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Life in the New World

For the Europeans who explored and settled North America, daily life was frequently a struggle to subdue a wilderness and to endure fierce conflicts with Native Americans. For Africans seized from their homes and enslaved in the Americas, life was a battle first to survive and then to hold on to their cultural identity.

A Collision of Cultures



Europeans began to explore North America in the early 1500s. Many explorers wrote grim reports of hardships encountered in the wilderness. The first arrivals were followed by other Europeans, settlers who built towns and started farms. As European settlement spread, conflict developed between the newcomers and Native Americans that often led to brutal wars. Their superior weapons enabled the Europeans to overcome their enemies. Even more destructive to the Native Americans were the diseases the newcomers brought with them. As a result of war and disease, few Native Americans survived beyond the end of the 1600s.

The Natives and the English

Watch the video and write key ideas.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTYOQ05oDOI>

Puritan Style



The Puritans greatly influenced early American literature. They began to establish communities in New England in the 1620s after leaving England to escape what they saw as signs of corruption in the Church of England. These included elaborate rituals, a richly dressed clergy, and fine churches. In opposition to this, Puritans dressed plainly and held simple religious services in undecorated meetinghouses. They also believed that they had a God-given responsibility to establish an ideal way of life in America. The Puritans' plainness and piety showed in their writing, which employed straightforward language and often focused on their faith. William Bradford was a member of the Puritan group known as the Pilgrims, who settled Plymouth Colony in 1620. Bradford viewed writing primarily as a practical tool. At the beginning of his history of the Plymouth Colony, he said that he intended to produce a record of events in "a plain style, with singular regard unto the simple truth in all things."

"For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us."
—John Winthrop

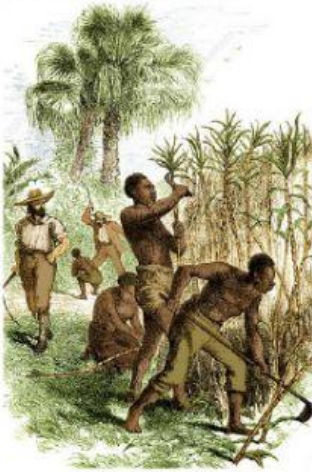
In 1734 Jonathan Edwards, a Congregational minister and a great spokesman for Puritanism, began a series of religious revivals in his community of Northampton, Massachusetts. Edwards' powerful sermons helped start the "Great Awakening," a movement that spread throughout the American colonies. Edwards maintained that a person had to repent and convert in order to be "born again." This idea of having a personal emotional experience that brings one to God was a central idea of the Great Awakening.

Puritans and Pilgrims

Watch the video and get some ideas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCl9HPlyYng>

Surviving Slavery



The first enslaved Africans were brought to Virginia in 1619. By the 1700s, slave ships arrived regularly in the American colonies. Most of these people, like Olaudah Equiano, had been taken from their homes in West Africa by slave traders. After enduring the horrors of the “Middle Passage,” the long sea voyage across the Atlantic, they reached the slave markets of the Americas. Despite brutal living conditions, these Africans struggled to preserve parts of their heritage—the social values and cultural traditions of their homelands—but usually without success.

Slavery

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NO_wmixXBdE

The Road to Independence

As human beings grow, they experience the challenges and rewards of becoming independent. Separated by a long, dangerous sea voyage from Britain, the American colonists became used to managing their own affairs. As colonial society developed, many Americans came to believe that this growth in responsibility should be matched with an increase in political and economic rights. In time, this belief would lead to revolution—resulting in a break with Britain, a long war, and full independence.

A “Natural Aristocracy”

The culture of the American colonies was shaped by the practical, self-reliant, pioneer spirit of settlers who had left their homelands to seek a better life. As the French-born American Michel Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur observed, “*He is an American who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds.*” The career of Benjamin Franklin reflected the American colonists’ ability to rise in the world. He began life as one of seventeen children in a poor family. He ended as a businessman, an influential politician, and a famous writer and scientist.

Benjamin Franklin

Watch the video and write mind map

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0HyDjbdsF8>

“Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears, while the used key is always bright.”

—Benjamin Franklin

Another important factor in the maturing of American colonial society was an emphasis on self-improvement through education. New England’s Puritans, for example, established a system of public schools, believing that learning was a defense against evil. The effect of a bold, enterprising spirit coupled with education was the emergence in the American colonies of an outstanding political leadership, which one of these leaders, Thomas Jefferson, called a “natural aristocracy” of virtue and talent.

Thomas Jefferson

Watch the video and do a Mind map

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82KmrV-Szhs>

Political Rights



During the 1700s, America came under the influence of the European cultural movement known as the Enlightenment. Enlightenment thinkers believed that natural laws applied to social, political, and economic relationships. Among these was the concept that human beings possessed certain natural, or “inalienable” rights, basic rights that could never be taken away. Thomas Jefferson believed that the colonists had a natural right to be free. He also believed that they had a right— indeed a duty—to end what he saw as Britain’s tyrannical rule of the colonies by establishing their own independent government. In the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson eloquently expressed the fundamental ideas behind the American Revolution.

American Revolution

Watch the video and write down key ideas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIUiSBXQHCw>

Women's Lives



In colonial America, law and custom gave men greater authority and importance than women in politics and in the home. A married woman had few legal rights and was almost completely under her husband's control. Despite legal limitations, many colonial women worked outside the home, running farms and businesses. Women also played a vital role in the independence movement by organizing boycotts of British goods. During the Revolutionary War, women made important contributions on the home front and on the battlefield. However, the political rights they helped win would be denied them for another 140 years.

Women's lives

Watch the video and write down key ideas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsgurh4wE1A>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fM1czS_VYDI