South Carolina Colony Printable Reading Comprehension

Grade Level: 5 | Word Count: 322 | Lexile 1000

South Carolina's Colonial Beginnings

South Carolina, part of the original Province of Carolina, was founded in 1663 when King Charles II gave the land to eight noblemen known as The Lords Proprietors. At the time, the province included both North Carolina and South Carolina. North and South Carolina became separate royal colonies in 1729.

The Spanish and French vied over the rights to the coast of South Carolina in the 1500s. In 1562, French soldiers unsuccessfully attempted to start a settlement on Parris Island off the coast of present-day South Carolina. In 1566, the Spanish built the colony of Santa Elena near the site of the original French settlement. Santa Elena was abandoned in 1576 after being attacked by Indians. Although the settlement was rebuilt, the Spanish concentrated their forces in Florida after British pirate Sir Francis Drake destroyed St. Augustine. The British would be the next to colonize the area.

In 1670, the first permanent English settlement in South Carolina was established at Albemarle Point. Many of the original settlers came from the Caribbean island of Barbados, including the new governor, William Sayle. A year before, in 1669, prospective Carolina settlers including John Locke wrote the Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina, which served as an early form of government for the Carolina colony.

In 1680, the colony moved to Charles Town (later Charleston). Charles Town would quickly become the cultural and economic center of the Southern colonies. Because of the influence of the Caribbean settlers, the colony's original economy resembled the plantation colonies of the West Indies. It would become a major center for rice, tobacco, and indigo production, and the colony's plantation owners were among the wealthiest people in all the colonies. By the late 1700s, African-American slaves represented the majority of the population in South Carolina, as the number of cotton plantations increased.

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1. Which statement best summarizes the main idea of the passage?
 A. South Carolina was originally founded by Spanish and French explorers before being taken over by England.
 B. South Carolina developed from a British colony into a wealthy plantation society influenced by Caribbean culture.
 C. South Carolina's population grew because of its thriving trade with Spain and France.
 D. The Lords Proprietors controlled South Carolina until the American Revolution.

2. Based on the passage, why did the Spanish abandon Santa Elena?
 A. They were defeated by British soldiers.
 B. They were attacked by Native Americans.
 C. They decided to join the French settlers.
 D. They wanted to start a new colony in the West Indies.

3. How were the early settlers of South Carolina influenced by the Caribbean?
 A. They introduced tropical crops such as sugar and bananas.
 B. They established an economy similar to the plantation system in the West Indies.
 C. They imported French architectural styles from Barbados.
 D. They prohibited slavery, as it was uncommon in the Caribbean.

4. Which of the following events happened FIRST?
 A. The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina were written.
 B. The Spanish built the settlement of Santa Elena.
 C. South Carolina moved its settlement to Charles Town.
 D. North and South Carolina became separate royal colonies.

5. What inference can you make about the role of enslaved Africans in South Carolina?
 A. They were mostly household servants in wealthy cities.
 B. They made up a small minority of the population until the Revolution.
 C. They were vital to the success of the colony's plantation economy.
 D. They were introduced by Spanish settlers before the English arrived.

6. Compare and contrast the early colonization efforts of the French and Spanish in South Carolina. Which statement is most accurate?
 A. Both the French and Spanish established long-lasting settlements in South Carolina.
 B. The French successfully controlled the region for over 100 years before the Spanish arrived.
 C. Both nations failed to maintain permanent control, paving the way for British settlement.
 D. The Spanish never attempted settlement after the French failure.

7. What was the significance of Charles Town in colonial South Carolina?
 A. It was the first European settlement in North America.
 B. It became the political and cultural hub of the Southern colonies.
 C. It served as the main Spanish military base in the Americas.
 D. It was the original name for the colony of Barbados.

Answer Key

1. **B** – South Carolina developed from a British colony into a wealthy plantation society influenced by Caribbean culture.

2. **B** – They were attacked by Native Americans.

3. **B** – They established an economy similar to the plantation system in the West Indies.

4. **B** – The Spanish built the settlement of Santa Elena.

5. **C** – They were vital to the success of the colony's plantation economy.

6. **C** – Both nations failed to maintain permanent control, paving the way for British settlement.

7. **B** – It became the political and cultural hub of the Southern colonies.