

Life in the English Colonies

The Big Idea

The English colonies continued to grow despite many challenges.

Main Ideas

- Colonial governments were influenced by political changes in England.
- English trade laws limited free trade in the colonies.
- The Great Awakening and the Enlightenment led to ideas of political equality among many colonists.
- The French and Indian War gave England control of more land in North America.

Main Idea 1: Colonial governments were influenced by political changes in England.

Colonial Governments

- Each English colony had its own government.
- Each government was given power by a charter.
- The English monarch had ultimate authority over the colonies.

Colonial Governors and Legislatures

- The governor served as head of the government.
- Most were assisted by an advisory council.
- Some colonies had elected representatives.
- Virginia established the first colonial legislature in 1619.
- The **town meeting** was the center of New England political life.
- Colonial courts that reflected the beliefs of their communities were used to control local affairs.

Changes in English Government

- King James II wanted more control over English government, including the colonies.
- United northern colonies under one government were called the Dominion of New England in 1686.
- Parliament replaced the unpopular King James II and passed the **English Bill of Rights** in 1689.
- The colonies in the Dominion formed new assemblies and charters and could elect their own representatives.

Main Idea 2: English trade laws limited free trade in the colonies.

- Earning money from trade was one of England's reasons for founding and controlling the colonies.
- England practiced mercantilism: a system of creating and maintaining wealth through controlled trade.
- Parliament passed the Navigation Acts to limit colonial trade.
- The colonies complained about trade restrictions.

Colonial Trade

- Trade between the American colonies and Great Britain was not direct.
- **Triangular trade** was a system in which goods and slaves were traded among the Americas, Great Britain, and Africa.
- Slave trade brought millions of Africans to the Americas on a voyage called the **Middle Passage**.
- Terrible conditions on the Middle Passage caused thousands of captives to die on slave ships.

Main Idea 3: The Great Awakening and the Enlightenment led to ideas of political equality among many colonists.

Great Awakening

- Religious leaders wanted to spread religious feelings.
- **The Great Awakening**—a religious movement that swept the colonies in the 1730s and 1740s—changed religion.
- Revivals became popular places to talk about political and social issues.

Enlightenment

- Movement in 1700s that spread the idea that reason could improve society
- Also formed ideas on how government should work
- Said that people had natural rights such as equality and liberty
- Influenced colonial leaders

Main Idea 4: The French and Indian War gave England control of more land in North America.

Native American Allies

- Some Native Americans allied with the colonists in King Philip's War.
- The French traded and allied with the Algonquian and Huron.
- The English allied with the Iroquois League.

War Erupts

- France and Britain struggled for control of North America in the late 1600s.
- The French and Indian War started in 1754.
- The turning point came when the British captured Quebec in 1759.

Treaty of Paris, 1763

- It gave Canada and all French lands east of the Mississippi River to Britain.

The Western Frontier

- Most colonial settlements had been made along the Atlantic coast.
- Colonial settlers, or pioneers, began to move west after the war.
- Native Americans led by Chief **Pontiac** rebelled against new British settlements in 1763.
- To avoid conflict, King George III issued the Proclamation of 1763, which banned settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains.