

Seeds of a Voice

Trace how three colonial actions built representative government.

8.3.B “analyze the importance of the Mayflower Compact, the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, and the Virginia House of Burgesses to the growth of representative government; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one phrase in each paragraph that shows how colonists could influence government. In the margin, write A for agreement, E for elections, or R for representatives beside each phrase.

Three Steps Toward Representation

- ① In 1620, the Mayflower reached Cape Cod after its passengers had sailed beyond the area named in their patent. Before going ashore, 41 adult men signed the Mayflower Compact. The agreement said the settlers would form a civil body politic and make “just and equal laws” for the colony’s general good. It did not give everyone the right to vote, but it showed that colonists could create a government through an agreement among its members. This idea tied government authority to the consent of the governed.
- ② The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut took effect in 1639. Settlers from Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield created this written plan for their colony. It described annual elections for a governor and other officials. It also created a General Court, where elected deputies joined magistrates in making laws. The Orders set rules for choosing leaders and holding meetings, so government did not depend only on one person’s decision. By putting elections and representation into a written framework, the Orders offered a lasting model for self-government.
- ③ In 1619, Governor George Yeardley called representatives from Virginia settlements to meet at Jamestown. Each community chose burgesses, or representatives, for the House of Burgesses. These burgesses joined the governor and council to discuss and pass laws. The House was not fully democratic: only some colonists could vote, and English officials still held power. Yet it gave elected colonists a continuing role in lawmaking. Together, these three colonial steps helped establish the expectation that government should include agreements, elections, and representatives.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the Mayflower Compact connect the authority of government to the colonists?

2 Why could the Fundamental Orders support representative government even when leaders changed?
Use two details from the passage.

3 What did the burgesses do in the House of Burgesses, and what limited their power?

4 How did the three colonial steps together help representative government grow?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly three sentences. State which colonial document or institution was most important to the growth of representative government, then defend your choice with two details from the passage, including one comparison to another colonial step.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one phrase in each paragraph that shows how colonists could influence government. In the margin, write A for agreement, E for elections, or R for representatives beside each phrase. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Mayflower Compact connect the authority of government to the colonists?	It showed that settlers could form a government and make laws through an agreement among members, tying authority to the consent of the governed.
2	Why could the Fundamental Orders support representative government even when leaders changed? Use two details from the passage.	They created written rules, required annual elections, and established a General Court with elected deputies. The system did not depend on one person's decision.
3	What did the burgesses do in the House of Burgesses, and what limited their power?	They joined the governor and council to discuss and pass laws. Only some colonists could vote, and English officials still held power.
4	How did the three colonial steps together help representative government grow?	The Compact supported government by agreement, the Fundamental Orders established elections and a written framework, and the House of Burgesses gave elected colonists a role in lawmaking. Together they built an expectation of agreements, elections, and representatives.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I think the Fundamental Orders were most important because they placed elections and representation in a written framework that could last. The Mayflower Compact showed that settlers could form a government by agreement, but it did not describe an elected legislature. The Orders went further by setting annual elections and creating a General Court with elected deputies.

Accept any of the three choices if the student makes a clear claim, uses two accurate passage details, and compares the choice with another colonial step. Responses should recognize that these systems expanded representation while still limiting participation.