

Escaping Persecution

Cross-Curricular Focus: History/Social Sciences

Some of the settlers who came to the English colonies in North America were trying to escape religious **persecution**. They had been treated unfairly because others were **intolerant** of their religious beliefs. People who wanted to separate themselves from the official Church of England called themselves Separatists. A company of Separatists traveled from England to the Netherlands before deciding to make the American colonies their home in 1620. They settled in what is present-day Massachusetts. They founded Plymouth Colony under their newly-elected leader, William Bradford. Since they were the first colonists known to come for religious reasons, the people of Plymouth Colony were called the **Pilgrims**. A pilgrim is a person who travels to a specific location for religious purposes.

Pilgrims from Plymouth Colony are often confused with the Puritans. The Puritans were a different group who traveled to America for religious freedom in 1630. People of this group wanted to purify the Church of England. They wanted to cleanse it of the things they believed had gone wrong instead of separating from it altogether.

John Winthrop established the Puritan colony of Massachusetts Bay as a place where Puritans could worship freely and be an example of godliness to those around them. Most of the Puritans lived in the city of Boston.

Since England was mostly a Protestant country, many Catholics felt persecuted. Lord Baltimore founded the colony of Maryland in 1634 to provide a safe place for Catholics to practice their faith.

The Massachusetts colonies were formed by those in search of religious freedom. However, some colonists found that their leaders would not allow religious beliefs that were different. Thomas Hooker left Massachusetts with a small group in 1636 and founded Hartford in the area that is now the state of Connecticut. Roger Williams was a famous colonial **dissenter**, a person who holds beliefs that are different from his leader's beliefs. He was forced out of Massachusetts in 1636. He went to present-day Rhode Island and founded the colony of Providence.

In 1681, William Penn received payment for a debt from King Charles II of England. The payment was in the form of land along the Delaware River. He began what he called a holy experiment there. He established a colony of Quakers, where people of all religions could live together. The colony would become Pennsylvania.

Name: _____

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage. Don't forget to go back to the passage whenever necessary to find or confirm your answers.

1) What is the difference in the beliefs of a Puritan versus the beliefs of a Separatist? _____

2) Which group, the Puritans or the Separatists, were the Pilgrims that established the Plymouth Colony?

3) If you had the opportunity to travel to a new country where you could set up a colony based on your personal beliefs, would you do it? Why or why not?

4) Name two of the states that were founded for religious freedom. _____

5) What is a pilgrim?

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Name: Key

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage. Don't forget to go back to the passage whenever necessary to find or confirm your answers.

Actual wording of answers may vary.

1) What is the difference in the beliefs of a Puritan versus the beliefs of a Separatist? The Puritans wanted to stay with the Church of England and correct the problems. The Separatists wanted a different church.

2) Which group, the Puritans or the Separatists, were the Pilgrims that established the Plymouth Colony?
the Separatists

3) If you had the opportunity to travel to a new country where you could set up a colony based on your personal beliefs, would you do it? Why or why not?
student's choice

4) Name two of the states that were founded for religious freedom. Example of correct answer: Massachusetts and Pennsylvania

5) What is a pilgrim?
a person who travels to a place for religious purposes