

# 1650 - Proprietor Colony

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## Introduction

Proprietor colonies were an important method of economic development in early U.S. history. Students will learn how proprietor colonies were formed and how proprietors acted to promote successful colonial development.

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## Related Areas

language arts and geography

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## Objectives

Students will:

1. define proprietor as someone who owns and manages a business.
  2. define colony as a community started by a group of people who leave their country and settle in another land.
  3. state that a proprietor colony is one started by a person or a group of people who owned land in the Americas.
  4. define opportunity cost as the highest valued alternative given up as a result of a decision made.
  5. identify possible opportunity costs incurred by the investors of a proprietor colony.
  6. identify natural resources found in a New England colony.
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## Materials

**Proprietor Colonies** for each student  
**Colony Sites 1, 2, 3, and 4**, one copy of each and transparencies  
**Stockholder's Certificates** (Kaleidoscope North for half of the class and Kaleidoscope South for other half of the class)

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## Procedure

1. Remind students they are becoming community economic developers who plan communities.
2. Ask what a **proprietor** is. (*someone who owns and manages a business*) If no one knows, use the following statements to guide them:
  - a. The proprietors of an amusement park have decided to add three new rides.
  - b. If I am unhappy with the service at a restaurant, I may ask to speak to the proprietor.

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- c. The proprietor of the bicycle shop agrees to sell a bike for twenty dollars less because it has a bad scratch on the fender.
3. Distribute *Proprietor Colonies* and read together. Discuss:
  - a. In the Americas, what did a proprietor own and manage? (*land*)
  - b. What is a colony? (*a community started by a group of people who leave their country and go to settle in another land*)
  - c. Where did the proprietors live? (*sometimes in the colony; sometimes in their own country*)
4. Explain that the class represents a group of investors who want to develop proprietor colonies. The king of England has offered four different pieces of land. The proprietors plan to develop colonies on two of them. Half of the students will invest in one and half in the other.
5. Divide the students into four groups and give each group a copy of *Colony Sites 1, 2, 3, or 4*. Explain that these four pieces of land are potential sites for colonies. Instruct the groups to look at each map and list the natural resources found in each tract of land. Remind the students that natural resources are things found in or on the earth.
6. Show transparencies of each piece of land, and ask the students to identify the natural resources they found in each, explaining why they are useful.

Colony 1. land, river (*fish, water, transportation*), some forests (*lumber, food*)

Colony 2. land, rivers (*fish, water, transportation*), forests (*lumber, food*), lake (*water, fish*)

Colony 3. land, river (*fish, transportation, water*), forest (*lumber, food*), lake (*water, fish*)

Colony 4. land, river (*fish, transportation, water*), forest (*lumber, food*)

7. Ask the following questions.
  - a. Do all four pieces of land contain the same natural resources? (*no*)
  - b. Why would it matter to you which piece of land you chose? (*more resources allow for more production*)

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- c. Which two would you choose? Why? (*2 and 3; because they have the most useful resources*)
8. Explain that groups of English **investors** put their money together to become proprietors of colonies in the Americas. Investors didn't want to put all their money into a colony, because they didn't know if the colony would survive and make them more money. So investors pooled their money to invest in the colony.
9. Ask students to imagine what English investors could do with their money in England in 1650. (*food, a house, nice clothes, a trip, a new horse, a carriage, invest in a store, save the money, etc.*)
10. Ask students to choose one thing they would do with the money if they were investors, and they were not going to invest in a colony.
11. Explain that this second choice, the thing they are giving up because they are investing in the colony, is called their **opportunity cost**. Explain that all decisions involve an opportunity cost.
12. Ask the students to imagine that it is Saturday morning and one of their friends is at their house to play. What things could the two friends do? (*examples: play cards, watch TV, play video games, play catch, take a walk*)
13. If the friends decide to play catch, what might have been their second choice? What are they giving up because they are playing catch? (*one of the other choices, perhaps playing cards*) We say then that the **opportunity cost** to the friends for playing catch is playing cards.
14. Explain that the students are now proprietors in the Americas. Distribute stockholder certificates (half the students receive Kaleidoscope North and half Kaleidoscope South). Have the students sign their names on the certificates and display them on the front of their desks.
15. Explain that, as proprietors, they will plan for the growth and development of their colonies.

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16. Summarize the lesson with the following points.
  - a. A colony is a community started by a group of people who leave their country and go to settle in another land.
  - b. Proprietor colonies are ones which were started by a person or a group of people who owned land.
  - c. Available resources influence choices.
  - d. Decision makers incur opportunity costs.