A Voice in Plymouth

Read how the Mayflower Compact put self-government into practice.

5.C.1.8.B "practice of self-government established by the Mayflower Compact"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the two promises the signers made, circle two ways colonists later shared power, and put a star beside one limit on who could take part. Use your marks to trace how their government worked.

An Agreement Before Landing

1. In November 1620, the Mayflower anchored near Cape Cod, far from the place its passengers had planned to settle. Some passengers worried that no one would have the power to keep order there. Before going ashore, 41 adult men signed the Mayflower Compact. Rather than wait for new orders, they made an agreement about how they would govern their new colony.

2. The signers promised to make just and equal laws for the good of the colony and to obey those laws. They agreed to join in one governing group, called a "civil body politic." This meant they would work together to make decisions about their community. Later, colonists chose leaders and held votes at meetings. A leader could not simply make every decision alone.

3. If colonists disagreed about a rule, eligible voters could discuss it and choose what to do. Their governor would help carry out decisions instead of making every rule alone. Still, not everyone could take part. Women and children did not sign the Compact, and the Wampanoag people who lived nearby had no say in the colony's government. Self-government gave some people a voice, but it left others out.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did making their own agreement matter when the passengers reached Cape Cod?

2. What two promises in the Compact helped the colonists govern themselves?

3. How did choosing leaders and voting at meetings share power?

4. Who was left out of the colony's government, and what does that show about its self-government?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Your class needs a new rule for a recess game. In three sentences, explain who may suggest rules, how the class will choose a rule and a leader to carry it out, and how you will make sure everyone affected has a voice.

ANSWER KEY

A Voice in Plymouth

GRADE 5 · 5.C.1.8.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the two promises the signers made, circle two ways colonists later shared power, and put a star beside one limit on who could take part. Use your marks to trace how their government worked. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did making their own agreement matter when the passengers reached Cape Cod?	**They were far from where they had planned to settle and worried about keeping order. The agreement gave them a way to govern their colony.**
2	What two promises in the Compact helped the colonists govern themselves?	**The signers promised to make just and equal laws for the colony's good and to obey those laws.**
3	How did choosing leaders and voting at meetings share power?	**Colonists could help choose leaders and make decisions by voting, rather than leaving every decision to one leader.**
4	Who was left out of the colony's government, and what does that show about its self-government?	**Women and children did not sign the Compact, and the Wampanoag people had no say in the colony's government. Self-government did not give everyone a voice.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Anyone in our class may suggest a rule for the recess game. We will discuss the ideas and vote on a rule, then choose a student leader to explain and carry it out. Every student who plays may speak and vote, so everyone affected has a voice.

Accept answers that connect the Compact's promises to shared decision-making and recognize that participation was limited. For Your Turn, look for a clear way to propose rules, make a group decision, choose a leader, and include those affected.