

Teaching US History Using Economics

The American Colonies: How Different Resources Led to Very Different Economies

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The American Colonies: How Different Resources Led to Very Different Economies

LESSON DESCRIPTION

Students will participate in a hands-on activity to demonstrate how resource use directly influences production decisions. Then they will examine six primary sources to analyze how varied natural resources in the 13 American colonies led to the creation of very different economies and occupations.

LESSON OVERVIEW

The Southern colonies, Mid-Atlantic colonies and New England colonies developed distinct land-use patterns and production systems, due to different resources and settlement patterns. In the South, fertile farmland led to the rise of cash crops, such as rice and tobacco. Navigable rivers allowed direct access to ocean-going vessels, and plantations developed as self-sufficient communities, creating less need for warehouses, shops and cities. In New England, rocky soil and colder winters led to smaller farms. In addition, its swiftly moving rivers were perfect for developing water-powered mills, which led to more factories. The mid-Atlantic colonies had rich farmland and a more moderate climate than New England, making them more suitable for grain and livestock.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- How does availability of resources affect production decisions?
- What types of resources were available in each of the colonial regions?

CONCEPTS

- Productive resources
- Colonial economic development

GEORGIA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- SSUSH1 Compare and contrast the development of English settlement and colonization during the 17th Century
- SSEF1 Explain why limited productive resources and unlimited wants result in scarcity, opportunity costs and tradeoffs for individuals, businesses, and governments

TIME REQUIRED

60-75 minutes

If the Lesson is split into two class periods, complete **Slides 1-5** and **Activity 1** on the first day and the remainder of the lesson on the second day.

MATERIALS

- **Activity #1 Activity Folders 1-6** – One folder per group
- **Activity #2** – One packet per group including the Notes Sheet and a copy of each Primary Source (*Tip: Put each primary source on a separate page. Don't staple the packets, so the sources are easy to distribute within each group.*)
- PowerPoint Slides 1 – 13

PROCEDURES

1. Show **Slide 2**. Ask students to name and describe the four types of productive resources, then click through the animation to introduce or review the four categories as defined by economists. *(Answers will vary. Students may have learned these four categories in an economics course, or they may respond with specific resources like petroleum, land and water.)*
 - a. **Land** (natural resources) – Resources present in nature, including land, water, vegetation and animals
 - b. **Labor** – Human effort, including teachers, chefs, firefighters, lawyers and a host of other occupations
 - c. **Capital** – Manmade tools and equipment, including computers, assembly lines, cranes
 - d. **Entrepreneurship** – The ability to develop new ways of combining resources to create goods and services
2. Show **Slide 3**. Ask students: Why do you think the United States produces a lot of wheat and corn and only a small quantity of bananas and coffee? *(The soil, temperature and rainfall conditions in the U.S. are good for growing crops like wheat and corn, but the climate in most states is not good for growing bananas or coffee, which require tropical conditions, like warm temperatures, no frost, and lots of rain and sun.)*
3. Explain that all resources are scarce, meaning that they are limited. However, resources are more plentiful in some places than in others. Some places have lots of fresh water, for example, while others have very little. Some have fertile soil, while others have rocky soil. The type of resources available in a specific location affects the types of production decisions made.
4. Show **Slide 4**. Explain that students are going to participate in a brief simulation to see how resources affect decisions. In this simulation, a few simple resources will represent all productive resources.
5. Assign students to six groups, and give each group an **Activity 1** folder. If you have more than six groups, make multiple copies of some of the folders.

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6. Once each group has its folder, click through the animation and explain their task:
 - a. Each group will use the resources in the envelope to create a toy (or other item) for a young child.
 - b. No other resources may be used.
 - c. Groups should not share or discuss their ideas with students in other groups
 - d. Select one group member to share your product with the class

Provide students with 10-12 minutes to complete their tasks.

7. At the end of work time, ask each group to have one member present their finished product. When they are done, show **Slide 5**, which reveals all of the resources provided to each group, and ask students to observe how the resources provided influenced the types of products that were made. *(For example, students with the origami instructions are likely to make an origami item, while others don't think of it. Students with scissors may make a doll or cut-out of some type, while those with only paper more often make paper airplanes.)*
8. Ask students which of the products they created could have been made by ALL groups, and which ones required specialized resources. *(Answers will vary, but most products can only be made by one group due to the specialized resources. If a student knows how to make an origami star, any group could have made it with their paper.)*
9. Show **Slide 6**. Explain that now you are going to shift your attention to the effect of resources on the development of the 13 American colonies. Distribute 1 copy of **Activity 2** to each group. Explain that in **Activity 2**, students are going to examine a variety of primary sources about the colonies to determine what kinds of resources were available and how these resources affected the kinds of products the colony produced, as well as the kinds of jobs people had. Students do not need to examine each colony individually. Instead, they will look at them as three groups: The Southern colonies, the Mid-Atlantic colonies and the New England colonies, which are defined on the note sheet.
10. Encourage students to distribute the sources within their group and work together to collect all of the information needed for the Notes Sheet. Give students 15-20 minutes to evaluate the primary sources and write their reflection.

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11. At the end of the work time, show Slides 7-12, which include images of each of the sources, and call on students to explain what information they learned from each source about the resources, products and occupations in each region. (*A key with suggested answers is at the end of the lesson.*)

CLOSURE

12. Ask each group to share out their response to the **Reflection Question**: What connections do you see between the types of resources available in each region and the kinds of products and occupations that developed in each region?

Activity #1: Resource Folders

Instructions: Create six separate Resource Folders according to the specifications below. Each manila folder should have a number written on it (“Resource Folder 1,” “Resource Folder 2,” etc.) If you will have more than six groups, create duplicates of some folders.

Some of the resources will be consumed in the activity, so you will need to set up new Resource Folders for each class.

Folder 1 – 2 sheets of blank copy paper, 2 pencils (sharpened)

Folder 2 – 1 copy of the origami instructions (on following page), one paper square (for making origami)

Folder 3 – 2 sheets of blank copy paper, 1 pair of scissors

Folder 4 – 2 sheets of blank copy paper, 1 red and 1 blue marker

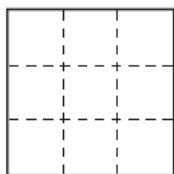
Folder 5 – 2 sheets of blank copy paper, 1 pair of scissors and 1 stapler

Folder 6 – 2 sheets of blank copy paper, 1 piece of ribbon and 1 roll of tape

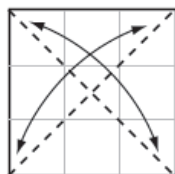


Origami 4 - Pointed Star

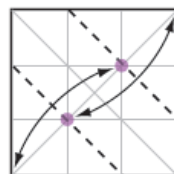
origami-fun
www.origami-fun.com



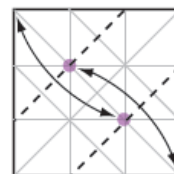
1. Make these creases, exactly in thirds. You may have to measure.



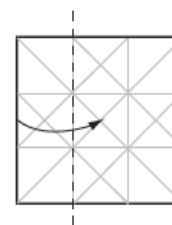
2. Now fold in half diagonally both ways, and open.



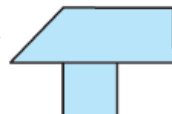
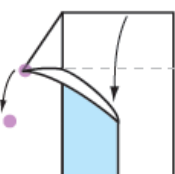
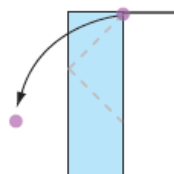
3. Fold along creases shown to points shown, and open.



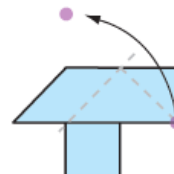
4. Do the same creases but in the other direction.



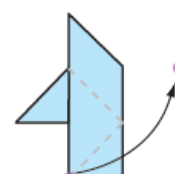
5. Fold the left third inward.



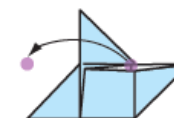
6. Using the creases shown, pull the corner from the point shown down to the other point shown, and flatten.



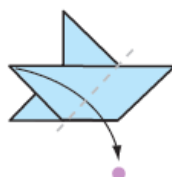
7. Again using the creases as shown, move this point to the other point, and flatten.



8. Again, using the creases shown, move this point to the other point and flatten.



9. Move only the inside flap outside to the point shown.



10. Fold this corner down along crease shown.



Finished 4 Pointed Star.

Activity #2: Colonial Resources Notes Sheet

Instructions: This activity includes six primary sources from Colonial America. Each source provides some insight into the kinds of resources or economic activities in one of the primary regions: the South, the Mid-Atlantic, and New England. Review the six sources in your group, and record your observations on the table below. Then answer the reflection question.

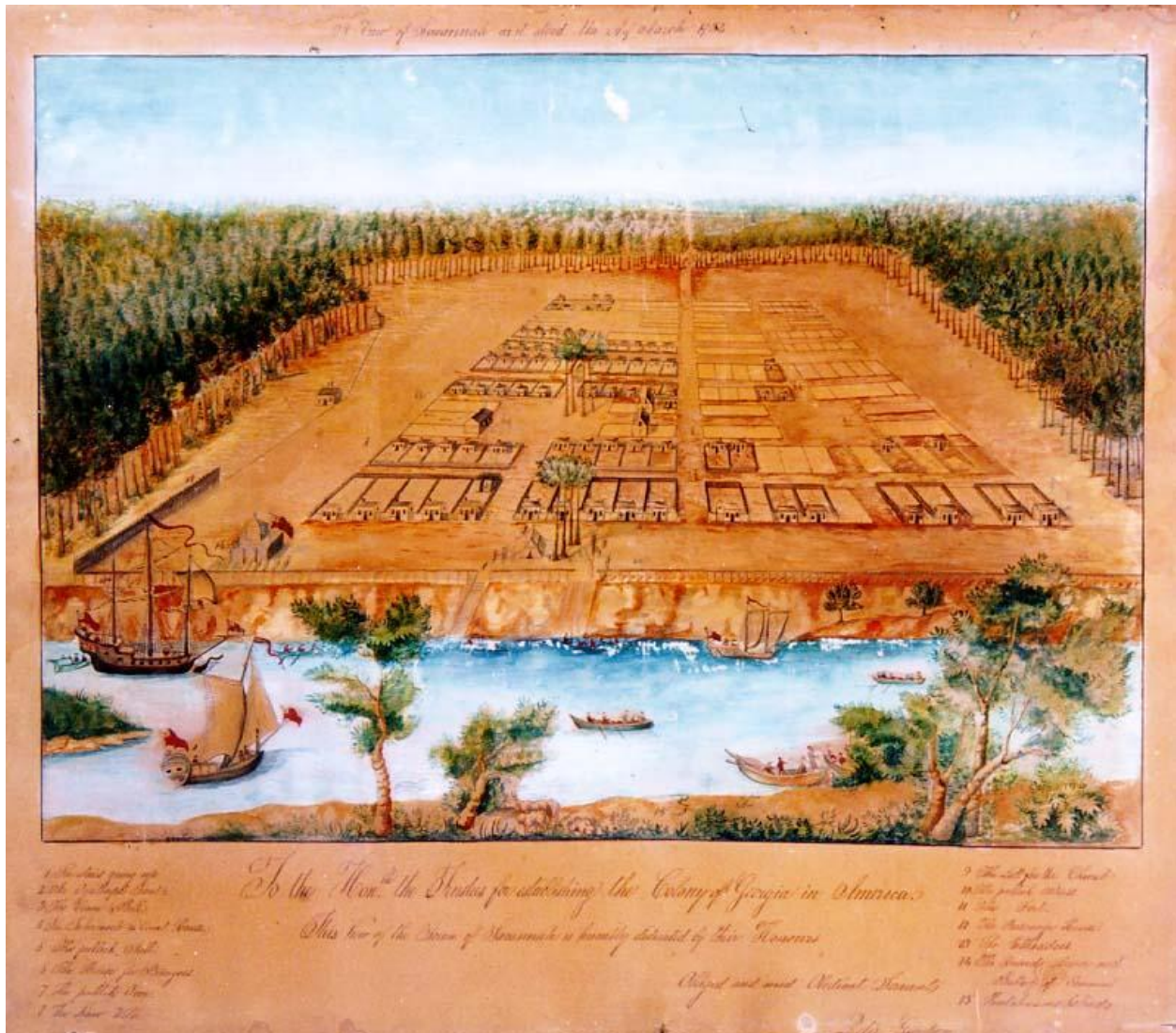
South (Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Maryland, Virginia)	(Sources 1 & 2) What resources are shown or described? Based on the resources, what products are more likely to be produced in this region? (Source 5) What products are more important to this region? (Source 6) What occupations are more common in this region?
Mid-Atlantic (Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware)	(Source 3) What resources are shown or described? Based on the resources, what products are more likely to be produced in this region?

Mid-Atlantic (Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware)	(Source 5) What products are more important to this region? (Source 6) What occupations are more common in this region?
New England (Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire)	(Source 4) What resources are shown or described? Based on the resources, what products are more likely to be produced in this region? (Source 5) What products are more important to this region? (Source 6) What occupations are more common in this region?

Reflection Question: What connections do you see between the types of resources available in each region and the kinds of products and occupations that developed in each region?

Source 1

Plan of Savannah, 1733 (Georgia Historical Society)



Source 2

State of the Province of Georgia, Nov. 10, 1740 (Library of Congress)

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/lhbc.7018a/?sp=53>

The Town of Savannah was laid out, and began to be built, in which are now 142 Houses, and good habitable Huts. The Soil in general, when cleared, is productive of Indian Corn, Rice, Peas, Potatoes, Pumpkins, melons and many other Kinds of Gourds, in great Quantities; Wheat, Oats, Barley, and other European Grains, 'tis found by diverse Experiments, may be propagated in many Parts (more especially in the Uplands toward Augusta) with Success. Mulberry-Trees and Vines agree exceedingly well with the soil and Climate, and so does the Annual Cotton, whereof large Quantities have been raised; and it is much planted. But the Cotton, which in some Parts is perennial, dies here in the Winter; which nevertheless the Annual is not inferior to in Goodness, but requires more Trouble in cleansing from the Seed. Cattle, Hogs, Poultry and Fruit-Trees of most Kinds, have increased even beyond Imagination.

Ships of about three hundred Tons can come up to the Town, where the Worm (which is the Plague of the American Seas) does not eat; and the River is navigable for large Boats, as far as the Town of Augusta, which lies in the Latitude of 33 D. 5 M. and is 250 Miles distant from Savannah by water; small Boats can go 300 Miles further, to the Cherokees.

There is already a considerable Trade in the River; and there is in this Town a Court-House, A Goal (jail), a Store-House, a large House for receiving the Indians, a Wharf of Bridge, a Guard-House, and some other publick Buildings; a publick Garden of ten Acres cleared fenced and planted with Orange-Trees, Mulberry-Trees, Vines, some Olives, which thrive very well, Peaches, Apples, etc.

Source 3

Excerpts from Richard Frame, a Short Description of Pennsylvania, 1692

<https://archive.org/details/ashortdescripti00jonegoog/page/n20/mode/2up>

I think 'tis hard for me to express
How God provided in a Wilderness

...

The Fields, most fruitful, yield such Crops of Wheat,
And other things most excellent to eat,
As Barley, Rye and other sorts of Grain;
In peace we plow, we sow, and reap again,
Good Indian Corn, which is a larger breed,
It doth our Cattle, Swine and Horses feed,
Buck-Wheat and Oats, beside, good store of Reed,
A plentiful Land, O plentiful indeed,

...

The Riches of this Land it is not known,
What in the after Ages may be shown;
My words are true, for here were lately found
Some Precious Mettle under-neath the Ground,
The Which some men did think was Silver Oar,
Others said Copper, but some think 'tis more.
They say there is a vein of Lead or Tin,

...

When we began to clear the Land,
For room to sow our Seed,
And that our Corn might grow and stand,
For Food in Time of Need,
Then with the Ax, with Might and Strength,
The Trees so thick and strong,
Yet on each side, such strokes at length,
We laid them all along.
So when the Trees, that grew so high,
Were fallen to the ground,
Which we with Fire most furiously
To Ashes did Confound.
Then presently we ought for Wood,
I mean (not Wood to burn,
But for) such Timber, choice and good,
As fitted well our turn
A city, and Towns were raised then,
Wherein we might abide,
Planters also, and Husband-men,
Had Land enough beside.
The heft of House then was known,
To be of Wood or Clay
But now we build of Brick and Stone

Source 4

Excerpts from John Smith, a Description of New England, 1616

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=zeaamericanstudies>

The part we call New England is betwixt the degrees of 41 and 45; but that part this discourse speaketh of, stretcheth but from Pennobscot to Cape Cod. ... I have seen at least 40 several habitations upon the Sea Coast, and found about 25 excellent good Harbours; In many whereof there is anchorage for 500 sail of ships of any burden; in some of them for 5000.

...

From Pennobscot to Sagadahock this Coast is all Mountainous and lles of huge Rocks, but overgrown with all sorts of excellent good woods for building houses, boats, barks or shippes, with an incredible abundance of most sorts of fish, such fowl and sundry sorts of good fruits for man's use.

...

Betwixt Sagadahock and Sowocatuck there is but two or three sandy Bayes, but betwixt that and Cape Cod very many; especially the Coast of the Massachusets is so indifferently mixed with high clay or sandy cliffs in one place & then tracts of large long ledges of diverse sorts, and quarries of stones in other places so strangely divided with tintured veins of diverse colours; as Free stone for building, Slate for tiling, smooth stone to make Furnaces and Forges for glasse or iron, and iron ore sufficient, conveniently, to melt in them.

Source 5

Colonial and Federal Statistics, Census Bureau

Series Z 384-397. Cast Iron Imported and Exported by American Colonies, by Origin and Destination: 1768 to 1772

[In hundredweights. For years ending January 4 of following year]

Series No.	Colony	Imports									Exports							
		From other Continental Colonies					From Great Britain				To other Continental Colonies					To West Indies		
		1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1771	1770	1769	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1771	1770	1769	
384	Total	4,936	4,884	4,039	3,824	4,733	968	969	2,621	5,231	5,503	6,309	3,926	2,025	97	42	165	
385	New Hampshire	217	402	172	40			(1)		5	11	18	29	18				
386	Massachusetts	128	138	121	44	43	8	(1)		2,070	1,714	2,029	1,972	860	21	25	10	
387	Rhode Island	72	97		194	7				2,538	2,795	1,208	1,422	711			65	
388	Connecticut	984	2,364	1,150	1,581	256				77	315	137	129	41		7		
389	New York	1,773	422	1,150	818	785			(1)	180	206	161	142	20	20	6		
390	New Jersey			24	116						2							
391	Pennsylvania	58	45	1,357	155	359		106	1231	311	290	356	137	188	3		70	
392	Maryland	280	266	236	285	1,496	(1)	130	1,426	4	39	2,513	95	51	55			
393	Virginia	135	290	347	331	65	733	626	528	8	82			99				
394	North Carolina	1,131	532	297	633	1,066	1178	78	6	8	12			2			20	
395	South Carolina	142	313	192	67	363		60	359	30	37	89		35				
396	Georgia	3	5	9		270	149	69	171							4		
397	Florida	30		3		23	(1)		(1)									

¹In addition, the following number of pots were imported: From other Continental Colonies, 1770, N.H.-4, Mass.-20, Conn.-103, N.Y.-52, Pa.-180; from Great Britain, 1771, Md.-2,432, N.C.-169, Ga.-150, Fla.-4; 1770, N.H.-187, Mass.-12 pots and 250 pounds, Md.-107; 1769, N.Y.-100, Pa.-231, Md.-34, Ga.-71, Fla.-2.

²In addition, the following number of pots were exported: Mass.-510, R.I.-116, Conn.-20, N.Y.-104, and 35 potash kettles from Mass.

³Includes figures for New Castle, Del., as follows: Imports from other Continental Colonies, 1770, 1 cwt.; 1771, 40 cwt. Exports to other Continental Colonies, 1771, 3 cwt.

Series Z 441-448. Tobacco Imported by England, by Origin: 1697 to 1775

[In thousands of pounds. For years ending December 24, except as noted]

Year	Total	Virginia and Maryland	Carolina	Georgia	Pennsylvania	New England	Other ¹	Year	Total	Virginia and Maryland	Carolina	Pennsylvania	New England	Other ¹
	441	442	443	444	445	446	448		441	442	443	445	446	448
1775	55,968	54,458	834	109		57	510	1760	52,347	51,283	989	10	7	59
1774	56,057	54,785	1,191	71			10	1759	34,732	34,652	120	4		6
1773	55,929	54,915	964	50			(Z)	1758	43,969	43,623	273			73
1772	51,501	50,867	684	135			15	1757	42,232	41,542	369			321
1771	58,093	56,888	1,136	35			34	1756	33,291	32,943	289	1	(Z)	53
1770	39,188	38,986	190	8			4	1755	49,084	48,610	241	14	2	217
1769	33,797	33,552	203	1			41	1754	58,867	57,977	836	46		8
1768	35,555	35,457	88				9	1753	62,686	61,913	451	35	285	2
1767	39,145	39,096	44				4	1752	57,250	56,591	83	68	505	3
1766	43,318	43,193	114				12	1751	45,979	45,745	162	67	4	(Z)
1765	48,320	47,600	704			3	13	1750	51,339	50,785	12	34	447	61
1764	54,433	53,862	765		4		2	1749	44,648	44,190	321	122		15
1763	65,179	64,500	647		6		27	1748	50,695	49,646	393	66	319	271
1762	44,111	41,862	2,226		10		13	1747	51,289	50,765	287	107	124	6
1761	47,075	45,818	796		450		11	1746	39,990	39,567	81	228		114

See footnotes at end of table.

SHIPPING AND FISHERIES

Z 516-538

Series Z 516-529. Vessels Built in Thirteen Colonies and West Florida: 1769 to 1771

Year and type of vessel	Total	New Hampshire	Massachusetts	Rhode Island	Connecticut	New York	New Jersey	Pennsylvania	Maryland	Virginia	North Carolina	South Carolina	Georgia	West Florida
	516	517	518	519	520	521	522	523	524	525	526	527	528	529
1771														
Topsails	128	15	42	15	7	9	-	15	10	10	-	3	2	-
Sloops and schooners	293	40	83	60	39	28	2	6	8	9	8	4	4	2
Tons	24,092	4,991	7,704	2,148	1,483	1,698	70	1,307	1,645	1,678	241	560	543	24
1770														
Topsails	118	27	31	16	5	8	-	18	7	6	-	-	-	-
Sloops and schooners	283	20	118	49	41	10	-	8	10	15	5	8	3	1
Tons	20,620	3,581	7,274	2,035	1,522	960	-	2,354	1,545	1,105	125	52	57	10
1769														
Topsails	114	16	40	8	7	5	1	14	9	6	3	4	-	1
Sloops and schooners	276	29	97	31	43	14	3	8	11	21	9	8	2	-
Tons	20,081	2,452	8,013	1,428	1,542	955	83	1,469	1,344	1,269	607	789	50	80

- Represents zero.

Source 6

Comparisons from Revolutionary America (via Library of Congress)

<https://guides.loc.gov/colonial-america-business-research/internet>

<http://gpih.ucdavis.edu/>

Occupations	Boston 1790 (New England)	Philadelphia 1780-83 (mid-Atlantic)	Charleston 1790 (South)
Officials	2.6%	1.3%	5.1%
Esquires	0%	0.8%	0.1%
Professionals	7.2%	2.7%	11.3%
Merchants	14.5%	26.6%	15.2%
Shopkeepers	19.6%	19.0%	29.2%
Artisans	25.6%	23.6%	14.0%
Construction	14.0%	9.0%	8.9%
Agriculture	2.1%	2.6%	10.4%
Unskilled	14.3%	14.6%	5.7%

*An “Esquire” was an office position, including lawyer, sheriff, justice of the peace.

*An “Artisan” was a blacksmith, woodworker, metal worker or other skilled tradesman

Activity #2: Colonial Resources Notes Sheet – SAMPLE RESPONSES

Instructions: This activity includes six primary sources from Colonial America. Each source provides some insight into the kinds of resources or economic activities in one of the primary regions: the South, the Mid-Atlantic, and New England. Review the six sources in your group, and record your observations on the table below. Then answer the reflection question.

South (Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Maryland, Virginia)	(Sources 1 & 2) What resources are shown or described? The image (Source 1) shows flat land, good for farming, and a waterway that is easily accessible to various sizes of boats. Source 2 explains that many grains and vegetables grow well, as well as cotton. The land is also good for raising cattle, hogs, poultry and fruit trees. Source 2 also talks about how far you can navigate on the rivers. Based on the resources, what products are more likely to be produced in this region? Grains, vegetables, cotton, fruits and meats. (Source 5) What products are more important to this region? Tobacco is an important product. Not cast iron or shipbuilding. (Source 6) Which occupations are more common in this region? Which are less common? Officials, professionals, shopkeepers and agriculture are common. Merchants and unskilled labor are less common.
Mid-Atlantic (Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware)	(Source 3) What resources are shown or described? He describes a lot of grains and animals. Also, precious metals like silver and copper. He also talks about tall trees that provide a lot of timber for building, as well as brick and stone. Based on the resources, what products are more likely to be produced in this region? Grains, metals, wood. Also, products that are made from metal and wood. (Source 5) What products are more important to this region? There are more iron exports compared to Georgia, but less than New England. Also, more ships compared to Georgia, but less than New England. They do not produce much tobacco, and exports of tobacco decrease over time.

Mid-Atlantic (Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware)	(Source 6) Which occupations are more common in this region? Which are less common? Merchants, artisans and unskilled laborers are more common. Officials, merchants, shopkeepers and agriculture are less common.
New England (Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire)	(Source 4) What resources are shown or described? He describes good harbors, lots of rock, good wood, fish, fowl and fruits. He also describes stone quarries, slate, and iron ore. Based on the resources, what products are more likely to be produced in this region? Not agriculture. There would be more fishing, as well as production of things that require stone and iron. Ships because of the wood and the good harbors. (Source 5) What products are more important to this region? Cast iron is a huge export from these colonies. Tobacco is barely exported at all. Shipbuilding is also a huge industry. (Source 6) Which occupations are more common in this region? Which are less common? There are more professionals than in the mid-Atlantic, but fewer than in the South. There are also a lot of artisans and more construction workers than in the other regions. Very few agricultural workers. About the same unskilled workers as in the mid-Atlantic.

Reflection Question: What connections do you see between the types of resources available in each region and the kinds of products and occupations that developed in each region?

Answers will vary, but students should point out that the good farmland in the South led to a major emphasis on agriculture, while the presence of metal ore in the mid-Atlantic and New England led to more iron exports as well as shipbuilding. The harbors and fishing in New England helped promote shipbuilding as well, while the waterways in the South made city building less significant. The types of exports and occupations relate directly to the types of resources available.

