**Geography of the Colonies**

During the 1600s and 1700s, settlers from England founded thirteen colonies along the Atlantic Coast of North America. Geography influenced where colonists settled and how they lived. In the Middle Colonies, people grew crops in the rich soil. Settlers used waterways for travel and to ship goods. In New England, people caught fish in the ocean and used wood from forests. Settlers in the Southern Colonies used waterways to reach inland areas of farmland. Few people settled beyond the fall line.

**Reasons for Settlement**

Settlers came to the colonies for different reasons. Some searched for riches, such as gold. Others wanted to start new lives as farmers. Some could be punished if they did not belong to the Church of England. Thousands sailed to North America to escape punishment.

Settlers had opportunities for self-government. The Pilgrims made a compact in which they agreed to be governed by laws they made together.

**THE THIRTEEN COLONIES**

![Map of the Thirteen Colonies](image)

**Before You Read**

Find and underline each vocabulary word or term.

- **fall line** *noun*, a place where rivers from the higher land of the mountains flow to the lower lands near the coast and often form waterfalls.
- **self-government** *noun*, the power of people to make laws for themselves.
- **compact** *noun*, an agreement.

**After You Read**

Where were the thirteen colonies? Highlight the sentence that tells the answer.

For what reasons did settlers come to the colonies? Circle the reasons settlers came to the colonies.

**SKILL** Reading Maps

Can you find some of the Thirteen Colonies? Draw a square around the colony of New York. Draw a circle around the colony of Virginia.