

The Mayflower Compact (1620)

**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 of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civill body politick, for our better ordering and preservation, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to 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 whereof we have hereunder 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 Dom. 1620.**

Part I: Knowledge Level: Important facts about the document

Historical Context: Getting to know your document

1. Please research the answers to the following questions:
2. Who wrote the document? (Person)
3. When was it written? (Period)
4. Where was it written? (Place)
5. Why was it written? (Purpose)

Part II: Comprehension Level

Exercise One: Understanding and Decoding the Document through Vocabulary in Context. This exercise will help you to practice substituting synonyms for difficult words or phrases. This is a great way to decode words and to understand sentences.

Directions: Each of the words or phrases in the word list below are synonyms of at least one of the words or phrases that have been highlighted in the document. On a separate sheet of paper, write out each of the bold-printed words or phrases, then next to it, write the word or phrase from the list of synonyms that best matches that word or phrase. The first blank has been completed for you as an example.

List of synonyms

- *to please God*
- *we pledge to obey the laws according to the purpose for which they were created*
- *establish*
- *for the sake of order, peace, and safety*
- *to accomplish our goals*
- *plan and create*
- *commit and unite*
- *fair laws that treat everyone equally*
- *promotion of*
- *the most effective way to bring about the good society that we all want*
- *together with one purpose*
- *a society of people living together under law*

The Mayflower Compact

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 of another, **covenant and combine**(_____) ourselves together into a **civil body politic** (_____), for our better **ordering and preservation**, (_____) and **furtherance of the ends** (_____) aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to 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 whereof we have hereunder 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 Dom. 1620.

1. Summarizing the Document

Now reread the document, and as you read, substitute each of the highlighted words or phrases with the synonyms.

Exercise Two: Fill in the blanks. This exercise is designed to help you to become more familiar with the actual vocabulary of the document.

Directions: Please fill in the missing words without looking back at the original document. But, you may use any or all of the following words or phrases to complete the blanks.

Mayflower Compact

*just, loyal, ordering, due, God, preservation, submission, 1620,
covenant, equal*

In the name of _____, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the _____ 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 of another, _____ and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic, for our better _____ and _____, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame such _____ and _____ 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 _____ and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder 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 Dom. _____.

Exercise Three: Matching paraphrased statements with actual phrases and words taken from the document. This exercise is designed to help you understand the language of the of the document. It also requires you to cite the document. Citing and writing the document’s actual language is a great way to increase your comprehension and retention of the text.

Directions: Each of the following statements is a paraphrase or summary of an idea in the document. Find the statement or phrase in the text that most nearly matches the paraphrase and write it on the lines below that paraphrase. Then, number the statements according to the order in which they appear in the document.

We promise to obey the laws that we create.

We are all going to work together to create laws that are fair so that everyone is treated in the same way.

We are doing this because we want to live in order and safety.

We come together in great seriousness, with God and each other as witnesses to create a society where we can live together under laws.

Exercise Four: Reading comprehension questions. This exercise is designed to help you understand the document's most important ideas.

Directions: Please answer the questions below in complete sentences.

1. Why do the authors of the document begin with the statement "In the name of God. Amen." In other words, what does this statement reveal about them and their mission?

2. What two reasons do they give for planting the colony?

3. According to the document, why do they desire to create a society?

4. What kinds of laws will they create?

5. Why do they think it's necessary to create such laws?

6. Why do they promise to obey the laws?

Exercise Five: Making inferences. This exercise will require you to use evidence from the document to support or refute conclusions or inferences that were drawn from the document.

Directions: Explain whether the authors of the document would agree or disagree with each of the following statements: (Cite text from the document as evidence to support your answer.).

1. The most important thing in life is to please and glorify God.

2. We are planting this colony because it will make us rich.

3. We can't stand the king of England, and as soon as we get a chance, we will rebel against him.

4. The best society is one where people agree to live together under laws that ensure justice for everyone.

5. People should be able to do whatever they want to do, regardless of what the laws say.

Exercise Six: Academic writing: responding to arguments. This exercise requires you to think deeply about the document, and to use it as evidence as you write to support or to refute arguments that can be made from or about the document.

Directions: Read the statement below, and, using evidence from history and the ideas from the document, explain whether you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your response with sound reasoning.

“The Mayflower Compact is an old, outdated document that has had absolutely no impact on our society.”

Exercise Seven: Enduring themes: This exercise requires you to think about the document's impact throughout history and its continuing relevance.

Directions: Write a cohesive paragraph in response to the question below.

How does the Mayflower Compact reflect the ideals and principles of the Magna Carta?

Exercise Eight: Summarizing the document. This exercise requires you to write a comprehensive summary of the document.

Directions: In a well written paragraph, summarize the document's content and significance in your own words. Make sure that your summary contains specific references and/or quotations from the document. A comprehensive and accurate summary will contain answers to the following questions:

1. What is the Mayflower Compact?
2. Who wrote it?
3. When and where was it written?
4. Why was it written?
5. What are its most important ideas?
6. Why is the document so famous?
7. Why are its ideas still relevant to us today?