Colonial Work and Trade

Compare regional economies and the labor behind them.

6-12.US1.4 "Explain the differences with economic systems between New England, and the Mid-Atlantic and Southern colonies, including indentured servitude and slavery as labor sources, and the role of the transatlantic slave trade."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one way people earned money in each region, circle the labor sources named in the passage, and put a star beside the sentence that explains how the transatlantic slave trade supplied labor.

Three Regions, Different Work

1. At a busy New England harbor, workers unloaded fish while carpenters repaired ships. Rocky soil and short growing seasons limited large farms, so many families ran small farms alongside fishing, lumbering, shipbuilding, and trade. A few port merchants became wealthy, but most people did not own big plantations. Family members, hired workers, and some indentured servants did much of the work. An indentured servant agreed to work for a set number of years, often in return for travel across the Atlantic. Enslaved people also worked in New England homes, shops, and docks, although slavery was less widespread there than in the South.

2. Farther south, a wagon entered a Mid-Atlantic market carrying wheat grown in Pennsylvania. Farmers in colonies such as Pennsylvania and New York sold wheat and other grains, and mills ground grain into flour for sale. Good farmland supported farms of different sizes, while towns offered jobs for artisans and merchants. Farm families, paid workers, indentured servants, and enslaved people all supplied labor. Some people were forced into slavery in the Mid-Atlantic colonies, especially in ports and on farms. Unlike New England's emphasis on seaborne work, grain farming was a major source of goods for sale in this region.

3. In the Southern colonies, landowners sold crops such as tobacco in Virginia and rice in South Carolina to buyers across the Atlantic. Large plantations grew these crops for profit, although small farms also existed. At first, many landowners used indentured servants, but over time plantation owners increasingly relied on enslaved Africans and their descendants. Through the transatlantic slave trade, traders forced Africans onto ships bound for the Americas; many died during the voyage. Enslaved people were held as property and could not leave their forced labor when a contract ended. Southern exports brought wealth to some landowners, while merchants in other colonial regions also profited from trade linked to slavery.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did New England's main ways of earning money differ from those of the Mid-Atlantic colonies?

2. How did the Mid-Atlantic and Southern colonies differ in farm size and use of labor?

3. Why was the labor of an indentured servant different from the forced labor of an enslaved person?

4. How did the transatlantic slave trade affect Southern plantations and merchants in other colonial regions?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A colonial town wants to build a new dock. In five sentences, propose which region should get it, explain what the dock would ship, compare that region's economy and labor with another region's, and explain how the transatlantic slave trade affected colonial work or trade.

ANSWER KEY

Colonial Work and Trade

GRADES 6-12 · 6-12.US1.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one way people earned money in each region, circle the labor sources named in the passage, and put a star beside the sentence that explains how the transatlantic slave trade supplied labor. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did New England's main ways of earning money differ from those of the Mid-Atlantic colonies?	**New England relied more on fishing, shipbuilding, lumbering, and trade. Mid-Atlantic colonies sold grain and flour from their farms.**
2	How did the Mid-Atlantic and Southern colonies differ in farm size and use of labor?	**Mid-Atlantic farms varied in size and used family members, paid workers, indentured servants, and enslaved people. The South had large plantations that increasingly relied on enslaved labor, though it also had small farms.**
3	Why was the labor of an indentured servant different from the forced labor of an enslaved person?	**An indentured servant worked for a set number of years. An enslaved person was held as property and could not leave when a contract ended.**
4	How did the transatlantic slave trade affect Southern plantations and merchants in other colonial regions?	**It forced Africans across the Atlantic, supplying enslaved labor to plantations. Merchants in other colonial regions also profited from trade linked to slavery.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would build the dock in a Southern colony to ship tobacco to buyers across the Atlantic. Large plantations there grew crops for sale and increasingly relied on enslaved workers. In the Mid-Atlantic colonies, farms of different sizes sold grain and flour, using family members, paid workers, indentured servants, and enslaved people. The transatlantic slave trade forced Africans across the ocean and supplied labor to Southern plantations. Merchants in other colonial regions could also profit from trade linked to slavery.

Accept accurate regional comparisons that recognize variation within each region. Responses should distinguish time-limited indentured servitude from enslavement and describe the slave trade as forced transport.