**The Mayflower Compact**

The Mayflower Compact is often considered to be the first document of American freedom. Written in this compact (or constitution) are the basic ideals of democracy as we know it today. It is the first example of a system of government instituted by men of equal rights who were about to establish their community in the world.

The Mayflower Compact was signed on November 11, 1620 aboard the ship of the same name - the Mayflower. The Mayflower Compact was the first written government document in the United States.

The Mayflower was the ship that transported the first Pilgrims - called Separatists - from England to the New World (North America). There were approximately 130 people on board the Mayflower when she set sail for North America. Despite the very difficult journey, most of the crew survived. Some of the Pilgrims were trying to flee religious persecution from King James of England; these Pilgrims were known as **Separatists**. The other Pilgrims aboard the Mayflower were tradesmen and adventurers who were known as **Strangers**.

The Mayflower voyage ended at the harbor of Cape Cod (in present-day Massachusetts). The Pilgrims named their new settlement “New Plimouth” after where they had set sail from in England. Today, the town is called Plymouth.

When the Pilgrims dropped anchor in Cape Cod, they wrote the Mayflower Compact - a government document aiming to establish legal order. The Mayflower Compact was needed because the Separatists and Strangers on the Mayflower couldn’t agree on the rules of settlement in the New World. The Mayflower Compact acted as an agreement between all the Pilgrims, stating that they would try to live together harmoniously in order to survive.

The Mayflower Compact was signed on board the Mayflower ship. Of the ship’s passengers, 41 signed the Mayflower Compact. All of the people who signed the Mayflower Compact were male. Women and children were not allowed to sign the Mayflower Compact.

The Mayflower Compact is often described as America’s first constitution.

**The Mayflower Compact**

*Agreement between the Settlers at “New Plymouth” in 1620*

In ye name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, ye loyall subjects of our dread soveraigne Lord King James by ye grace of God, of Great Britain, Franc, and Ireland, King, Defender of ye Faith, e&.

Haveing undertaken, for ye Glorie of God, and Advancemente of ye Christian faith and honour of our King and Countrie, a Voyage to plant yet first Colonie in ye Northerne parts of Virginia, doe by these presents solemnly and mutualy in ye presence of God, and one of another, covenant, and combine our selves togeather into a civill body politick, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of ye ends aforesaid; and by vertue hearof to enacte, constitute, and frame such just and equall Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions, and Offices from time to time, as shall be thought most meete and convenient for ye generall good of ye Colonie, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

In witnes wherof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cap-Codd ye - 11 - of November, in ye year of ye raigne of our soveraigne Lord King James, of England, Franc, and Ireland ye eighteenth, and of Scotland ye fiftie fourth. Ano: Dom, 1620.

**The Mayflower Compact** (*Modern Translation*)

In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyal Subjects of our dread 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 solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God and one another, covenant, and combine ourselves together into a civil body politick, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof do enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

In witness hereof we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cape Cod the 11 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 Domimi, 1620.

John Carver Edward Tilley Degory Priest

William Bradford John Tilley Thomas Williams

Edward Winslow Francis Cooke Gilbert Winslow

William Brewster Thomas Rogers Edmund Margesson

Isaac Allerton Thomas Tinker Peter Browne

Myles Standish John Rigsdale Richard Britteridge

John Alden Edward Fuller George Soule

Samuel Fuller John Turner Richard Clarke

Christopher Martin Francis Eaton Richard Gardiner

William Mullins James Chilton John Allerton

William White John Crackstone Thomas English

Richard Warren John Billington Edward Doty

John Howland Moses Fletcher Edward Leister

Stephen Hopkins John Goodman

**The Mayflower Compact**

*Translation for Students*

In the name of God, Amen. We pray to God as we write this. We, who have signed our names at the bottom, are the loyal subjects of our independent King James I of England; we are also subjects of God, Great Britain, France, Ireland, King and Defender of the Faith, etc.

We came here for our love of God, for the spread of Christianity, and for the honor of our King and the country of England. We are on a journey to start the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia. Since God agrees, we all agree to work together in this new land. We - whether we like it or not - agree to combine into a civil government. We will work together to make ourselves better; we will work together for the better organization and perseverance of the colony (*make the colony last longer*). We agree to have fair laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and people in office, for the better of the colony. We will make laws that we think are best for the colony. We promise to follow these laws completely.

To prove we have seen and agreed to this document, we sign our names at the bottom today - at Cape Cod on November 11, 1620, under the rule of King James. Anno Domini (A.D. - “in the year of the Lord”), 1620.

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Core: \_\_\_\_\_**

**The Mayflower Compact**

***Directions:*** *Using the sources provided to you - information about the Mayflower Compact, the Mayflower Compact, and two modern interpretations of the Mayflower Compact - answer the following questions*.

1. Who was this document created for?
2. When was the Mayflower Compact written?
3. Based upon the date and your knowledge of this colonization, what religious group in the English colonies wrote this document?
4. What is the purpose of this document/why was the Mayflower Compact written?
5. What democratic elements (*features of a democracy*) are used in this document?
6. What is the first thing that strikes you as different of this official document from other official documents that you have read?
7. As you read, what common theme do you see throughout the document?