

Power in the Colonies

Trace the ideas and experiences that shaped colonial self-government.

11.1c "Colonial political developments were influenced by British political traditions, Enlightenment ideas, and the colonial experience. Self-governing structures were common, and yet varied across the colonies."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Mark examples: B for a British tradition, E for an Enlightenment idea, and C for a colonial condition. Underline one limit on participation.

Different Paths to Self-Government

- ① English representative traditions influenced Virginia's elected burgesses, who joined the governor and council in the General Assembly in 1619. The Virginia Company appointed the governor; Virginia became a royal colony in 1624. Representation operated within imperial authority. Colonists also invoked government under established law, associated with Magna Carta. Participation remained unequal, with varying restrictions involving status, sex, property, religion, or race.
- ② Local circumstances shaped institutions too. In 1620, adult male Mayflower passengers signed a compact to form a civil body politic after arriving outside their patent's intended territory. The compact promised laws for the colony's common good while affirming loyalty to the king. New England town meetings allowed eligible residents, generally men meeting local qualifications, to vote directly. Virginia used elected representatives. Later, Enlightenment arguments about consent and natural rights gave colonial readers additional tools for questioning government authority.
- ③ New Netherland residents petitioned Dutch officials and the West India Company, drawing on traditions familiar in the Dutch world. Maryland's 1649 Toleration Act protected Christians professing belief in Jesus Christ, but punished denial of the Trinity and did not grant equal freedom to all faiths. Governors, proprietors, assemblies, and local institutions shared or contested power differently. Colonial self-government was widespread and varied, but not universal democracy.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What English practice influenced Virginia's elected burgesses?

2 What colonial situation led the Mayflower passengers to form a civil body politic?

3 What Enlightenment principle did colonial readers use to question distant officials, and what concern did it raise?

4 How did decision-making in New England town meetings differ from decision-making in Virginia's House of Burgesses?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

In three sentences, explain colonial self-government using one British tradition, one Enlightenment idea, and one local practice. Include a limit on participation.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Mark examples: B for a British tradition, E for an Enlightenment idea, and C for a colonial condition. Underline one limit on participation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What English practice influenced Virginia's elected burgesses?	Representative participation in government influenced the election of burgesses who joined the governor and council in the assembly.
2	What colonial situation led the Mayflower passengers to form a civil body politic?	They were settling outside the area governed by their patent, so they needed to create rules for their community.
3	What Enlightenment principle did colonial readers use to question distant officials, and what concern did it raise?	Consent of the governed gave readers a way to question whether government authority was legitimate and protected their rights.
4	How did decision-making in New England town meetings differ from decision-making in Virginia's House of Burgesses?	Eligible town-meeting participants voted directly on local matters. Virginia voters chose representatives. Both systems limited participation.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

English representative traditions influenced Virginia's elected burgesses, though their assembly operated within imperial authority. Enlightenment arguments about consent gave readers tools for questioning government. New England town meetings allowed direct voting on local matters, but eligibility restrictions excluded much of the population.

Accept accurate passage-based explanations identifying the three influences and a participation limit. Do not attribute Dutch petitioning solely to English traditions or later Enlightenment ideas to the 1620 compact.