

Study Guide



Chapter 3, Section 2

For use with textbook pages 91–97

NEW ENGLAND AND THE MIDDLE COLONIES

KEY TERMS AND NAMES

- Grand Banks** a shallow region in the Atlantic Ocean teeming with fish (page 92)
- fall line** the area where rivers descend from a high elevation to a lower one, causing waterfalls (page 93)
- town meetings** meetings in New England in which town residents met to discuss problems and issues (page 94)
- selectmen** men chosen to manage the affairs of New England towns (page 94)
- meetinghouse** the name given to Puritan churches (page 94)
- bills of exchange** credit slips used by New England and English merchants (page 95)
- triangular trade** a three-way trade established by New England merchants (page 95)
- artisans** skilled workers who manufactured various goods (page 95)
- entrepreneurs** businesspeople who risk their money to earn a profit (page 97)
- capitalists** people who invest their money in new businesses (page 97)

DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

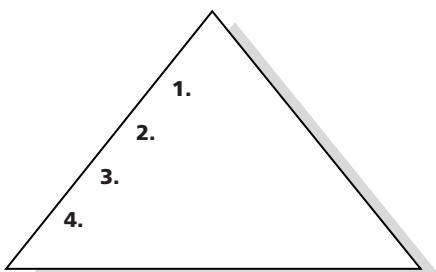
How did the city or community you live in start out? Is it located near a body of water? Is it an important trade or business center?

The last section described the economy of the Southern Colonies. This section discusses the economies of New England and the Middle Colonies.

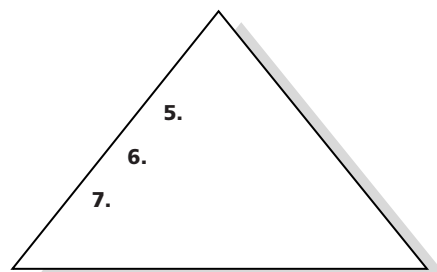
ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the diagram below to help you take notes. During the early 1700s, distinct social classes developed in New England and the Middle Colonies. List these classes in the diagrams below, listing the highest class at the top.

New England Colonies



Middle Colonies



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READ TO LEARN

• New England's Economy (page 91)

Unlike in the Southern Colonies, the climate and soil in New England was unsuitable for the development of large plantations. New England farmers practiced subsistence farming. The main crop grown in New England was corn, which was suitable for the region's short growing season and rocky soil. New England farmers also raised livestock.

Because of New England's geography, fishing became a major industry in the region. The **Grand Banks** lay northeast of New England in the Atlantic Ocean. It is a region where the mixing of the warm Gulf Stream and the cold North Atlantic produced an environment favorable to plankton. Plankton is an important food for fish and whales. During colonial times, many kinds of fish flourished in the Grand Banks.

New England's coastline had many good harbors and plenty of timber for building fishing boats. Nearly every coastal town had a fishing fleet. Whaling was also an important industry. The whale's blubber, intestines, and bones were used to make a variety of products.

Forests covered much of New England. The **fall line**—the area where rivers descend from a high elevation to a lower one, causing waterfalls—was near the region's coast. The waterfalls were used to power sawmills. The lumber was then transported down river to the coast and then shipped to other colonies and to England. The lumber was used to make goods such as furniture and barrels. It was also used to build ships. Shipbuilding became another important industry in New England.

8. What industries became important in the New England colonies?

• Life in New England's Towns (page 93)

The town was the center of New England society. It determined how the land was settled and how the people were governed. The residents of towns met to discuss local problems and issues. These **town meetings** eventually became the local town government. Anyone could attend a town meeting, but only men who were granted land by the town could vote.

The men who were chosen to run the town's affairs were called **selectmen**. They appointed other officials the town needed. Town meetings led people to believe that they had a right to govern themselves. They helped set the stage for democratic government in the colonies.

New England Puritans were expected to attend Sunday worship at the **meetinghouse**, or church. They were expected to obey strict rules that regulated most activities of daily life. Puritans also felt that they had a duty to watch

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over the moral behavior of others. Although Puritans appeared to be intolerant and rigid, they did enjoy activities that were fun.

9. Why were town meetings important?

• Trade and the Rise of Cities (page 95)

New England produced few products that England wanted. However, England produced many goods that New England colonists wanted. To get these goods, New England merchants had to sell products from New England somewhere else in exchange for goods that England wanted. The sugar plantations in the Caribbean wanted to buy New England's fish and lumber. The planters would pay for the goods by trading sugar or by giving the New England merchants **bills of exchange**. These were credit slips that English merchants had given the planters in exchange for sugar. The New England merchants would take the bills back to New England and trade them to English merchants for their manufactured goods. The three-way trade New England merchants developed with the Caribbean colonies is an example of **triangular trade**.

The development of trade in the colonies led to the growth of America's first cities, such as Philadelphia and Charles Town. Distinct social classes developed in these cities. Wealthy merchants made up the top social class. This class was a minority of the urban population. **Artisans**, or skilled workers who manufactured goods, made up about half of the population. Artisans included carpenters, masons, silversmiths, and glassmakers. Innkeepers and people who owned their own businesses were part of the same social class as artisans. Below the artisan class were the people without skills or property. They included servants, street sweepers, and people who loaded ships. Below this social class were indentured servants and enslaved Africans.

The rapid growth of cities created problems such as overcrowding, pollution, and crime. City governments created specific departments to deal with these problems. Various charities tried to help the growing number of poor people in the cities.

10. How did New Englanders get the manufactured goods they wanted from England?

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- **Society in the Middle Colonies** (page 96)

Unlike the New England Colonies, the Middle Colonies had abundant rich soil and a long growing season suitable for farming. Farmers grew a variety of crops, but wheat became the main cash crop. The Middle Colonies had three wide rivers that ran deep into the region’s interior. The rivers allowed farmers to move their goods to the Atlantic coast to ship to other markets. Small ships sailed along the rivers, exchanging European goods for wheat and flour. Towns, which later developed into cities such as New York, began near the places where the rivers emptied into the oceans.

In the early 1700s, Europe experienced a population explosion. Many Europeans immigrated to America, particularly to the Middle Colonies. The increased number of people in Europe created a big demand for wheat to feed these people. As a result, wheat prices in the Middle Colonies soared, making these colonies very profitable.

The wheat trade and the increase of new settlers changed society in the Middle Colonies. Some farmers became very wealthy by hiring immigrants to work their land and grow large amounts of wheat for sale. Other colonists grew wealthy by becoming **entrepreneurs**. These were businesspeople who risked their money buying land and equipment that they sold to the new immigrants for a profit. The wheat boom also created a new group of **capitalists**, people who had money to invest in new businesses. Most farmers in the Middle Colonies, however, did not become wealthy.

As in New England, distinct social classes developed in the Middle Colonies. Wealthy entrepreneurs made up the highest social class. Small farmers who made a small profit from their land made up the middle class. At the bottom of society were people who either rented land or worked for wages.

11. How did the geography of the Middle Colonies help make the colonies prosperous?
