

Dates That Changed America

Read how six turning points shaped the colonies and the United States.

8.1.B “explain the significance of the following dates: 1607, founding of Jamestown; 1620, arrival of the Pilgrims and signing of the Mayflower Compact; 1776, adoption of the Declaration of Independence; 1787, writing of the U.S. Constitution...”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline all six dates, then circle the words or phrases that explain why each event changed the colonies or the United States.

Six Turning Points

- ① In 1607, English settlers founded Jamestown in Virginia, the first permanent English settlement in North America. Its survival showed that England could maintain a colony despite disease, hunger, and conflict. In 1620, Pilgrims arrived in New England aboard the Mayflower. Before going ashore, many male passengers signed the Mayflower Compact. This agreement created a plan for self-government, in which colonists would make and follow laws for their community. Both events began important English colonial traditions.
- ② In 1776, representatives of the thirteen colonies adopted the Declaration of Independence. The document announced that the colonies considered themselves free from British rule and gave reasons for separation. Declaring independence changed a colonial protest into a new nation's fight for freedom. In 1787, delegates wrote the U.S. Constitution in Philadelphia. The Constitution established a national government, divided its powers, and created a framework for laws. It remains the highest law of the United States.
- ③ In 1803, the United States bought the Louisiana Territory from France. The Louisiana Purchase greatly expanded the nation's land west of the Mississippi River and opened questions about exploration, settlement, and the expansion of slavery. From 1861 to 1865, the Civil War was fought mainly between the Union and the Confederacy. The war tested whether the United States would remain one nation. Union victory preserved the nation, and the conflict led to the end of slavery in the United States after the war ended.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why was the founding of Jamestown in 1607 significant for English colonization?

2 How did the Mayflower Compact make the Pilgrims' 1620 arrival significant beyond simply reaching New England?

3 How did the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the Constitution in 1787 play different roles in forming the United States?

4 Explain one way the Louisiana Purchase and one way the Civil War reshaped the United States.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a six-sentence museum label called *Turning Points*. Use all six dates, and in each sentence name the event and explain why it mattered to colonial America or the United States.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline all six dates, then circle the words or phrases that explain why each event changed the colonies or the United States. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why was the founding of Jamestown in 1607 significant for English colonization?	Jamestown was the first permanent English settlement in North America, and its survival showed England could maintain a colony.
2	How did the Mayflower Compact make the Pilgrims' 1620 arrival significant beyond simply reaching New England?	It created a plan for self-government in which colonists would make and follow laws for their community.
3	How did the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the Constitution in 1787 play different roles in forming the United States?	The Declaration announced freedom from British rule. The Constitution established a national government and a framework for laws.
4	Explain one way the Louisiana Purchase and one way the Civil War reshaped the United States.	The Louisiana Purchase greatly expanded U.S. land west of the Mississippi River. The Civil War preserved the nation and led to the end of slavery.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1607, Jamestown became the first permanent English settlement, showing that England could keep a colony in North America. In 1620, the Mayflower Compact gave colonists a plan for self-government. In 1776, the Declaration of Independence announced that the colonies were free from British rule. In 1787, the Constitution created a national government and a system for making laws. In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase expanded the nation's land far west of the Mississippi River. From 1861 to 1865, the Civil War preserved the United States as one nation and led to the end of slavery.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect each date to its broader effect, not merely a restatement of the event. For the museum label, check that all six dates are included and that each sentence explains significance accurately.