

# Comparisons in Period 2

**Learning Objective:** Compare the effects of the development of colonial society in the various regions of North America.

The reasoning skill of “comparison” is the suggested focus for evaluating the content of this period. Historians often compare various European colonial systems or various British colonies. As explained in Topic 2.1, there are many factors to consider in the broad topic of the influences on the development of society in the 13 colonies from 1607 to 1754. On the AP exam, a question might be focused on any one factor such as migration, the North American environment, interaction with Native Americans, or British expectations to list but a few of the factors.

In an effort to “Explain the extent to which the British colonies were involved in political, cultural, and economic exchanges with Great Britain,” one could show that from the very beginning the colonialists questioned the British government’s control while asking for their support and mirroring much of their culture.

One could show that, economically, the British policy of mercantilism dictated what the colonies could produce and with whom they could trade. This is specific evidence of an economic factor that negated colonial use of all their available resources that produced “enumerated” goods. One can take other specific evidence to demonstrate the complexity of the relationship between Britain and the colonies. For example, one could compare the colonial desire for government support to drive away the Native Americans to the colonial view of mercantilism.

Further evidence can support the argument that in the 17th century the colonies had an evolving relationship with Britain. One element that could be compared is religion. How did the influence of the British-led Church of England compare with that of the Puritans, Quakers, and Catholics who played active roles in starting specific colonies? One might consider several plausible arguments and then decide which one is best supported by the evidence:

- Colonial culture was more tolerant of religious diversity than was British culture.
- People in the colonies carried on the same religious conflicts that existed in Great Britain.
- Colonists held similar ideas about religious toleration as the British did, but circumstances led them to act more tolerantly.

COMPARING COLONIAL REGIONS			
Characteristic	New England	Middle Atlantic	Southern
<b>Colonies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Hampshire</li> <li>• Massachusetts</li> <li>• Rhode Island</li> <li>• Connecticut</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New York</li> <li>• Pennsylvania</li> <li>• New Jersey</li> <li>• Delaware</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maryland</li> <li>• Virginia</li> <li>• North Carolina</li> <li>• South Carolina</li> <li>• Georgia</li> </ul>
<b>Population Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English</li> <li>• German</li> <li>• Dutch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English</li> <li>• Scotch-Irish</li> <li>• African American</li> </ul>
<b>Religious Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puritans</li> <li>• Dissenters</li> <li>• Baptists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anglicans</li> <li>• Roman Catholics</li> <li>• Quakers</li> <li>• Jews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anglicans</li> <li>• Roman Catholics</li> <li>• Baptists</li> </ul>
<b>Commercial Centers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boston</li> <li>• Providence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New York</li> <li>• Philadelphia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charleston</li> <li>• Savannah</li> </ul>
<b>Exports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fish</li> <li>• Lumber</li> <li>• Ships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tobacco</li> <li>• Rice</li> <li>• Indigo</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax-supported schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private religious schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutors and parents</li> </ul>
<b>Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rock soils</li> <li>• Long winters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich soil</li> <li>• Moderate climate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse soils</li> <li>• Diverse climate</li> </ul>
<b>Representative Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colonial assemblies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia House of Burgesses</li> </ul>

## QUESTIONS ABOUT COMPARISON

1. Explain the extent to which the 13 colonies developed differently during the 17th century. For example, compare the people who settled the specific colonies as well as the available resources and support they had.
2. Explain the influence of British political, cultural, and economic views on the development of the 13 colonies. For example, compare how the British and colonists viewed mercantilism, representative government, and religion among many possible areas of interaction.
3. Explain the extent to which the various conditions in the English colonies led to the development of a unique system of slavery. For example, compare the influence of the colonial economy, geography, and population on the enslaving of Africans.



Historians do more than repeat facts and quotations. They also develop arguments. Argumentation means using reasons and evidence effectively to make a point. The first part of an argument is making a claim. That means making a statement that can be proved or disproved.

You may have made claims in English class or speech class. For example, maybe you argued “Schools should require students to wear uniforms.” Or perhaps your topic was “The city should ban single-use plastic bottles.”

Historians’ claims are more robust and demanding than these. A historian’s claim must be historically defensible. That means there are specific and relevant facts, statistics, records, or accounts that support the claim.

Evaluate this claim: “The original thirteen colonies were based on republican ideals that persist in the United States to this day.” Is this claim historically defensible? To decide, you’ll need to evaluate the evidence. Then you will need to consider whether the claim can be proved or disproved.

On one hand, colonial governments included elections. On the other hand, most people today would not consider any of those colonies to be very inclusive. That’s because the colonies excluded most people from voting—including women, men who did not own property, indentured servants, and enslaved people.

Historians consult secondary sources, including works by other historians, to help them make claims and develop arguments. However, only primary sources provide the actual words of people who were alive at the time.

How could a historian prove the claim that the colonies were based on republican ideals? He or she might quote from documents such as the *Fundamental Orders of Connecticut*, the first written constitution in American history. To disprove that same claim, a historian might quote from letters by indentured servants or women. Voting records would be valuable sources to historians on either side of the issue.

*For each claim listed below, tell whether it is historically defensible and describe sources you would search for to prove or disprove the claim.*

1. Native Americans’ escape from enslavement changed not only the colonies’ economies but also world history.
2. Britain’s salutary neglect ended up having negative outcomes for its colonies.
3. Metacom’s War marked the end of most Native American resistance in New England. However, it was not the end of Native American influence on that region.
4. The large numbers of children that colonial women bore affected the wealth and development of colonial economies.
5. In the 13 colonies, owning land was the likeliest way to become wealthy.