing your corn and roots.

Victual(s) = provisions, food

[T]he others . . . you must leave as [a] sentinel at the mouth [of the river].

Sentinel = a guard

[T]he other[s] you may employ in discovery of the river. . . [O]f these forty discoverers, when they do [see] any highlands or hills, Captain Gosnold may take 20 of the company to cross over the lands [with] half a dozen pickaxes to try if they can find any mineral.

In all your passages you must have great care not to offend the naturals . . . and employ some few of your company to trade with them for corn and all other lasting victuals . . . [T]o avoid the danger of famine, use and . . . store [some] of the country[’s] corn. . .

You shall do well to send a perfect [description] of all that is done . . . [including] what com[m]odities you find, what soil [and] woods and their several kinds and so of all other things . . .

Lastly and chiefly the way to prosper and to obtain good success is to . . . serve and fear God[,] the giver of all goodness. [F]or every plantation which our Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted out.



4. Imagine you are thinking of joining the voyage to North America after reading these “Instructions.” Write a letter to the leaders of the Virginia Company applying to be one of the first settlers. Give two reasons why you want to join this expedition and explain how you might help the colonists establish their settlement in the “New World.”

London, England

1 November 1660

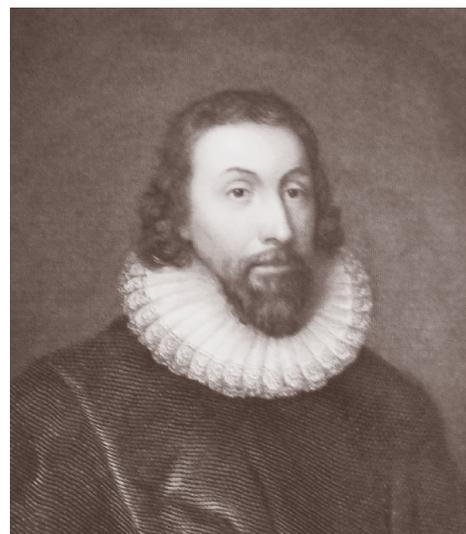
To the Most Honorable Knights and Gentlemen of the Virginia Company,

Your very humble servant,

Reverend John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity” (1630)

The Puritans were a group of English Protestants who wanted to “purify” the English Church by living more strictly according to the Bible. A group of Puritans decided to set sail for North America in 1630.

John Winthrop was a preacher and the leader of the Puritan colonists. His sermon, “Model of Christian Charity,” was delivered aboard their ship *Arabella* as it neared the coast of the Massachusetts Bay. Winthrop wanted the new colony to be a “city on a hill,” a model of Christian living for all nations. He also mentioned the Puritan idea of a “covenant,” an agreement with God that if the Puritans created a colony in God’s name and lived model lives, God would bring them prosperity and success.



Reverend John Winthrop

Before Reading:

1. Think about what advice you might have given to new settlers before they set ashore.
2. Recall the instructions that the Virginia Company gave to the colonists at Jamestown. As you read Winthrop’s sermon below, think about how his instructions compared to those given by the Virginia Company. How were they similar and how were they different?

During Reading:

As you read, number the paragraphs and summarize the main idea of each paragraph in the column on the right.

<i>The Model of Christian Charity</i> (1630)		Main Idea
<p>[We must] follow the [commands of the Bible] to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God.</p> <p>For this end, we must be knit together, in this work, as one man. We must entertain each other in brotherly affection. We must be willing to [give up our own] superfluities, [in order to] supply [each] other’s necessities. We must show meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality. We must delight in each other; make other’s conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together . . .</p>	<p>Word Helper</p> <p>Superfluities = unnecessary things</p>	

Continues

The Lord will be our God, and delight to dwell among us, as his own people, and will command a blessing upon us in all our ways . . . We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when He shall make us [such] a praise and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, “the Lord make it likely that of *New England*.”

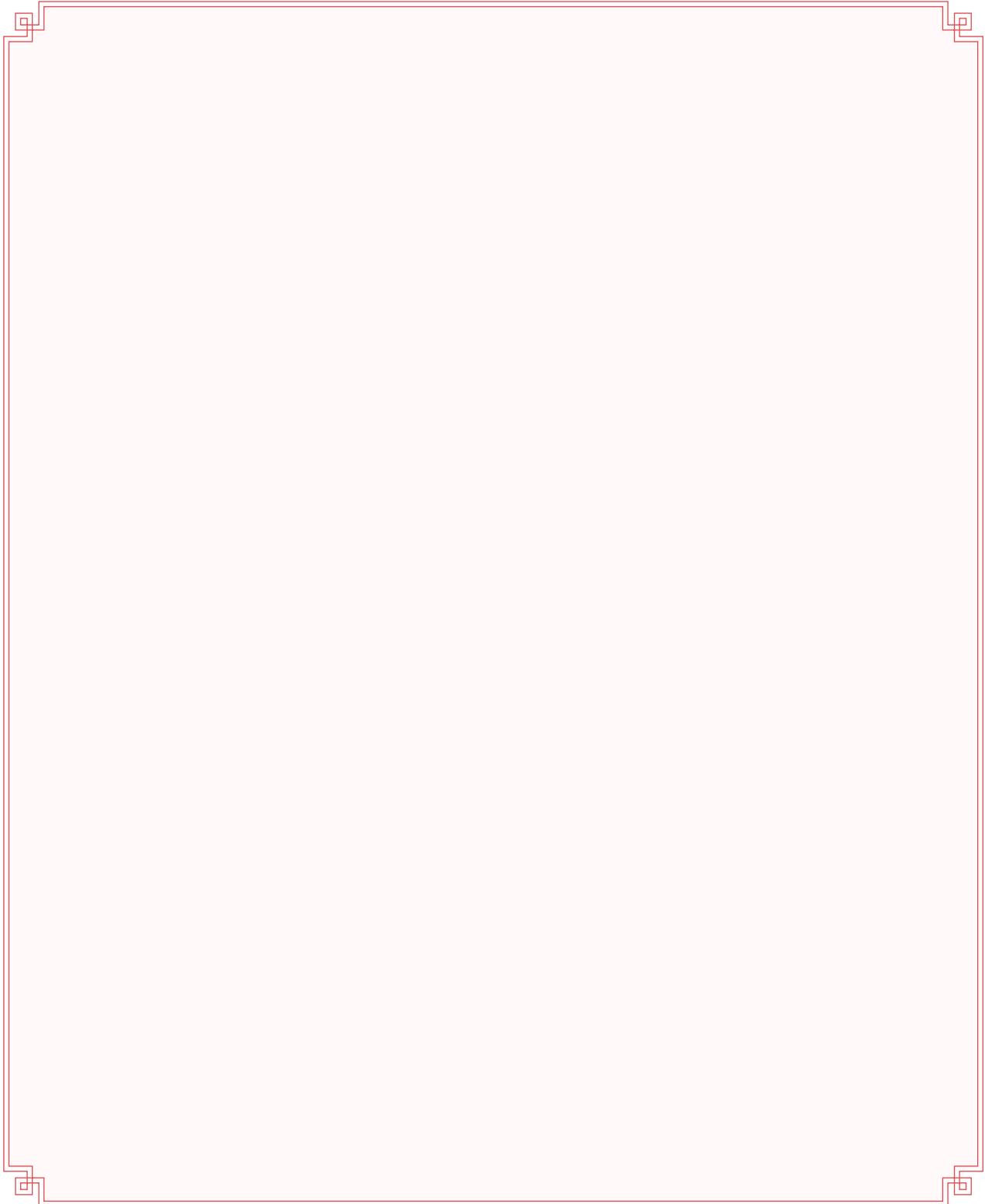
Word Helper

Plantations = colonies

For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world . . . We shall shame the faces of many of God’s worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us [until] we be consumed out of the good land whither we are going.



4. Imagine that you have been hired by Reverend Winthrop to design an advertisement for his “city upon a hill” to attract new settlers. Create an advertisement identifying the advantages of coming to the Puritan colony of Massachusetts Bay.

A large, empty rectangular box with a decorative red border, intended for the student to write an advertisement. The border features a repeating geometric pattern at the corners and midpoints of the sides.

James Oglethorpe, Rationale for Founding the Colony of Georgia (1733)

Georgia—named after King George II—was the last of the thirteen British colonies to be established. It was started for both political and social reasons. The royal government wanted to occupy this territory to protect the English colony at Charleston from Spanish Florida. But who would settle in this dangerous place? One member of Parliament, a young military engineer named James Oglethorpe, had an idea. He had been placed in charge of a committee investigating the conditions of those sent to debtors’ prison for being unable to pay their debts. Oglethorpe thought these debtors could be sent to North America. He also thought the colony could provide a refuge to Protestants on the European continent facing persecution from Catholic rulers.

The reading below is from a pamphlet that Oglethorpe wrote to raise funds for his colony of debtors. Oglethorpe was granted a charter and set sail with a group of debtors and other colonists in 1732. Oglethorpe prohibited both slavery and rum in the new colony, but both bans were lifted by 1750.



Before Reading:

Think about why Parliament might have been interested in sending people to America who might otherwise have remained in debtors’ prison.

During Reading:

In the margin or in the text, number each reason or advantage Oglethorpe sees for establishing this new colony. Code each reason with either an E (economic), P (political), R (religious), or S (social).

<p>In America there are fertile lands sufficient to subsist all the useles poor in England, and distressed Protestants in Europe . . .</p> <p>His Majesty having taken into his consideration, the miserable circumstances of many of his own poor subjects, . . . as likewise the distresses of many poor foreigners, who would take refuge here from persecution; and having a Princely regard to the great danger the southern frontiers of South Carolina are exposed to, . . . hath, out of his fatherly compassion towards his subjects, been graciously pleased to grant a charter . . . for establishing the Colony of Georgia in America. . . .</p> <p>By such a colony, many families, who would otherwise starve, will be provided for, and made masters of houses and lands; the people in Great Britain to whom these necessitous families were a burthen, will be relieved; numbers of manufacturers will be here employed, for supplying them with clothes, working tools, and other necessaries; and by giving refuge to . . . other persecuted Protestants, the power of Britain, as a reward for its hospitality, will be [i]ncreased . . .</p>	<p>Word Helper</p> <p>Subsist = support</p> <p>Distressed = suffering from anxiety, stress or pain</p> <p>Compassion = pity; concern for others</p> <p>Burthen = burden</p>
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3. Using evidence from the three readings, complete the chart below (and on the following page) on the political, economic, religious and social reasons for the establishment of the thirteen English colonies.

Establishing Colonies	Description	Examples/Evidence
Political Reasons		
Economic Reasons		

Continues

Name _____ Teacher _____ Date _____

Establishing Colonies	Description	Examples/Evidence
Religious Reasons		
Social Reasons		