

British migration to Roanoke: Push and pull factors

BY PAULINE S. JOHNSON

In this lesson, students will examine the push/pull factors that led settlers to attempt to settle Roanoke Island in the 1580s. Two optional activities are included.

Learning outcomes

- Students will learn about the push and pull factors that influenced immigration
- Students will assign and evaluate push/pull factors that encouraged colonists to go to Roanoke in the 1580s
- Students will work cooperatively in groups
- Students will develop historical empathy
- Students will engage in higher levels of thinking

Teacher planning

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Computer with internet access for each group of students OR one computer with an LCD projector
- Overhead projector(optional)
- Two pages of chart paper or newsprint — one labeled “Push factors,” one labeled “Pull factors”
- Markers

TIME REQUIRED FOR LESSON

30 minutes

Procedure

BELLRINGER ACTIVITY

1. Put the following prompt on an overhead or the board. Give the students three to five minutes to answer the question on paper.

You are in your early 30s. You are getting ready to move from one house to a new one in the same town. What are some reasons that you are leaving the house you live in now? What are some reasons that you are going to the new house?

2. Ask for a few examples from the students' answers. Then ask them to imagine that they are moving from one town to another. What might be some reasons they would leave their present town? What might be some reasons they would want to go to a different town? Go over this orally.

ACTIVITY

1. Explain that these reasons are similar to those that have encouraged people to migrate throughout history. These are called “push and pull” factors; reasons that “push” people from one place and reasons that “pull” people to another.
2. Tell the students that they will read two selections that will help them to understand the reasons that people decided to leave England to travel to Roanoke Island in the 1580s. While they read the selections they will list push and pull factors.
3. Put the students into mixed ability groups of three or four. Have each group designate a recorder.
4. Ask the recorder of each group to get out a piece of notebook paper and label “Push factors” on one side and “Pull factors” on the other.
5. Give each group a computer that has the page “England’s Flowering¹” up, or project the page with one computer and an LCD projector.
6. Have the groups read “England’s Flowering” and “Merrie Olde England?²”. As the students read these pages, they should talk about and list the factors that would cause people to want to leave England (push factors) and those that would cause them to want to go to Roanoke (pull factors). You may want to ask the students to take turns reading the selections aloud to the rest of the group. If using an LCD, you may want to allow groups to take turns reading sections aloud for the class and then giving the groups several minutes to talk about and list the push and pull factors.
7. While the groups are working on their lists, tape the chart paper you have prepared in the front of the room.
8. Move around the room as the students are working. You may want to prompt some of the groups in considering some factors that they may have not thought about.
9. After the groups have read the two pages and generated their own list, have the class come back together to share group ideas.
10. Write the factors on the chart paper as the groups share their lists. For this activity, accept all appropriate answers. Some of the push/pull factors may not have been issues in the Roanoke settlements, but the idea is to get the students to think about possible push/pull factors. The teacher sample page lists some of the major push/pull factors that influenced early English colonization.

11. Discuss with the students the importance of these factors in the early settlement of the English colonies. Explain that while push/pull factors may change during different ages and in different situations, they are important to think about as the class continues its study of history.
12. You may choose to leave the chart posted throughout the rest of the semester/year so that you and students can refer to and/or add to it as migration studies continue.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Ask the students to get back into their groups.
2. Assign each of the groups one of the following categories: social factors, economic factors, and political factors. You may need to go over a working definition for the class for each of these categories (social factors involve individuals, families, religion, lifestyles; economic factors include those that have to do with money, jobs, goods and services; political factors encompass governments, laws, empowerment of individuals in making rules.)
3. Have the groups list the factors from the class push/pull list that fit into their category.
4. As a whole class ask the groups to share their evaluations. (Note: some of the push/pull factors may fit into more than one category.)
5. These evaluations should lead to a discussion of the factors and the categories. Students should defend their placement of the factors into a category, but ultimately should recognize that some factors will overlap or share categories. This discussion will engage the students in higher levels of thinking.

Assessment

This activity will be assessed by observing the groups working. Students should all take part in talking about the push/pull factors. The whole class should generate a complete list of the appropriate push/pull factors (see sample teacher chart).

The letter will be assessed by students' successfully taking on the role of a settler and incorporating six of the push/pull factors that were discussed in the class.

OPTIONAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT/HOMEWORK

1. Give students the following writing prompt:

Imagine that you are preparing to go with the John White colony in 1587. Write a letter to your parents explaining why you will be leaving for Roanoke. Include at least six items from the push/pull factor list in your letter.
2. Explain that the students can take on the persona of anyone in the colony — from one of the White advisors to one of the family members (woman or child).

North Carolina Curriculum Alignment

SOCIAL STUDIES (2003)

Grade 8

- **Goal 1:** The learner will analyze important geographic, political, economic, and social aspects of life in the region prior to the Revolutionary Period.
 - **Objective 1.01:** Assess the impact of geography on the settlement and developing economy of the Carolina colony.
 - **Objective 1.03:** Compare and contrast the relative importance of differing economic, geographic, religious, and political motives for European exploration.
 - **Objective 1.05:** Describe the factors that led to the founding and settlement of the American colonies including religious persecution, economic opportunity, adventure, and forced migration.

National Standards

In addition to meeting objectives of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, this lesson plan addresses the following national standards.

U.S HISTORY STANDARDS

Era 2: Colonialization and Settlement (1585-1763)

Standard 1: Why the Americas attracted Europeans, why they brought enslaved Africans to their colonies, and how Europeans struggled for control of North America and the Caribbean

HISTORICAL THINKING STANDARDS

Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation

B. Consider multiple perspectives.

C. Analyze cause-and-effect relationships and multiple causation, including the importance of the individual, the influence of ideas.

On the web

England's flowering

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-twoworlds/4.1>

The reign of England's Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603) was marked by a proliferation of the arts, an expansion of private markets, and a dedication to world exploration and privateering.

Merrie olde England?

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-twoworlds/4.2>

Many residents of Elizabethan England did not enjoy the abundance that accompanied Queen Elizabeth's reign. The dawn of the age of exploration gripped people's imaginations and caused many to dream of travel, and the New World offered the promise of a fresh start without the problems of the old country.

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Notes

1. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-twoworlds/4.1>.
2. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-twoworlds/4.2>.

About the author

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I am currently the Director of a Teaching American History Grant for Buncombe County Schools, Asheville City Schools, and Madison County Schools. I have taught history and English in the seventh and eighth grades for over twenty-six years at Reynolds Middle School in Asheville, North Carolina. I am currently doing adjunct work for Mars Hill College and Western Carolina University. I have a Masters Degree from Western Carolina University and am Nationally Board Certified in Early Adolescence/Social Studies-History. I am certified to teach K-12 and I also have Academically-Intellectually Gifted certification.