

The Pilgrims and Puritans Come to America

As you read previously, colonists came to America for many reasons. They came to explore, to make money, to spread and practice their religion freely, and to live on land of their own. The Pilgrims and Puritans came to America to practice religious freedom.

In the 1500s England broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and created a new church called the Church of England. Everyone in England had to belong to the church. There was a group of people called Separatists that wanted to separate from the Church of England. The Separatists, under the leadership of William Bradford, decided to leave England and start a settlement of their own so that they could practice their religion freely. Bradford went to the Virginia Company and asked them for permission to establish a new colony in Virginia. The Virginia Company agreed, so the Pilgrims set sail on the Mayflower in September 1620 towards Virginia.

The Pilgrims had a long and difficult journey across the Atlantic Ocean. A storm blew them off course so instead of landing in Virginia, they landed further north in Cape Cod. The Pilgrims decided to settle in this area and called it Plymouth. There was a problem with them staying; there was no form of government to follow. The Virginia Company had given the Pilgrims a charter to settle in Virginia. The charter was not valid for Plymouth. The men aboard the Mayflower decided that they would write a plan of government for their colony. The plan of government became known as the Mayflower Compact. The men agreed to consult each other about the laws for the colony, and they promised to work together to make the colony succeed. All the men signed the document. Women were not allowed to participate.

The Pilgrims finally stepped foot on land in November of 1620. This was not the best time to establish a colony. It was very difficult for the Pilgrims to find food and shelter in the middle of winter. By the time spring arrived, half of the colonists had died. When spring arrived the Pilgrims set out to plant crops and build their colony. They Pilgrims were told how to plant corn and other crops and how to trap animals for food and clothing by Samoset and Squanto. By fall the colony was saved and to celebrate their success they celebrated the first Thanksgiving.

In 1630 another group left England in search of religious freedom. This group was

called the Puritans. The Puritans wanted to leave the Church of England to become pure by getting rid of Catholic practices. The Puritans did not want to separate entirely from the Church of England; they wanted to make reforms or changes. King Charles I would threaten the Puritans with harsh punishments if they did not obey the Church of England; therefore, they sought freedom in America.

The Puritans received a charter from the Massachusetts Bay Company to settle land in New England. John Winthrop led approximately 1,000 Puritans to America and established the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The colonists wanted to base the colony on the laws of God. They believed that God would protect them if they obeyed his laws. Winthrop wanted to make this colony a model for all other colonies to follow. Like the other colonies, the Massachusetts Bay Colony established a government. All men who were church members were able to vote for governor and for representatives to the General Court. The General Court would then make laws for the good of the colony.

Roanoke Island, Jamestown, Plymouth, and Massachusetts Bay Colony were the earliest of the English settlements. They paved the way for future colonies to develop. Will it be an easy task? Will the colonists continue to live under English rule? Only time will tell.

Pilgrims and Puritans
Review

Name _____
Date _____
Block _____ Entry _____

Directions: You are to use your “The Pilgrims and Puritans Come to America” story to answer the following questions.

1. Why did the Pilgrims and Puritans come to America?

2. What was the name of the church that England created when they broke away from the Roman Catholic Church?

3. What did Separatists want to do?

4. Who was the leader of the Separatists?

5. Who agreed to give the Separatists money for their voyage?

6. What was the name of the ship that the Pilgrims sailed to America on?

7. Where were the Pilgrims supposed to have landed?

8. Why did the Pilgrims not land where they were supposed to?

9. Where did the Pilgrims land? _____
10. What was the name of the plan of government the Pilgrims formed before leaving the ship?
- _____
11. What two things did the men agree to do under this form of government?
- _____
- _____
12. True or False: Women were allowed to participate in government decisions.
13. What two Native Americans helped the Pilgrims with planting crops and trapping animals?
- _____
14. Why did the Puritans want to leave the Church of England?
- _____
15. What is a reform? _____
16. True or False: The Puritans did not want to separate entirely from the Church of England, they wanted to make reforms.
17. Who did the Puritans receive a charter from?
- _____
18. Who was the leader of the Puritans? _____
19. What was the name of the colony established by the Puritans?
- _____
20. Describe the government set up by the Puritans.