

Study Guide



Chapter 4, Section 1

For use with textbook pages 100–106

LIFE IN THE COLONIES

KEY TERMS

<i>subsistence farming</i>	Farming to produce enough food to meet the needs of a family, with little left over to sell or exchange (page 101)
<i>triangular trade</i>	Merchant shipping routes that follow a triangle between the West Indies, New England Colonies, and West Africa (page 102)
<i>cash crop</i>	Crops that are sold for profit (page 103)
<i>diversity</i>	Cultural variety (page 104)
<i>Tidewater</i>	A region of flat, low-lying plains along the seacoast (page 105)
<i>backcountry</i>	Region of hills and forests west of the Tidewater (page 105)
<i>overseer</i>	Boss in charge of slaves on a plantation (page 106)

DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

What kinds of jobs do people have in your community? What jobs do your parents or friends' parents have? What type of work would you like to do when you are old enough?

This section focuses on how settlers in the different colonies earned a living.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the chart below to help you take notes as you read the summaries that follow. Think about how the region influenced what people did for a living.

Characteristics of the Colonies

New England Colonies	Middle Colonies	Southern Colonies
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.
6.		

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READ TO LEARN

- **New England Colonies** (pages 100–103)

Almost 1 million people immigrated to the colonies between 1670 and 1775. The African American population grew at a faster rate than the European population. Colonial cities and towns grew as a result. The main economic activities in New England were farming, small businesses, shipbuilding, fishing, and trade. Well-organized towns were built around a meeting house used for church and town meetings. Most colonists were farmers who lived in towns and farmed the land surrounding the towns. They practiced **subsistence farming**, producing just enough to feed their families with little left over. New England farms were much smaller than Southern plantations because the cool climate and rocky soil made farming difficult. Family members provided the labor.

New England became the center of the shipping trade in the colonies because of its location. The colonists traded their goods for goods made in England and Europe. Some merchant ship routes went back and forth between two ports, while others, known as the **triangular trade**, followed a triangle. In New England, the triangular trade went from the West Indies to the New England colonies and across the Atlantic Ocean to West Africa. The shipping of enslaved Africans from West Africa to the West Indies for sale to plantation owners in America was known as the Middle Passage. The living conditions were bad for these enslaved Africans. The Africans were packed tightly onto ships, and many did not survive the long trip.

1. Why was the Atlantic Ocean important to the economy of New England?

- **The Middle Colonies** (pages 103–104)

Agriculture and industry supported the Middle Colonies. A warmer climate and fertile soil made farming larger areas of land possible. The Middle Colonies grew more crops than they needed, called **cash crops**, which they sold for profit. New York and Philadelphia, the largest cities in America, became busy ports. Industries included small businesses and larger lumbering, mining, and small-scale manufacturing businesses. New Jersey and Pennsylvania had iron mills and ironworks industries. Many of the mills employed hundreds of workers, including German immigrants.

One hundred thousand German immigrants came to the colonies. Most settled in Pennsylvania and used European agricultural methods. They became successful farmers. Germans, Dutch, Swedish, and other non-English immigrants brought cultural **diversity**, or variety, to the Middle Colonies. As a result, the people of the Middle Colonies were accepting of religious and cultural differences.

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2. Who settled the Middle Colonies?

• The Southern Colonies (pages 104–105)

The main economic activity in the Southern Colonies was farming. The area's rich soil and warm climate helped with the growth of cash crops.

South Carolina and Georgia's main cash crop, rice, was grown in coastal regions called the **Tidewater**. Most of the Southern plantations, or large farms, were in the Tidewater region. Plantations became separate small communities of fields surrounding buildings. For example, the buildings on a plantation often included a large main house, a separate kitchen building, slave cabins, a barn, a stable, a blacksmith shop, a carpentry shop, and storerooms. Some large plantations had their own chapels and schools.

Settlers with small farms lived in the **backcountry**, which were hills and forests at the base of the Appalachian Mountains. They grew tobacco and corn on a small scale, relying on one or two enslaved Africans and family members to help with the work.

3. How was farming in the Southern Colonies different from farming in New England?

• Slavery (page 106)

Enslaved Africans worked in the fields on large plantations, while **overseers**, or bosses, watched to make sure they were working hard. Some enslaved Africans worked in the main house on the plantation, performing all of the household chores.

The slave codes, or rules, were strict, and punishments for disobeying their slaveholders were cruel. Enslaved people were not allowed to be taught how to read or write. The punishment for a minor offense was a whipping. A serious offense resulted in hanging or burning to death. Runaways were severely punished when caught.

The financial success of the Southern colonies was due, in large part, to the use of slave labor. Colonists who opposed slavery argued that no human being could own another human being. Slavery was debated and became one of the reasons why Northern and Southern states fought each other during the Civil War.

4. How were enslaved Africans treated in America?
