

Unit 1: The Colonial Period

DBQ 1: Immigration

Historical Context:

From the establishment of the first successful English colony at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, the population of the American colonies grew rapidly. By 1700 this area contained close to 300,000 people; by 1750 it contained well over one million. In 1790 the first official census of the United States counted 3,900,000. While much of this population increase came from an unusually high birthrate (families with 10 or more children were common), about half of the increase came from massive immigration.

◆ **Directions:** The following question is based on the accompanying documents (1–5) in Part A. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of the document and the author's point of view. Be sure to:

1. Carefully read the document-based question. Consider what you already know about this topic. How would you answer the question if you had no documents to examine?
2. Now, read each document carefully, underlining key phrases and words that address the document-based question. You may also wish to use the margin to make brief notes. Answer the questions which follow each document.
3. Based on your own knowledge and on the information found in the documents, formulate a thesis that directly answers the question.
4. Organize supportive and relevant information into a brief outline.
5. Write a well-organized essay proving your thesis. The essay should be logically presented and should include information both from the documents and from your own knowledge outside of the documents.

Question: *Why did so many people move to colonial America?*

◆ **Part A:** The following documents will help you understand the various reasons for immigration to the American colonies. Examine each document carefully, and answer the question or questions that follow.

Document 1

This is an excerpt from Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (New York, 1791, vol. 1). Equiano was an African who was sold into slavery in America in the mid-1700's.

I loved my family, I loved my village, and I especially loved my mother because I was the youngest son and I was her favorite . . . I was very happy. But my happiness ended suddenly when I was eleven [and sold into slavery. After being marched to the seacoast] the first object which saluted my eyes . . . was a slave ship. . . . I was put down under the decks.

(continued)



DBQ 1: Immigration *(continued)*

After a long and terrible voyage, the ship came to America, where Equiano was sold into slavery. Why did Equiano and thousands of other Africans come to America during the colonial era?

Document 2

This excerpt is from William Penn's "Some Account of the Province of Pennsylvania in America." Written in the late 1600's, this was Penn's appeal for immigrants.

... industrious farmers and day laborers ... people who work with their hands ... their labor will be worth more than it is in England and their living will be cheaper.

Why would land (living) be cheaper in Pennsylvania than in England? _____

Why would wages for labor be higher in Pennsylvania than in England? _____

What kinds of people would be likely to emigrate to Pennsylvania colony by Penn's appeal? _____

Document 3

This excerpt is from Clarence Ver Steeg's *The Formative Years, 1607-1763* (Hill and Wang, New York, 1964). Dr. Ver Steeg was a professor of history at Northwestern University. Here he explains why the English authorities of the seventeenth century encouraged emigration to the American colonies.

... political economists of the period [concluded] that England was overpopulated, an assumption resulting from a theory that exportation of people to the colonies was a national asset. ... Coupled with the theory was the fact: thousands of Englishmen were forced off the land and unwelcome itinerants became a common sight in [English cities], constituting a problem. ...

Why did the English government promote the "exportation" of people to the American colonies? _____

What kind of people did they "export?" _____

(continued)



DBQ 1: Immigration *(continued)*

Document 4

This excerpt is from John Winthrop's 1630 sermon "A Model of Christian Charity." Winthrop was the leader of a large group of English Puritans. He gave this address to his followers while still on board the ship *Arabella* in preparation for landing in the new colony on Massachusetts Bay. Here he speaks of what he believed was their primary motive for settlement.

The end is to do more service to the Lord . . . that ourselves and posterity may be the better preserved from the common corruptions of this evil world to serve the Lord and work out our salvation under the power and purity of his holy ordinances.

According to Winthrop, why did the Puritans come to New England? _____

Document 5

This excerpt is from James Truslow Adams' book *The Founding of New England*, published in 1919 (Little, Brown and Company, 1921, 1949; pp. 121–122). This book won the Pulitzer Prize for history in 1922. In the following excerpt, Adams is writing of the early migration to Massachusetts.

They came for the simple reason that they wanted to better their condition. They wanted to be rid of the growing and incalculable exactions [oppressive demands] of government. They wanted to own land; and it was this last motive, perhaps, which mainly had attracted those twelve thousand persons out of sixteen thousand who swelled the population of Massachusetts in 1640, but were not church members. . . .

According to Adams, what was the primary motive for immigration to colonial New England? _____

Does this document disprove what Winthrop said in Document 4? _____

◆ Part B—Essay

Why did so many people move to colonial America?