

Colonial Voices Grow

Read how colonial practices built representative government.

8.3 "History. The student understands the foundations of representative government in the United States. The student is expected to: explain the reasons for the growth of representative government and institutions during the colonial period..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the reasons colonists wanted local representative government. Number the three institutions or documents that gave colonists practice in self-government, then circle one detail about religion or civic virtue.

Building a Voice in Government

- ① In the English colonies, representative government grew because people faced problems that could not wait for orders from across the Atlantic. A governor or company leader might be appointed, but settlers needed local decisions about taxes, land, defense, roads, and trade. English colonists also brought ideas that rulers should follow laws and consult representatives. As towns and plantations expanded, elected bodies gave property-owning men in many colonies a way to speak for local communities, although voting rights were limited.
- ② In 1620, the Mayflower Compact was an agreement among the male settlers who signed it before they founded Plymouth. It formed a civil body politic and promised that the settlers would make and obey laws for the colony's general good. Connecticut's Fundamental Orders of 1639 set rules for choosing a governor, magistrates, and representatives. In Virginia, elected burgesses first met in 1619 with the governor and council. The House of Burgesses gave colonists experience debating and making laws.
- ③ Religion and civic virtue also shaped colonial political life. Many colonists believed that communities were bound by covenants, or serious agreements, with God and one another. This belief could encourage people to attend meetings, obey laws, and work for the common good. Civic virtue meant putting the community's welfare ahead of private gain and taking responsibility as a citizen. These ideas supported self-government, yet they did not create equal political rights. Some colonies limited voting or public influence by religion, sex, race, or property.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Explain two reasons representative government grew in the English colonies.

2 How did the Mayflower Compact support self-government at Plymouth?

3 Compare the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut with the Virginia House of Burgesses. What did each provide?

4 How did religion and civic virtue support representative government, and what was one limit on political rights?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine you are helping start a new colonial town. Write a five-sentence proposal for its government that uses practices from at least two colonial institutions or documents, explains why local representation is needed, and includes one example of civic virtue or a religious belief supporting the plan.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the reasons colonists wanted local representative government. Number the three institutions or documents that gave colonists practice in self-government, then circle one detail about religion or civic virtue. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Explain two reasons representative government grew in the English colonies.	Colonists needed quick local decisions about issues such as taxes, defense, roads, and trade. They also brought English ideas that rulers should follow laws and consult representatives.
2	How did the Mayflower Compact support self-government at Plymouth?	It formed a civil body politic and promised that settlers would make and obey laws for the colony's general good.
3	Compare the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut with the Virginia House of Burgesses. What did each provide?	The Fundamental Orders set rules for choosing a governor, magistrates, and representatives. The House of Burgesses was an elected body that met with the governor and council to debate and make laws.
4	How did religion and civic virtue support representative government, and what was one limit on political rights?	Religious covenant ideas and civic virtue encouraged colonists to obey laws, attend meetings, and work for the common good. Political rights were limited by factors such as religion, sex, race, or property.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our settlement should sign an agreement to form a civil body and make laws for the general good. Each town should elect representatives, as Connecticut towns did under the Fundamental Orders. Those representatives should meet with a governor and council, like the Virginia burgesses. Because distant leaders cannot quickly solve road and defense problems, local representatives should debate these issues. Citizens should practice civic virtue by attending meetings and choosing the common good over private gain.

Accept equivalent explanations supported by the passage. For the open response, look for accurate use of at least two institutions or documents, a reason for local representation, and a relevant link to civic virtue or religious belief.