

## Unit 2: Early America

### Key Connections:

- European exploration and subsequent settlement in America was motivated by economics and religion
- The development of the United States was influenced by geography and available natural resources

### Topic One: Early Exploration

**Connections to the unit content:** Students learn that though the land itself did not change, exploration changed the map when Europeans “discovered” the New World. European exploration of the Americas opened up an entirely new hemisphere for European settlement and transformed Europeans’ perception of the world.

### Key Questions:

- How and why did the world map change after European exploration of the Americas?
  - How did exploration affect country boundaries?
  - How would exploration later affect the formation of the United States?

### Description:

Students investigate how European exploration of the Americas changed the map and the population of the future United States. This investigation is framed through contrasting maps and images from before and after European “discovery” of the Americas. Students return to this investigation of change throughout the course.

### Activities:

- Students answer the following question: What were the effects of European exploration on Europe and the Americas?

### Topic Two: American Colonies

**Connections to the unit content:** Students learn that regional geography heavily shaped the life, culture, and economies of colonies. Jamestown was founded as a profit venture and adapted to the climate as an agricultural colony, growing tobacco as a cash crop. In contrast, Plymouth was settled by whole family units seeking religious freedom, who engaged in subsistence farming to survive, but did not have the climate to produce high yields of crops. Lives in the colonies were extremely different as a result of the reasons for colonization and geography of the land where colonists settled.

### Key Questions:

- How did the colonists’ reasons for migrating influence where they chose to settle?
  - How did geography influence life and economic activities in the colonies?

### Description:

Students examine the relationship between early American colonists and regional geography. Students apply their knowledge of regional contemporary geography and cultures to a historical context. Through a comparative analysis of Jamestown and Plymouth, students explore the impact of land on new settlements.

### Activities:

- Students compare and contrast Jamestown and Plymouth
- Students answer the following question: Which is more influential in the development of new settlements: people or geography?

## Priority Content and Concepts:

- Explain the motivations of early Europeans explorers (gaining access to spices and natural resources, finding a sea route to access Asia's resources instead of a land route, claiming new land for European countries to increase wealth).
  - Explain the challenges faced by early European explorers (navigating across oceans, navigating to the right destination, securing funding from European countries, warring with indigenous peoples to take control of lands).
  - Explain how European expansion affected the borders and territory of European countries by creating colonies in North and South America.
  - Explain how European colonization affected the borders and territory of North and South America by claiming territories through taking land and spreading European languages (English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese).
  - Explain how conflicts arose from colonization (Indigenous peoples fighting European explorers and armies to maintain their land and resources), and cooperation that occurred, too (exchange of goods).
  - Explain the impact of European colonization on Native Americans (mass amount of deaths due to European diseases, mass amount of deaths due to wars with Europeans, loss of land and resources to European colonizers, exchange of resources-firearms, tools, horses).
  - Explain the reasons for the establishment of the Jamestown and Plymouth colonies (Jamestown was an economic venture for England, Plymouth was established by families who wanted religious freedom).
  - Compare and contrast the climate and geographic features of Jamestown and Plymouth.
  - Explain how life was different for colonists in the Jamestown and Plymouth colonies.
  - Explain how trading developed between colonies in the U.S. and European countries based on supply and demand of natural resources.
  - Explain why slavery was more important to the southern colonies than the northern colonies.
  - Explain how geography and climate impacted the uneven expansion of slavery throughout the colonies.
  - Explain how geography and climate affected the survival of colonists.
  - Explain how colonists interacted with Native American people to help ensure colonist survival (trading and bartering for goods and crops).
  - Identify examples of human, natural, and capital resources used in the exchange of goods between U.S. colonies and European countries.
  - Identify the natural resources sought out by Europeans, and why they were seeking those resources.
  - Explain how European countries used capital resources to access natural resources in North America.
  - Explain how natural resources from the colonies were traded to European countries and used to produce finished goods.