

The Carolina colony: Comparing three perspectives

BY PAULINE S. JOHNSON

Students will compare and contrast three different descriptions of the early Carolina colony:

- Robert Horne, A Brief Description of the Province of Carolina¹
- John Lawson, The present state of Carolina [people, climate]²
- Christen Janzen, A German immigrant writes home³

As an extension activity they will write letters imagining they are describing their own neighborhoods for relatives back home.

Learning outcomes

Students will:

- read and evaluate a primary source document
- discover information about the early Carolina colony
- cite references from a primary source to support their own interpretations
- engage in critical thinking
- replicate the reasons that the early settlers wrote primary sources

Teacher preparation

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Computer with internet access for each group of students *or* one computer with an LCD projector
- Three copies of the decision-making chart⁴ used in the lesson plan “The Present State of Carolina’: Making Decisions⁵.” **Note:** Only two copies will be needed if you have

done the “Present State of Carolina’: Making Decisions” lesson. *Alternatively*, you may project the chart and have the students copy it onto paper.

TIME REQUIRED FOR LESSON

One class period. Homework time will be needed.

Activities

1. Bellringer Activity: (oral or written exercise) Ask the students to imagine they are twenty-five and are thinking about moving to a new state. What might be some of the reasons for moving? What might be some reasons against moving? Have some students share their answers with the class.
2. Divide the class into three different groups — one for each of the sources they’ll be reading. **Note:** If you have used the “Present State of Carolina’: Making Decisions⁶” lesson plan, you will only have two groups, rather than three.
3. Divide each student group into smaller cooperative groups that will work together — 3 to 4 students per group.
4. Each group needs to have a copy of the decision-making chart, either photocopied or made on their own paper from projecting the PDF.
5. Explain that the students will be reading sources from the early days of the Carolina colony:
 - Robert Horne, A Brief Description of the Province of Carolina⁷
 - John Lawson, The present state of Carolina [people, climate]⁸
 - Christen Janzen, A German immigrant writes home⁹As they read, they are to think about the pros and cons of the colony, but in the opinion of their group — not necessarily the opinion of the author.
6. Allow the students time to read and discuss the sources, being sure to remind them to read the information about the authors and the material in the sidebars. Ask each group to also determine the reason the source was written.
7. After the charts have been filled in, have the class choose one (or more if there is time) of the sections to discuss as a whole class. Students should be prepared to support their opinions about why they have labeled items “pro” or “con” during the discussion.
8. Ask the students who read the Janzen letter to describe for the class some of the personal stories that were included.
9. Ask the class what differences they noticed between the two advertisement sources (Horne and Lawson) compared to the personal letter (Janzen). Students should recognize that the advertisements were intended to draw more people to the colony, so they wanted to portray the colony in a positive way. While the letter was mostly positive, Janzen mentioned the lack of marriageable women, lack of variety of fruit in the area, and his wish for a pastor.
10. Homework: Have the students write two papers (these can be as short as a paragraph or as long as a page each, depending on the ability level and/or interest of your students). Instruct the students to imagine that they have just moved from Europe to their neighborhood (town or farm). The students should write one notice back to their

former country in Europe, describing their new home with the goal of encouraging many more people to come. They should also write a letter back to their family in Europe explaining exactly what it is like in their new home.

Assessment

- Each group should have a completed decision-making chart. This assignment should be graded on effort as there are many possible answers to the pro/con questions. They also represent opinions of the different student groups.
- The class discussion will allow the teacher to gauge the comprehension of the students. Student participation should be an assessment.
- The homework should be assessed by the following: one written letter and one writing more in the form of an advertisement. Each writing should contain information about the student's neighborhood, town, or farm; grammar and correct spelling, although if students place their writings in the past rather than the present, some of your students may be aware that spelling was not standardized at this time.

National Standards

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

NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

Era 2: Colonization 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 FOR GRADES 5-12

Standard 2: Historical Comprehension

- A. Identify the author or source of the historical document or narrative and assess its credibility.
- B. Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage.
- C. Identify the central question(s) the historical narrative addresses.
- D. Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations.
- E. Read historical narratives imaginatively.
- F. Appreciate historical perspectives.

Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation

- A. Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas.
- 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

A Brief Description of the Province of Carolina

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/2043>

A pamphlet produced in 1660s London at the request of the Lords Proprietors described the economic opportunity and religious freedom available to settlers in Carolina. Includes historical commentary.

The present state of Carolina [people, climate]

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/1515>

Excerpt from John Lawson's 1709 *A New Voyage to Carolina* describing (and mostly praising) the European and native inhabitants, weather, and natural resources of Carolina, as well as what settlers should bring with them from Europe. Includes historical commentary.

A German immigrant writes home

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/1902>

Letter (c. 1710) from an immigrant to North Carolina to his family and friends in Germany, telling about his life and experiences in Carolina and giving advice to others who might follow him. Includes historical commentary.

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Notes

1. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/1.8>.
2. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/2.1>.
3. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/2.4>.
4. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/multimedia/12044>.
5. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial-lessons/2.1>.
6. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial-lessons/2.1>.
7. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/1.8>.
8. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/2.1>.
9. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/2.4>.

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.