# Who Could Worship?

Religious choice and change in colonial America

**SS24.6.5** "Explain how the desire for religious freedom served as a motivation for establishing colonies. 5a Summarize efforts to limit religious freedom in the colonies..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** As you read, underline a reason people established a colony, circle two limits on religious freedom, and number three ways colonists challenged religious authority or widened religious choice. Use your marks to trace how one choice led to another.

### A Search for Religious Choice

1. In the 1630s, a Puritan family might leave England for Massachusetts Bay because they wanted to worship together without pressure from the Church of England. Yet freedom for one group did not mean freedom for everyone. Puritan leaders expected people in the colony to follow Puritan religious rules. They punished some who challenged their beliefs and banished others, including Roger Williams. Quakers also faced harsh laws in Massachusetts. The colony shows a puzzle: people could seek religious freedom for themselves while denying it to neighbors who believed differently.

2. After his banishment, Roger Williams helped found Providence in 1636, in what became Rhode Island. He argued that government should not force people to follow one religion, and Rhode Island became a refuge for people with different beliefs. Later, William Penn, a Quaker, founded Pennsylvania as a place where many religious groups could worship more freely. Colonists like Williams and Penn changed colonial society by building communities with wider religious choice. Their efforts did not end every limit on religious freedom, but they offered an alternative to colonies with stricter rules.

3. In the 1730s and 1740s, traveling preachers drew large crowds during a wave of religious revivals called the Great Awakening. George Whitefield urged listeners to seek a personal connection with God rather than rely only on church leaders. Some people joined new churches, while others argued with neighbors about the revivals. The movement encouraged some colonists to question religious authority and decide for themselves whom to trust. It did not cause the American Revolution by itself, but its ideas helped some colonists believe ordinary people should have a say in public decisions.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did some Puritans establish Massachusetts Bay, and how did their rules limit that same freedom for others?

2. How did the limits Roger Williams faced in Massachusetts help lead to a different approach in Rhode Island?

3. How did Williams and Penn each help change religious life in the colonies?

4. How did the Great Awakening affect both religious life and some colonists' political beliefs?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence proposal for a new colony's rule about worship. Use two different events or people from the passage to explain your rule, then predict how Great Awakening ideas might affect people's views about who should have a voice in government.

ANSWER KEY

# Who Could Worship?

GRADE 6 · SS24.6.5

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline a reason people established a colony, circle two limits on religious freedom, and number three ways colonists challenged religious authority or widened religious choice. Use your marks to trace how one choice led to another. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Why did some Puritans establish Massachusetts Bay, and how did their rules limit that same freedom for others? | **They wanted to worship without pressure from the Church of England, but their leaders expected others to follow Puritan rules and punished or banished some dissenters.** |
| 2 | How did the limits Roger Williams faced in Massachusetts help lead to a different approach in Rhode Island? | **After Massachusetts banished him, Williams helped found Providence and argued that government should not force people to follow one religion.** |
| 3 | How did Williams and Penn each help change religious life in the colonies? | **Williams helped make Rhode Island a refuge for people with different beliefs. Penn founded Pennsylvania, where many religious groups could worship more freely.** |
| 4 | How did the Great Awakening affect both religious life and some colonists' political beliefs? | **It led some people to join new churches and question religious leaders. Its ideas also helped some colonists believe ordinary people should have a say in public decisions.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our colony should let people worship without forcing them to join one church. Massachusetts punished dissenters, showing how a required religion can hurt neighbors. Rhode Island welcomed people of different beliefs, showing that another choice is possible. The Great Awakening might also lead some colonists to think ordinary people deserve a voice in government.

Accept proposals for other worship rules if students support them with two distinct passage examples and make a plausible connection to the Great Awakening. Students should not claim that the revivals alone caused the American Revolution.