

Substitute Guide: Comparing the Three Colonial Regions

Grade: 5 **Subject:** Social Studies (early United States) **Time:** ~45 min core + ~15 min extension Social Studies

Learning goal (plain language)

Students learn that the early American colonies formed **three regions** — New England, Middle, and Southern — and that the **geography** of each region (its land, weather, and water) shaped **how people there made a living**. They read three short summaries, look at a simple map and a table, then **compare** the regions and write a short evidence-based explanation. **You do not need a history background to run this.** Everything students need is printed in their packet, and you may read any part aloud.

Standards alignment

Framework: 19 TAC Chapter 113 (Grade 5 Social Studies).

- **Primary (geography / early United States):** comparing the New England, Middle, and Southern colonial regions and explaining how physical geography and climate influenced settlement and ways of life.
- **Skills (social studies skills):** reading and interpreting a simple map and a table, and comparing regions using evidence.

Provisional — pending educator verification against the current official TAC source.

(Standards are paraphrased here, not quoted, and no specific section number is asserted. Please confirm the codes and wording against your official source. Prompts are kept non-partisan and in historical context.)

Setup Before class (5 min)

- Count and hand out one **student packet** per student.
- Confirm each student has a **pencil**. No calculators, computers, or textbooks are needed.
- Write the date on the board and remind students to fill in the name line.
- Keep the **answer key** with you — it is a separate file and is **not** in the student packet.

Materials What's needed

- Printed student packet (4–6 pages) per student.
- Pencil per student.
- This guide and the separate answer key (teacher only).
- No technology, no calculator, no textbooks, no safety hazards.

Timing Suggested pacing (~45–60 min)

Segment	Time	What students do
Start — Look & Notice	5 min	Q1–Q2 warm-up

Segment	Time	What students do
Build — Read the region profiles	10 min	Read the three profiles, word bank, map (Figure 1), Table 1
Apply — Read the map & table	20 min	Q3–Q8 (map, table, compare, cause/effect, fact/opinion, evaluate)
Explain — CER	10 min	Q9 claim/evidence/reasoning comparing two regions
Close — ACE	5 min	Articulate / Connect / Extend
Continue — early finishers	optional ~15 min	"Which region fits the job?"

Script Read aloud to start

"Today's work is a paper reading activity called *Comparing the Three Colonial Regions*. Long ago, the early American colonies formed three regions: New England, the Middle colonies, and the Southern colonies. You will read three short summaries, look at a map and a table, and answer with a pencil. Work by yourself — no computers or books. Read the parts in order; if one question is tricky, skip it and come back. Write in full sentences when it asks you to explain. Everything you need is in the packet, so you do not need to know any outside facts. You may quietly read aloud to yourself. Put your name, class, and date at the top now. You have about 45 minutes; raise your hand if you need help with a word."

Support When students ask for help

- **You may read any part aloud** to a student or the class.
- If they are stuck comparing, point them to **Table 1** — the three regions sit side by side there.
- For cause and effect (Q6), point to a region's **profile**: the land/weather is the cause, the job is the effect.
- For "fact or opinion" (Q7), point to the **Word Bank**: an opinion says what someone feels or likes (like "best" or "exciting").
- Encourage the printed **sentence stems and starters** for Q6, the CER (Q9), and ACE.
- Do **not** give answers; prompt with "What does the packet say?" or "What was the land or weather like there?"
- It is fine if a student cannot finish the optional early-finisher task.

Access Accommodations & language support

- **Read-aloud** of any passage or question is allowed for all students.
- Point students to the **sentence stems** and the **Word Bank** (region, geography, climate, soil, colony, plantation, port, fact, opinion are all defined for them).
- **Glossary tip**: if a word is hard, read its Word Bank meaning aloud and give a quick example ("a *port* is like a place where boats stop to drop off things").
- Extended time is fine; the core can stop after Q9 if time runs short.
- Students may answer in short phrases if writing full sentences is a barrier, as long as the idea is clear.
- The packet is grayscale-safe — it prints and reads clearly in black and white, with roomy writing space.

Tools Allowed & not allowed

Allowed: pencil, the printed packet, quiet self-read-aloud. **Not needed / not allowed**: calculator (no math required), phones, computers, textbooks or outside sources (everything needed is in the packet).

Collect at the end: Collect every packet, whether finished or not, with names on them. Stack them for the teacher. Note on a sticky how far most students got and any words or questions that caused confusion.

Answer key: The **answer key is a separate file** (answerkey.html) and is for the teacher only. Please do not hand it to students.

Teacher follow-up (for the returning teacher)

Watch for students who assume the three regions were the same (Q5/Q8) and for fact/opinion mix-ups in Q7. A quick next-day sort of the three climate/land descriptions, plus reviewing the "geography → how people lived" link for each region, would reinforce this well. The CER (Q9) responses show who can compare two regions and cite a profile, the map, or Table 1 as evidence. Note: the Southern profile plainly states that enslaved people did much of the plantation work; keep any discussion factual and age-appropriate.

G05_SOC_ColonialRegions_01 — Comparing the Three Colonial Regions Substitute Guide

Comparing the Three Colonial Regions

Grade: 5 **Subject:** Social Studies (early United States) **Time:** ~45 min core + ~15 min extension **Work mode:** Independent · pencil only Social Studies

Start Here

This is a **paper reading activity**. You will read three short summaries, look at a map and a table, and answer with a **pencil**. You do **not** need a computer or a book — **everything you need is in this packet**. Work by yourself. Write in complete sentences when a question asks you to explain. If a question is hard, skip it, keep going, and come back. You may read the passages quietly aloud to yourself.

Start Look & Notice 5 min

Warm up before you read. A **region** is a group of places that share things, like weather or land.

1 Look at the map in the Build section (Figure 1). Write **one thing you notice** about where the three regions are.

2 People long ago used the land around them to live. Name **one way** weather or land might change how people work. (Guess in your own words.)

Build Read the Region Profiles 10 min

New England Colonies (written for this packet)

The New England region was in the far north, near the cold Atlantic coast. Winters were long and cold, and the soil was rocky and hard to farm. Because big farms were difficult, most families grew just enough food for themselves on small farms. Many people turned to the sea instead. They caught fish, hunted whales, built ships, and traded goods in busy port towns. People often lived close together in small towns.

Type: original region summary · Region: New England (north)

Middle Colonies (written for this packet)

The Middle region sat between the north and the south. It had milder weather and rich, flat soil. Farmers grew so much wheat and other grain that this area was called the "breadbasket." Wide rivers helped people move crops to market. Busy port cities grew and traded many goods. People came from many different countries to live here, so the towns were mixed and lively.

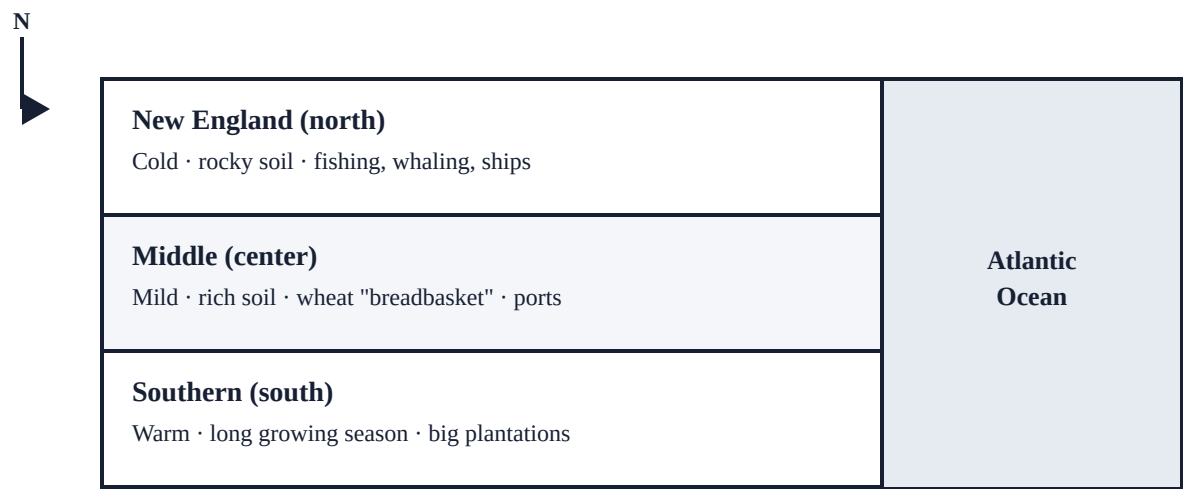
Type: original region summary · Region: Middle (center)

Southern Colonies (written for this packet)

The Southern region was in the warm south. It had hot weather, a long growing season, and rich soil. This let people grow large crops like tobacco and rice on very big farms called plantations. Much of the hard field work on these plantations was done by enslaved people, who were forced to work and were not free. Because farms were large and spread out, people lived far apart, and there were fewer big towns.

Word Bank

- region
 - a group of places that share things, like weather or land.
- geography
 - the land, water, and weather of a place.
- climate
 - the usual weather of a place over time.
- soil
 - the top layer of ground that plants grow in.
- colony
 - a place ruled by a faraway country.
- plantation
 - a very large farm that grows one main crop.
- port
 - a town by the water where ships load and unload goods.
- fact
 - something you can check and show is true.
- opinion
 - what a person feels or likes; not proven true.



Not to scale — a simple drawing to show north-to-south order

Figure 1. A simple map of the three colonial regions along the Atlantic coast, from north (New England) to south (Southern). The map is black on white so it reads clearly in grayscale. It is not to scale.

Table 1 — Comparing the regions (written for this packet)

Region	Climate & land	Main way people made a living	Towns
New England	Cold; rocky soil	Fishing, whaling, shipbuilding, trade; small farms	Small towns close together
Middle	Mild; rich, flat soil	Growing wheat and grain ("breadbasket"); trade at ports	Busy port cities
Southern	Warm; long growing season	Large plantation farms growing tobacco and rice	Few towns; people spread out

Type: original comparison table · Use it with the map to answer the questions.

Apply Read the Map & Table 20 min

3Map reading. Using Figure 1, which region is **farthest north**? Which region is **farthest south**?

Farthest north: _____

Farthest south: _____

4Table reading. Use Table 1 to fill in the blanks.

- a) The region known as the "breadbasket" is the _____ region.
- b) The region with big plantation farms is the _____ region.
- c) The region where many people fished and built ships is _____.

5Compare. Use the profiles and Table 1.

One way all three regions were alike:

Two ways the regions were different from each other:

6Cause and effect. Pick **one** region. Explain how its **geography** (its land, weather, or water) affected **how people made a living** there. Write 2–3 sentences.

Sentence starter: "In the _____ region, the _____ meant that people _____."

7Fact or opinion? Write **F** for a fact you can check in the packet, or **O** for an opinion (what someone feels or likes).

- _____ a) The New England region had cold weather and rocky soil.
- _____ b) The Middle region was the best region to live in.
- _____ c) Southern plantations grew crops like tobacco and rice.
- _____ d) Ships are more exciting than farms.

8Check the claim. A student says: "*The land and weather were the same in all three regions.*" Does the packet support this?

- Yes — the packet says all three had the same land and weather.
- No — the packet shows cold rocky land in the north, mild rich soil in the middle, and warm land in the south.
- The packet does not talk about land or weather at all.

Explain your choice using one detail from a profile or Table 1:

Explain Claim–Evidence–Reasoning 10 min

Question 9. Pick two regions. How was the way people made a living different in those two regions, and why? Write a **claim** naming your two regions and how they were different, give **two pieces of evidence** from the profiles, map, or Table 1, then explain your **reasoning** (how geography helped cause the difference).

Sentence stems you may use: "In _____ people mostly _____, but in _____ people mostly _____." · "One piece of evidence is... (from a profile / the map / Table 1)." · "A second piece of evidence is..." · "This happened because the land and weather were..."

Claim
Evidence (two pieces)
Reasoning

Close ACE Wrap-Up 5 min

Articulate

In your own words, tell a friend what a **region** is.

Connect

Name one place in this packet (the map, a profile, or Table 1) that shows geography changing how people lived.

Extend

Think about where **you** live. Name one way the land or weather changes how people work or play here.

Continue Early Finisher optional • ~15 min

If you finish early (no new materials needed):

Which region fits the job? On the back of this page, match each worker to the region that fits best, and tell **why** using the packet: (1) a **fisher** who catches fish and helps build ships, (2) a **wheat farmer** who ships grain from a busy port, (3) a farmer who grows **tobacco** on a very large warm farm. For each one, name the region and give one reason from a profile, the map, or Table 1.

Turn in: Hand in this whole packet with your name, class, and date filled in. Make sure questions 1–9 and the ACE box are answered. The early-finisher matching is optional, but turn it in too if you did it.

G05_SOC_ColonialRegions_01 — Comparing the Three Colonial Regions Student Packet



TEACHER ANSWER KEY FOLLOWS

Do not copy the pages after this divider for students.

Answer Key: Comparing the Three Colonial Regions

Grade: 5 **Subject:** Social Studies (early United States) **For teacher use only** Social Studies

How to use this key

Answers are grouped by section and question number. Many items are open-ended; accept any response that shows correct reasoning even if the wording differs. Notes flag where more than one answer is defensible and list common misconceptions to watch for. Everything students need is in the packet, so answers should draw on the three profiles, the map (Figure 1), and Table 1 only. Estimated grading time: ~4–6 min per packet.

Start Look & Notice grade for effort · ~1 min

1 Notice one thing about where the regions are.

Full credit for any reasonable observation from the map, e.g., "the three regions are stacked north to south," "they are all next to the Atlantic Ocean," "New England is farthest north and Southern is farthest south." Warm-up graded for effort.

2 One way weather or land might change how people work.

Accept any reasonable idea in the student's own words: cold weather makes farming hard, good soil helps farming, being near water lets people fish or ship goods, warm weather helps crops grow. More than one answer is defensible.

Apply Read the Map & Table ~2–3 min

3 Map reading — north and south.

Farthest **north: New England**. Farthest **south: Southern** (the Southern colonies). Both are read directly from Figure 1.

4 Table reading.

a) "breadbasket" = **Middle** region. b) big plantation farms = **Southern** region. c) fishing and shipbuilding = **New England**. All read directly from Table 1.

5 Compare — one likeness, two differences.

Alike (any one): all three were colonies along the Atlantic coast; all three used the land and water around them to make a living; all three had farming of some kind; all three traded goods.

Different (any two): climate/land (cold rocky north vs. mild rich middle vs. warm south); main way of making a living (fishing/ships vs. wheat/grain vs. plantation crops like tobacco and rice); settlement (small close towns vs. busy ports vs. spread-out farms with few towns).

Watch: a difference must contrast the regions, not just restate one region's trait.

6 Cause and effect — geography shaped how people lived.

Accept any one region with a correct geography → living link. **Models:**

- **New England:** cold weather and rocky soil made big farming hard, so people fished, hunted whales, built ships, and traded by the sea.
- **Middle:** mild weather and rich, flat soil let farmers grow lots of wheat and grain, and wide rivers and ports helped them trade it.
- **Southern:** warm weather, a long growing season, and rich soil let people grow large crops like tobacco and rice on big plantations.

Full credit needs a geography cause **and** a matching effect on how people worked. See rubric below.

7 Fact (F) / Opinion (O).

- a) **F** — checkable in the New England profile / Table 1.
- b) **O** — "best region" is a personal preference; cannot be proven.
- c) **F** — checkable in the Southern profile / Table 1.
- d) **O** — "more exciting" is a personal feeling.

Fact = you can check it in the packet; opinion = what someone feels or likes.

8 Evaluate the claim "the land and weather were the same in all three regions."

Correct: B (No). The packet clearly shows different geography: cold rocky land in New England, mild rich soil in the Middle, and warm land with a long growing season in the South. Reject A (nothing says they were the same) and C (the packet discusses land and weather throughout). Explanation must cite one such detail from a profile or Table 1.

Explain CER (Q9) ~1–2 min

9 Compare how two regions made a living, and why.

Model answer (New England vs. Southern). Claim: In New England people mostly fished and built ships, but in the Southern colonies people mostly farmed big plantations of tobacco and rice. Evidence: (1) The New England profile / Table 1 says the north was cold with rocky soil, so people fished, whaled, and built ships. (2) The Southern profile / Table 1 says the south was warm with a long growing season, so people grew tobacco and rice on large plantations. Reasoning: The land and weather were different, so people used whatever their region gave them — the sea in the north, and warm farmland in the south.

Defensible alternates: any two regions may be chosen (New England vs. Middle, or Middle vs. Southern) and earn full marks if the claim names both regions, two accurate pieces of evidence support it, and the reasoning connects the difference to geography.

CER scoring rubric (3 points)

Score	Claim	Evidence	Reasoning
3	Names two regions and clearly states how their ways of making a living differed.	Two accurate, relevant details from the profiles, map, and/or Table 1.	Correctly links the difference to geography (land, weather, or water).
2	Names two regions; difference mostly clear.	One solid detail, or two with a minor error.	Some correct linkage but incomplete or a small misconception.
1	Vague or names only one region.	Evidence weak, off-topic, or not from the packet.	Little or flawed reasoning; no clear link to geography.
0	No/incorrect claim.	No evidence.	No reasoning.

Close ACE ~1 min

Articulate: accept any accurate plain-language definition (e.g., "a region is a group of places that share things like weather or land").

Connect: the cited spot must actually show geography shaping life — e.g., the map note "cold · rocky soil · fishing," the Middle "breadbasket" note, or the Southern "big plantations" note.

Extend: any reasonable local land/weather effect with a link to work or play (e.g., "hot summers here mean people swim," "flat farmland means farming"). More than one answer is defensible; grade the reason, not the choice.

Watch Common misconceptions

- **All regions were the same (Q5, Q8).** Students may assume the colonies were alike. Point to the clear climate/land and livelihood differences in the profiles and Table 1.
- **Mixing up "breadbasket" and plantations.** The Middle region was the wheat/grain "breadbasket"; the Southern region had large plantations of tobacco and rice.
- **Fact vs. opinion (Q7).** A statement using "best" or "more exciting" is an opinion, not a fact — it cannot be checked in the packet.
- **Cause vs. effect (Q6).** The geography (land, weather, water) is the cause; how people made a living is the effect. Students sometimes name the job without naming the geography that led to it.
- **Not to scale.** The map is a simple drawing showing north-to-south order, not exact sizes or shapes — grade the order and reasoning, not map precision.

Sensitive-topic note. The Southern profile states plainly that much of the plantation field work was done by enslaved people who were forced to work and were not free. Keep any discussion factual, age-appropriate, and non-partisan. If a student asks, affirm that slavery was wrong and that this is why it is part of learning our history.

Teacher follow-up based on likely errors

If many students say the regions were "the same" (Q5/Q8), do a 3-minute sort of the three climate/land descriptions. If Q7 shows fact/opinion confusion, re-anchor with the Word Bank and a couple of quick examples. If Q6 or the CER (Q9) reasoning is thin, model aloud the "geography → job" link for one region. The highest-value idea to revisit is that **the land and weather of each region shaped how people there lived and worked.**