



Lesson 4.1 “Building New Hampshire’s Towns”

Unit 4: Building a Colony

Lesson Objectives

- Students will discuss a comparison of the layouts of 18th-century towns.
- Students will read and follow detailed instructions.
- Students will create a map showing the development of a 18th-century town.

Lesson Competencies

- I can initiate and sustain a focused discussion. (ELA 7)
- I can interpret and use information delivered orally or visually and respond by asking relevant questions, summarizing key points, or elaborating on ideas. (ELA 7)
- I can analyze, use, and construct maps and other geographic representations to explain relationships between people and the environment. (Moose SS)

Essential Questions

How did New Hampshire come to be the way it is?
How have New Hampshire’s people shaped its government?

Focus Questions

How did towns develop throughout New Hampshire during this time?

Estimated Time

Three to five 40-minute class sessions

Materials & Equipment

Various town plans for projection, as desired
“Building New Hampshire’s Towns” for projection
“Benning Wentworth, 1760” for projection
Class or group set of “The Beginning,” “Year One,” “Year Two,” “Year Three,” “Year Four,” “Year Five” instructions
Paper for maps, ruler, pencils, colored pencils (blue, brown, yellow, orange, green)
“White Pine” infographic, if desired
Answer keys as desired
Town seal images and/or image of your town’s seal
Class or group set of “_____’s Town Seal” worksheet



Educator Introduction & Rationale

In 1741, the British Crown ruled that all of the land from John Mason's original charter in the 1620s continued to be owned by the Mason family, despite challenges from Massachusetts and individuals who wanted the land. Mason's descendants in England didn't have much interest in New Hampshire, so they sold the claim—and all the land—to a group of 12 Portsmouth businessmen who became known as the Masonian Proprietors. Their goal was to encourage development of the land by giving the land to people who would settle and improve it, thereby making it valuable. The Masonian Proprietors kept a part of each settlement and planned to sell the land when it had become valuable years in the future. The settlers had a contract with the Masonian Proprietors in the form of a town charter outlining what needed to happen within a specific time period in order to keep the free land. 60% of all New Hampshire towns were founded in this way between 1715 and 1765, mostly in the southern part of the state. The population of New Hampshire likewise exploded during the 18th century, leaping from just over 9,000 people in 1720 to more than 60,000 in 1770. Please see the [Educator Overview](#) for more information.

This lesson is the first lesson in Unit 4: Building a Colony. In this lesson, students examine town layouts then take on the perspective of a person receiving a town charter from a Masonian Proprietor. They are responsible for building a town within five years that meets the contract requirements set by the town charter. Can they do it? The simulation takes the form of a map, where students first lay out and organize their town, then "live" through the first five years of its development. They name and create a town seal for their town and reflect on the activity.

Please adapt all the material in this lesson, as necessary, to meet the needs of the students in your classroom. Please note, lesson vocabulary and definitions are at the end of this document. You may wish to preview these with your students. There is a reinforcement activity for students who would benefit from reviewing the student content on the subject and comparing it to the activity. Two extension activities invite students to investigate their town's history and research the colonial governor of the time, Benning Wentworth.

Learning Activity

Activation & Discussion

The shape of a town. Tell students you will be projecting mystery images and that they should make observations about them in order to try to figure out what they are. Project or display the images of the various town layouts in New Hampshire from the historic town charters; use as few as four of the images or as many as all of them. Discuss observations and guide students as necessary for them to guess that they are maps of towns as they were organized when they were started. What similarities do they notice about the town layouts? What differences do they notice among them?

Student Reading

Settlers get to work. Before moving into Guided Practice, direct students to read Unit 4: Learn It! "[More NH Settlements](#)," pages 1 to 5.

Guided Practice

Building a New Hampshire town. Project "Building New Hampshire's Towns" and read with students. This activity guides students through founding and developing one of the towns with land from Benning Wentworth, a Masonian Proprietor and royal governor of New Hampshire. There are a variety of ways to use this activity with the classroom.

- In this activity, students follow directions to draw a map of a town settled during this time.
- In order to develop a town, settlers needed to set it up and meet certain requirements within five years. The activity has set up instructions and instructions for each of the five years.
- Materials needed are paper, a pencil, colored pencils (blue, brown, yellow, orange, and green), a ruler, and the instructions.
- The paper can be 8.5x11, 11x17, or larger.
- The activity can be done individually, in pairs, in groups, or as a whole class during Social Studies time.
- Instructions are detailed and long; students practice following directions throughout the activity. Think about whether it would benefit your students to read the instructions to each other or if you will read to the class. Decide for your class whether you will give them all the instructions for the years at once or whether you will give them to them a year at a time.
- If completing in groups or pairs, it would be possible to trade drawings in between years so that students are working on each other's towns and seeing the development of various ones. Alternatively, take pictures of the towns as they develop.
- Instructions are as historically accurate as possible but have been adapted in an effort to be reasonable for the classroom; for example, the original charters had the lots divided into 100 equal shares rather than 50 as seen here.
- Discuss and process with students as you go along. Ensure they are following directions but not to the point where the preciseness of their drawing is taking away from the activity.

Teaching tip: As students are setting up their towns with “The Beginning,” project the image of Benning Wentworth. Invite observations about him. He’s the one who will be checking on students throughout this process—they should take care!

Teaching tip: If students have questions about the white pine trees, display the “White Pine” infographic.

Continue with the development of towns until all students have reached a successful year five. Congratulate them!

Reflection

The town seal. If possible, look up and project your town’s seal. A town seal is a symbol of the town. It usually has the date of settlement and the date of incorporation on it as well as images of places or things of significance to the town. The images on your town seal may be obvious, or your town government or local historical society may have additional information about why those images were chosen. See the town seals of New Hampshire’s first four towns for other examples.

Distribute “_____’s Town Seal,” one per town group. Direct groups to fill in their town’s name at the top and give them time to design their town’s seal. (Remind students that the last direction on the developing a town activity was to name the town.) They should choose images with intent rather than randomly selecting them and should have reasons for their design choices.

When groups have finished, display town maps alongside town seals. Discuss the activity together:

- What the most fun part of the activity? The least fun?
- Hardest? Easiest?
- In the 1750s, what did a town have to have to be “developed”?
- Do you think that’s reasonable? Should there be more or less?
- Would you have been interested in developing a town in New Hampshire during this time? Why or why not?

Consider having students write a reflection about their experience.

Reinforcement

Comparing to student readings. Ask students to compare the development of the town they created with what actually happened in history. Revisit the Student Reading in Unit 4: Learn It! “[More NH Settlements](#)” with students and create a two column chart.

Extension

1. **Investigate your town's history.** Use your town website, local historical society, or another resource to find out about your town's history. Was it one of the towns granted by the Masonian Proprietors? When was it founded? What did it look like when it was laid out? What then happened? How has it changed since then?
2. **Benning Wentworth.** Benning Wentworth was the colonial governor of New Hampshire from 1741 to 1766. He was a Masonian Proprietor and cared deeply for his business interests in the state. As governor, he saw many town charters granted and towns established, even some in what is now Vermont, such as Bennington. Investigate his legacy and ask students: Should we criticize Benning Wentworth for acting in his own economic self-interest or should we thank him for helping settle New Hampshire? Or both?

Supporting Materials

New Hampshire Historical Society Resources

1. Benning Wentworth, 1760
2. White Pine infographic

Other Resources

"The Town Game" adapted from "The Urban Game" in a variety of sources, including:

- Seth Macomber, 8th grade Social Studies teacher at the Cooperative Middle School in Stratham, NH (SAU 16)
- www.thecaveonline.com/APEH/TheUrbanGame.htm
- geographyeducationdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2017/06/industrialization-game-analysis.pdf

Historic population data can be found at the New Hampshire state website at www.nh.gov/osi/data-center/documents/1767-1820-historic.pdf

Town charters and layouts from Masonian Proprietor towns can be found in the *New Hampshire State Papers* available in many libraries statewide and online at the New Hampshire Secretary of State website at sos.nh.gov/archives-vital-records-records-management/archives/publications-collections/new-hampshire-state-papers/ Specific town layouts used in this lesson plan were from Volume 28: sos.nh.gov/media/dqtmpgcf/volume28.pdf?id=47284

Dover Town Seal, Wikimedia Commons
Exeter Town Seal, Wikimedia Commons
Hampton Town Seal, Wikimedia Commons
Portsmouth Town Seal, Wikimedia Commons

Standards

“Moose on the Loose” Content:

- ✓ Students will understand that European exploration led to the colonization of the region that became New Hampshire. They will understand that, beginning in the early 1600s, colonial New Hampshire was home to people from different areas of the world. (3-5.T2.1)

“Moose on the Loose” Skills:

- ✓ Effective Historical Thinking (3-5.S3.1)
- ✓ Comprehensive Geographic Reasoning (3-5.S4.1, 3-5.S4.2)

New Hampshire Social Studies Frameworks:

- ✓ Economics: Financial Institutions and the Government (SS:EC:4:4.1)
- ✓ Geography: The World in Spatial Terms (SS:GE:4:1.2, SS:GE:4:1.4)
- ✓ Geography: Places and Regions (SS:GE:4:2.1, SS:GE:4:2.2, SS:GE:4:2.3, SS:GE:4:2.4, SS:GE:4:2.5)
- ✓ Geography: Human Systems (SS:GE:4:4.1, SS:GE:4:4.2)
- ✓ Geography: Environment and Society (SS:GE:4:5.1, SS:GE:4:5.2)
- ✓ US / NH History: Political Foundations and Development (SS:HI:4:1.2)

NCSS Themes:

- ✓ Theme 3: People, Places, and Environments
- ✓ Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- ✓ Theme 7: Production, Distribution, and Governance

C3 Frameworks:

- ✓ Exchange and Markets (D2.Eco.3.3-5)
- ✓ Geographic Representations: Spatial Views of the World (D2.Geo.1.3-5, D2.Geo.2.3-5)
- ✓ Human-Environment Interaction: Place, Regions, and Culture (D2.Geo.5.3-5, D2.Geo.6.3-5)
- ✓ Human Population: Spatial Patterns and Movements (D2.Geo.7.3-5, D2.Geo.8.3-5)

Common Core ELA Grade 3:

- ✓ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas in Informational Text (RI.3.7)
- ✓ Vocabulary Acquisition and Use (L.3.4, L.3.6)

Common Core ELA Grade 4:

- ✓ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas in Informational Text (RI.4.7)
- ✓ Knowledge of Language (L.4.3c)
- ✓ Vocabulary Acquisition and Use (L.4.4, L.4.6)

Common Core ELA Grade 5:

- ✓ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas in Informational Text (RI.5.7)
- ✓ Knowledge of Language (L.5.3b)
- ✓ Vocabulary Acquisition and Use (L.5.4, L.5.6)

Lesson Vocabulary

Abenaki	(noun) Name used to refer to the indigenous people of the land now called New Hampshire
barter	(verb) Exchanging goods and services you have for the goods and services you need
colony	(noun) An area governed by another, often distant, country
commons	(noun) A public area, usually flat and grassy, that is used by all members of a community
livestock	(noun) Animals that are raised on a farm, like cows, chickens, horses, and sheep
lumber	(noun) Wood that has been processed from a tree into usable boards or pieces
Masonian Proprietor	(noun) One of 12 businessmen who, in the 1760s, bought the Mason family land grant; from this land they founded 60% of New Hampshire's towns
sawmill	(noun) A building along a river with a machine to cut logs into timber
seal	(noun) When referring to a town seal, a symbol that represents the town
township	(noun) The planned outline of an area where people will live together
weirs	(noun) Underwater fences used to trap fish