

Northwest History Consortium

Mayflower Compact

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5th Grade

National Standard

Era 2: Colonization and Settlement (1585 – 1763) / Standard 1

Standard 1: Why the Americas attracted Europeans, why they brought enslaved Africans to their colonies, and how Europeans struggled for control of North America and the Caribbean

Washington State EALRs: 2.1, 2.3, 4.1, 4.2, 5.2, 5.4

Classroom-Based Assessment: Causes of Conflict

BACKGROUND

In 1608 a group of English people living in Holland known as the *Separatists*, left or separated from the Church of England. At the time, everyone in England had to belong to the Church of England. Those who refused to belong were not safe; so this group moved to Holland, where they could follow their own religion. In Holland the Separatists had religious freedom, but they soon worried that their children would not learn English ways. They decided to move to America, where they would live among English colonists and still be able to follow their own religion. A person who would make this journey for religious reasons became known as a Pilgrim.

Early in 1620 a group in England invited the Pilgrims to join them on their journey to North America. The Virginia Company agreed to pay for the colonists' voyage if they would send the company furs, fish, and lumber.

SCENARIO

The Mayflower had a long and troubled journey. Violent storms drove the ship off course, and the Pilgrims ended up far north—near Cape Cod in what is now Massachusetts—of the lands **governed** by the Virginia. There was no government.

To keep order, all the men aboard the Mayflower signed an agreement or compact known as the **Mayflower Compact**. Signers agreed that “just and equal laws” would be made for the common good of the colony and promised to obey these laws. In other words, they would self-govern.

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PROBLEM

You are part of a family of Englishmen (Church of England), of pilgrims (Separatists), family from Ireland (Irish Catholics), from France (Catholics), or slaves and servants. ALL that have arrived in America in 1620 will live under self-rule, unlike England's Monarch governing.

Each family group, whether it is Pilgrim (Separatists), English (Church of England), Irish (Catholics), French (Catholics), or servant/slave, had varying points of view on the Mayflower Compact and the leadership of Miles Standish or William Bradford.

You need answers to such questions as:

- *Did the Mayflower Compact promote self-government in the colonies?*
- *Why or why not sign the Mayflower Compact?*
- *Was Plymouth Colony a successful colony in terms of governing? Why or Why Not?*
- *How did the Mayflower Compact form the future documents of governing?*

TASK(S)

The arrival of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock brings many hardships and planning, such as governance, which was not completed in England.

Captain Miles Standish who is the hired leader of the new military colony in Plymouth, Virginia will need to establish, with the people, a document by which they can live and work together.

William Bradford was one of the Pilgrim leaders.

Up until this time, all the people of Europe have only known of a monarch ruling the government.

The Mayflower Compact promotes self-rule of ruling oneself. It gave everyone the right to share in making of laws.

- How will this be accomplished?
- How does this historic contract influence men to write and adopt the Declaration of Independence in 1776 (some 156 yrs. later)?
- What events lead to this document?

RESOURCES

Books

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ASSESSMENT

Students will decide together in groups of 4-5 on how to present to the class. You may do a timeline, a debate, a drama, or a written document describing the Mayflower Compact and events which help tell why you think it served as a model for later documents or not; i.e., our U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.

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