

# Early English Settlements Introduction



Mrs. Jagannath, Grade 5

# The Continents



The early 1600s saw the beginning of a great tide of **immigration** from Europe to North America. Spanning more than three **centuries**, this movement grew from a *trickle* of a few hundred English colonists to a *flood* of millions of newcomers. Encouraged by *powerful and diverse motivations*, they built a new civilization on the northern part of the continent.

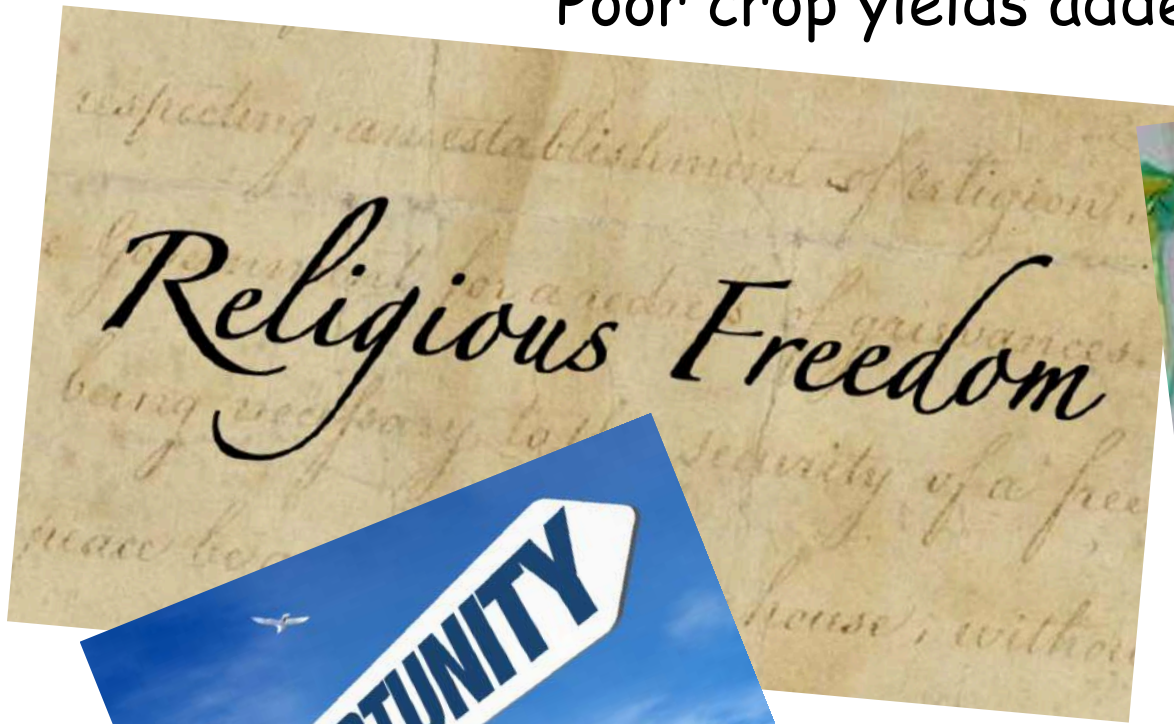


The first English immigrants to what is now the United States crossed the Atlantic long after thriving Spanish colonies had been established in Mexico, the West Indies, and South America. Like all early travelers to the New World, they came in small, overcrowded ships. During their six-to 12-week voyages, they lived on **meager rations**. Many died of disease, ships were often battered by storms, and some were lost at sea.





Most European immigrants left their homelands to escape **political oppression**, to seek the **freedom to practice their religion**, and to **find opportunities** denied them at home. Between 1620 and 1635, economic difficulties swept England. Many people could not find work. Even skilled **artisans** could earn little more than a bare living. Poor crop yields added to the distress.



## Turn to your Partner

1. What was the journey to North America like for early English colonists?
2. What was happening in England between 1620 and 1635?
3. What were the three main reasons colonists wanted to leave England and come to America?





The colonists' first glimpse of the new land was a scene of *dense woods*.

The settlers might not have survived had it not been for the help of friendly Indians, who taught them how to grow native plants pumpkin, squash, beans, and corn. In addition, the vast, *virgin forests*, extending nearly 2,100 kilometers along the Eastern seaboard, proved a rich source of game and firewood. They also provided **abundant** raw materials used to build houses, furniture, ships, and **profitable** items for **export**.



Although the new continent was remarkably filled with nature, trade with Europe was vital for items the settlers could not produce. The coast served the immigrants well. The whole length of shore provided many inlets and harbors. Only two areas North Carolina and southern New Jersey lacked harbors for ocean-going vessels.



Majestic rivers linked lands between the coast and the Appalachian Mountains with the sea. Only one river, however, the St. Lawrence dominated by the French in Canada offered a water passage to the Great Lakes and the *heart of the continent*. Dense forests, the **resistance** of some Indian tribes, and the **barrier** of the Appalachian Mountains discouraged settlement beyond the coastal plain. Only trappers and traders ventured into the wilderness. For the first hundred years the colonists built their settlements **compactly** along the coast.



## Turn to your Partner

4. How did Native Americans help early English Colonists?
5. Why did early English colonists stick close by the Atlantic Coast?

The journey required careful planning and management, as well as considerable expense and risk. Settlers had to be transported nearly 5,000 kilometers across the sea. They needed utensils, clothing, seed, tools, building materials, livestock, arms, and ammunition. The immigration from England was not directly sponsored by the government but by private groups of individuals whose chief motive was profit.

