

A “WORKABLE” MAYFLOWER COMPACT

Learning Objective(s): The student will

1. Identify the reasons for the establishment of the colony at Plymouth as recorded in the Mayflower Compact;
2. Develop specific laws to carry out the reasons for the colony.

TEKS: 8.3B; 8.2B; 8.16A; 8.30; 8.32 TAKS Objective 4: 8.16A

Materials Needed: Copies of the Mayflower Compact; paper, pencils

Vocabulary: covenant, “civil body politic”

Teaching Strategy:

1. Teacher and students should read the Mayflower Compact and list the reasons for establishing this colony.
 - a. for the glory of God
 - b. for the advancement of Christianity
 - c. to honor the King and country
 - d. for the “general good” of the colony
2. Divide the class into eight groups. Assign two groups for each of the above-mentioned reasons. Groups will write two SPECIFIC laws for carrying out the assigned reason.
3. The four laws written for reason “a” should be presented to the class for discussion and voting.

NOTE: Girls may participate in the discussion, but CAN’T vote, as would be true for this time period.
4. Go through the “b, c, d” in the same manner.
5. Evaluation/discussion: Which is better in a document - specific laws or generalizations about goals? Explain. Ask the girls how they felt not being able to vote on the laws. Ask if they thought women during this period objected to this treatment.

Extension for GT: What problems can you predict for the Plymouth colony when you examine these statements from the Mayflower Compact: “for the general good of the colony” and “we promise all due submission and obedience”?

THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT

" . . . to enact . . . just and equal laws . . . for the general good of the colony "

On November 11, 1620, the storm-battered vessel bearing the Pilgrims to the lonely shores of the New World sailed in from the open sea and dropped anchor in the chill waters of what is now Provincetown Harbor. The Mayflower was far off its course, and the Pilgrims had no legal right to settle in New England or to establish a government. But they had no choice, for winter was close at hand, and the colony had to be started. Confronted by the need for action, the Pilgrim leaders drafted the Mayflower Compact. Later, the men gathered in the smoke-blackened cabin of the ship and, in the flickering light of a fish-oil lamp, signed their names to the now historic document. The Mayflower Compact became an important landmark along the road leading to democracy. True, it did not extend the privilege of participating in government to others besides the Pilgrims themselves. True, it did not outline, or even attempt to outline, a plan of government. But and this is the significant point the Compact did commit the Pilgrims to the creation of a government based on the consent of the governed.

November 11, 1620

In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread [revered and feared] sovereign Lord King *James*, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, etc., having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honor of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents [this document] solemnly and mutually in the presence of God, and of one another, covenant [promise] and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic [group organized for government] for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue [authority] hereof, to enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances [regulations], acts, constitutions, and offices from time to time, as shall be thought most meet [fitting] and convenient for the general good of the colony unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

In WITNESS whereof, we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cape Cod, the eleventh of November, in the year of the reign of our sovereign Lord King James of England, France, and Ireland the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. *Anno Domini*, 1620.

[Signed by forty-one men on the *Mayflower*.]

JOHN CARVER	ISAAC ALLERTON	FRANCIS EATON
WILLIAM BRADFORD	MILES STANDISH	JAMES CHILTON
EDWARD WINSLOW	JOHN ALDEN	JOHN CRAXTON
WILLIAM BREWSTER	JOHN TURNER	JOHN BILLINGTON
JOSES FLETCHER	THOMAS WILLIAMS	THOMAS TINKER
JOHN GOODMAN	GILBERT WINSLOW	JOHN RIDGATE
SAMUEL FULLER	EDMUND MARGESSON	EDWARD FULLER
CHRISTOPHER MARTIN	PETER BROWN	RICHARD CLARK
WILLIAM MULLINS	RICHARD BITTERIDGE	RICHARD GARDINER
WILLIAM WHITE	GEORGE SOULE	JOHN ALLERTON
RICHARD WARREN	EDWARD TILLY	THOMAS ENGLISH
JOHN HOWLAND	JOHN TILLY	EDWARD DOTEN
STEPHEN HOPKIS	FRANCIS COOKE	EDWARD LIESTER
DIGERY PRIEST	THOMAS ROGERS	

(Excerpt from Living American Documents, by Starr, Todd and Curtis, Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1961)

