

## Life in the American Colonies

### Lesson 3 Culture and Society

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*How do new ideas change the way people live?*

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *What was life like for people living in the thirteen colonies?*
2. *What values and beliefs were important to the American colonists?*

#### Terms to Know

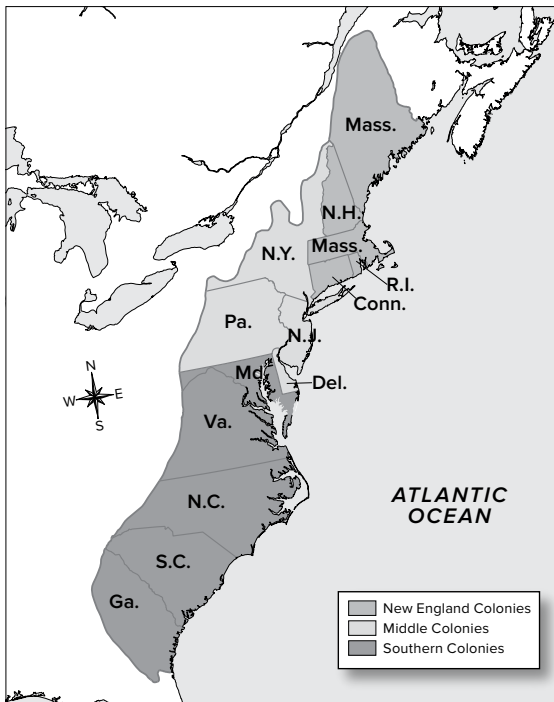
**immigration** the permanent movement of people into one country from other countries

**epidemic** an illness that affects a large number of people

**apprentice** a young person who learns a trade from a skilled craftsman

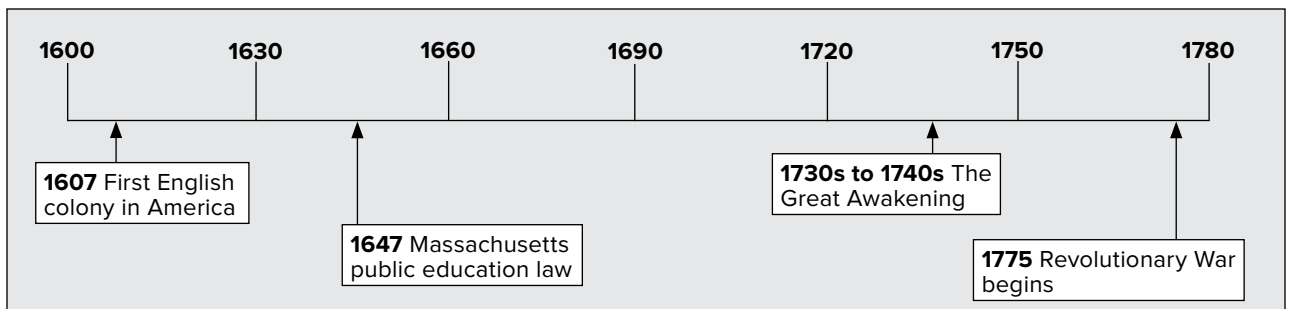
**civic virtue** the democratic ideas, practices, and values that are at the heart of citizenship in a free society

#### Where in the world?



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#### When did it happen?

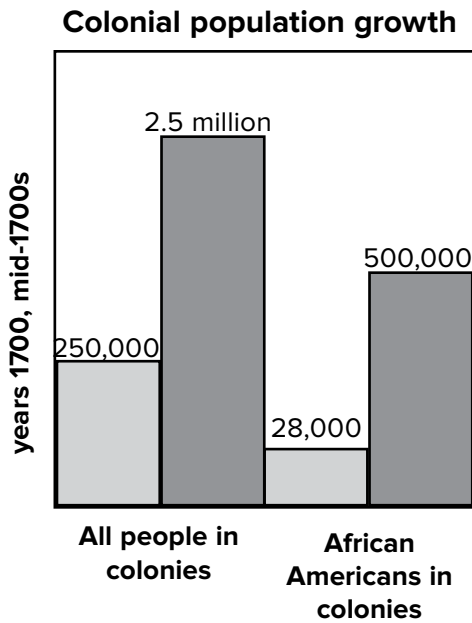


**Life in the American Colonies**

**Lesson 3** Culture and Society, *Continued*

**Life in the Colonies**

In 1700, there were about 250,000 people living in the colonies. By the mid-1770s, there were about 2.5 million colonists. The number of African Americans grew from 28,000 to more than 500,000. **Immigration** was important to this growth. Immigration occurs when people move permanently to one country from another.



There was another reason for the growing number of people in the colonies: large families. Colonial women often married young and had many children. Also, America was a very healthy place to live, especially New England.

Still, there were more threats to life than today. Many women died in childbirth. There were outbreaks of smallpox and other serious diseases. Some outbreaks killed large numbers of people. This is called an **epidemic**.

The American spirit of independence began in these early years. Settlers left their home countries far behind. In America, they faced new challenges. The old ways of doing things no longer worked, so people began doing things in a different way—their own way.

The family was the basis of colonial society. Men were the official heads of the family. They ran the farm or business. They represented the family in the community. Sons might work on the family farm or in the family business. A young man might also become an **apprentice**—a person trained by a skilled craftsman.



**Identifying**

- List two reasons why the population of the colonies was growing.
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  - \_\_\_\_\_



**Making Connections**

- What reasons do people have for moving to a new country today?
   
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**Making Inferences**

- How would an epidemic affect population numbers?
   
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**Explaining**

- How could a young man learn to be a blacksmith?
   
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## Life in the American Colonies

### Lesson 3 Culture and Society, *Continued*

#### Reading Check

5. What was the role of the family in colonial life?

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#### Determining Cause and Effect

6. Why was there such a high level of literacy in New England?

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#### Listing

7. List three different groups that might run a school.

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#### Reading Check

8. In what ways did the Great Awakening influence religion in the colonies?

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Women ran their homes and cared for the children. On farms, many worked in the fields with their husbands. A young, unmarried woman might work as a maid or cook for a wealthy family. A widow (a woman whose husband has died) might sew, teach, or nurse for a living. Widows and unmarried women also could run businesses and own property.

Even children worked. By the time they were four or five years old, they often had jobs. Even so, they did have time to play. Their games and toys were simple.

### American Beliefs

Life in the colonies was built upon a strong, two-part foundation: the spirit of independence and the family.

Americans valued education. Parents often taught their children to read and write at home.

In New England and Pennsylvania, people set up schools. In 1647, Massachusetts passed a public education law. It said that communities with 50 or more homes must have a school. The result of this was a high level of literacy (the ability to read and write) in New England. By 1750, about 85 percent of the men and half of the women could read.

In the Middle Colonies, most schools were private. Widows and unmarried women ran many of them. Religious groups, such as Quakers, ran others.

Another kind of school was run by craftspeople. In these schools, apprentices learned a skill. Colleges in the colonies had a special purpose: to train ministers (people who lead religious worship).

Religion shaped much of colonial life. In the 1730s and 1740s, ministers were asking people to renew their faith—to return to the strong faith of earlier days. This renewal of religious faith was called the Great Awakening.

The Great Awakening inspired many new types of churches. These churches stressed personal faith rather than church ceremonies. The most important effect of the Great Awakening was greater religious freedom. More colonists began to choose their own faith. The older, more established churches lost power within the colonies.

The Great Awakening also broke down walls between the colonies. From north to south, the colonists were united by this revival of faith. This helped to spread other ideas—political ideas. In time, the colonies would also share the ideas of revolution and independence.

**Life in the American Colonies**

**Lesson 3** Culture and Society, *Continued*

By the mid-1700s, another movement spread from Europe to the colonies—the Enlightenment. With it came the idea that knowledge, reason, and science could improve society. In the colonies, interest in science grew. People, like Benjamin Franklin, began to study nature, do experiments, and write about their findings. The Enlightenment also brought ideas about freedom of thought and expression, equality, and popular government.

Freedom of the press became important. Newspapers carried news about politics. Often the government did not like what the newspapers wrote and told them not to publish the information. The publishers fought this censorship. Their battle helped a free press to grow in the United States.

How should a citizen think, feel, and act in a free society? This is a question that colonists were beginning to think about. They began to wonder what **civic** (public or community) **virtues** (values) would be important to a free and democratic society.

//////////////////// Glue Foldable here //////////////////////

**Check for Understanding**

**How did respect for education influence colonial life in New England?**

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**Which of the following values and beliefs were important to the colonists?**

\_\_\_\_\_ **a.** free press

\_\_\_\_\_ **b.** religious freedom

\_\_\_\_\_ **c.** immigration

\_\_\_\_\_ **d.** education

\_\_\_\_\_ **e.** workers' rights

**? Contrasting**

**9.** How was the Enlightenment different from the Great Awakening?

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**? Critical Thinking**

**10.** Why is censorship an important issue in a free society?

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**11.** Use a one-tab Foldable and place it along the dotted line to cover Check for Understanding. Write the title *Beliefs That Shaped America* on the anchor tab. Create a memory map by drawing five small arrows from the title to the tab and writing five words or phrases that you remember about the values and beliefs that influenced the colonies. Use the back to list other information.