

**TASKS:**

1) Read the attached document and complete the activities on pages 5 and 10. Use the Glossary at the back to define key terms **in bold**.

2) Optional extension task: read and note Jones chapters 1 and 2 for more detailed background on the American colonies before 1760 and attempts to expand up to 1763. Use the sub-headings in the reading to help you make notes.

## Gateway to The American Revolution 1740–96

**The nature of the colonies**

North America contained three main European settlements by 1750: 13 British colonies along the Atlantic coast; Spanish colonies in Florida, California and New Mexico (including parts of the modern-day states of Texas, Colorado, Nevada, Utah, Oklahoma, Kansas and Wyoming); and French colonies in the Mississippi Valley, Canada and in the great area of Louisiana. The nature of the colonies was very different. The Spanish colonies had a relatively small population and many isolated outposts. They were ruled as part of the Spanish Empire in the new world by viceroys. There was little population growth and limited economic prosperity. The French Empire was essentially based on fur trade and missionary activity and ruled directly from France. Its population had not expanded as rapidly as that of the British colonies, which had more diverse economic activity, more developed self-government and higher levels of prosperity. The British colonies had been founded at different times for different reasons and New England, the Middle colonies and the Southern colonies had their own characteristics and were more diverse than the colonies of Spain and France.

**Government**

- There was little colonial self-government in the French and Spanish colonies, but the British colonies had representative assemblies.
- These local parliaments could be overruled by royal governors who were mostly appointed by the British crown.
- They had a restricted franchise – women, slaves (who were 20 per cent of the population) and one half of the white male population did not vote for the assemblies.
- There were more democratic ideas and more freedom to prosper by owning land and starting businesses.
- In terms of equality of political rights, democracy in a modern sense was limited.

**Freedom**

- Nine colonies were ruled by royal governors.
- Georgia and Pennsylvania remained the property of their founders and Rhode Island and Connecticut elected their own governors.
- Britain hardly interfered with the colonies in 1750 and British rule has been described as 'statutory neglect'. Laws controlling trade were ignored and there was little attempt to tax the colonies.
- The French and Spanish crowns also, in practice, allowed their colonists freedom from control.
- African slaves, who made up a large proportion of the workforce and population in the Southern colonies, did not have freedom.
- Many white colonists were indentured servants contracted to work often for long periods for their masters.

**Economic life**

- There were no substantial cities in New Spain.
- Quebec and New Orleans were important urban settlements in French North America.
- In the British colonies there were only four substantial cities.
- Most of the people (80–90 per cent) lived and worked in the countryside, with better developed farms in the British colonies.
- British colonies saw a population growth from 300,000 in 1700 to over 2 million by 1775.
- British colonies had more diverse economies with different types of agriculture: from the arable farming in the North to the tobacco, rice, indigo and cotton of the middle and southern colonies.
- The French were active traders, especially in furs.
- British exports were more diverse and there was some small-scale manufacturing.

**Religion and culture**

- French and Spanish areas were predominantly Catholic, though there were French protestant colonists.
- British colonists were diverse with Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Quaker, Catholic and some Jewish settlers.
- Many were not religious despite a religious revival or Great Awakening in the 1730s and 1740s.
- Educational development was greater in the British colonies with the growth of schools and colleges, the impact of Enlightenment thinkers from Europe and also from the colonists, such as Benjamin Franklin.

**Expansion**

- There was a great desire for expansion among the colonists and this led to conflict.
- Spanish expansion into modern day Nebraska was halted by French opposition in 1720.
- There were clashes between British and Spanish colonists in Florida, and French and British settlers where the territories met.
- The population growth in the thirteen colonies led to pressure to move west and this brought colonists into conflict with the Native Americans.

# Chapter 1

## The development of British hegemony in America

This chapter focuses on the development of British hegemony (dominance) in America in the period from 1740 until the ending of the Seven Years War in 1763. It will consider the main characteristics of the British, French and Spanish colonies in North America at the start of the period, analysing their similarities and differences. The chapter will explain how society and the economy had developed in the British colonies and analyse the relationship between British colonial authorities, settlers and Native Americans in the period from 1740 to 1763. It will consider why Britain expanded its territory in North America in this period and discuss the consequences of the expansion. The chapter will also explain why Britain was successful in the Seven Years War against France. The main questions to be considered in this period are as follows:

- What were the key characteristics of British, French and Spanish colonies in North America in 1740?

- How had colonial society and the economy developed by 1740 in British North America?
- How strong were the relations between the British colonial authorities and settlers and Native Americans?
- How successfully, and with what consequences, did Britain expand its territory in North America in the period 1740–63?
- Why were the British successful in the wars with France 1740–63?

This chapter will also explain how to understand the wording of a question and then how to plan a response to the question. It will focus on identifying the key words within the question and then explain how to ensure that you address the key demands of the actual question, rather than simply writing all you know about a topic.

### Timeline

1607	Establishment of British colony of Virginia	1745	New England colonists capture Louisbourg
1620–50	Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Maryland established	1748	Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle
1660s	New Jersey, North and South Carolina founded	1753–4	Ohio Company established
1664	New York captured from the Dutch	1754	Albany Congress
1680s	Pennsylvania and Delaware established	1756–1763	Seven Years War
1689–97	War of the League of Augsburg/King William's War	1757	Duke of Newcastle recalled to power and William Pitt the Elder appointed Secretary of State
1702–13	War of Spanish Succession/Queen Anne's War	1759	Britain captures Quebec
1732	Georgia established	1760	Naval victory at Quiberon Bay
1740–48	War of Austrian Succession/King George's War	1760	Accession of George III
		1763	Britain captures Montreal
			Peace of Paris

## What were the key characteristics of British, French and Spanish colonies in North America in 1740?

The Spanish colonisation of America followed Christopher Columbus' first voyage to the New World in 1492. Although the Spanish did colonise parts of North America and establish New Spain, which was the term used to describe the Empire north of the Panama isthmus, much of their Empire in the Americas was in the south. However, they did control the south-west and Florida. The French arrived in North America in the sixteenth century and established control over the Mississippi River – lands that ran from the Gulf of Mexico through to modern day Canada, although their control did not extend to the Eastern Seaboard (the eastern coastline of North America bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, the area containing the original thirteen British colonies). Britain was the last of the Western European powers to establish settlements in North America, with the first permanent colony, Virginia, established in 1607, followed by Massachusetts in 1620. By the eighteenth century Britain had established a series of thirteen colonies on the Eastern Seaboard, which can be divided into three groups:

- New England colonies: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut
- Middle colonies: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware
- Southern colonies: Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

British influence also extended into Canada as the Hudson Bay Company had been incorporated by **charter** in 1670 and acted as the government for the area. Britain also had numerous holdings in the Caribbean, most notably Jamaica, which would be of strategic importance in the later American Revolutionary War. However, the colonies of the three powers differed considerably in their economic, social and political outlook.



The British, French and Spanish colonies in 1740

## Economic and social differences

The French controlled the interior of America and economically their aim was to supply France with raw materials, particularly furs and fish. This brought them into close contact with the Native Americans with whom they largely enjoyed a good relationship. In contrast, the British were more concerned with farming the new lands, where tobacco was the key crop, and, in contrast with the French, adopted fewer Native American customs. This meant that the Native Americans often joined with the French to raid and attack the western borders of the British possessions.

The economies of the colonies were also developing at very different rates. This was not only due to the attitudes of the British, French and Spanish governments, but also because of population growth. There were very few Spanish settlers in New Spain or Florida, which would have hampered any attempt to develop their economies. Similarly, the population of New France or Louisiana was also very low compared with that of the British colonies. By the mid-eighteenth century there were probably no more than 60,000 French settlers, whereas the population of the British colonies had reached 1 million and was growing rapidly, with Virginia the most populous of the colonies. Population growth was also reflected in the development of towns. Most French settlements were small, often little more than forts or outposts, while there were five seaports in the British colonies of reasonable size: Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Newport and Charleston.

The political and religious nature of the French and Spanish colonies (see below and page 14) also had an impact on the development of the colonies. While both the Spanish and French colonies were reluctant to allow in people from other nations or of other religions, this was not the case with the British colonies. In total, some 400,000 people went to the thirteen British colonies in the period from 1700 to 1763, among them migrants from Europe and forced migrants or slaves from Africa. This had a major impact on the nature of the settlers. This diversity led to a much more religiously tolerant outlook in the British colonies compared with those of France or Spain, and also had an impact on the religious composition of the colonies.

## Religious differences

There were religious differences between the colonies, with both France and Spain being Catholic states who did not tolerate other religions. Spain had established an empire in the New World partly to spread Catholicism, whereas many of the original British settlers had gone to the New World to escape religious persecution. There were, therefore, fears among the British settlers that the two Catholic powers would join forces to prevent the expansion of British influence, which could not be tolerated for a number of reasons.

The large-scale immigration from Europe meant that in contrast with the French and Spanish colonies, which had mainly Catholic settlers, there was religious diversity within the British colonies with a range of different Protestant denominations, including Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Quakers, Baptists, Lutherans, German and Dutch Reformed churches joining Anglicans within the colonies, although Maryland was a Catholic colony. In contrast with the French and Spanish colonies and most European States, there was no dominant religious group in the British colonies and greater religious toleration.

## Political differences

France was still ruled by a **divine right, absolutist** monarchy. The French state, unlike Britain, still maintained close control over its colonies and was very demanding, conscripting its subjects and levying large amounts of taxation. Moreover, as a Catholic state it did not practise religious toleration, unlike Britain. In comparison with continental standards, Britain was much more liberal and had a minimalist, much less powerful central government along with a tradition of freedom of speech, assembly and the press. This freedom also applied to the colonies and, unlike the French, there was often minimal contact with the home government. These differences meant that British settlers did not want to come under the rule of France, and this led to a great fear of the French among the settlers, which helped to bind them more closely to Britain.

The population growth of the British colonies and the associated economic development would play a significant role in Britain becoming the dominant colonial power in North America. The power of the Spanish in North America was already declining before this period, even if it still maintained control in much of South America, but in part because of their religious similarities, the Spanish worked with the French to limit British influence. However, given the different economic, political and ideological outlooks of Britain and France it was increasingly likely that the two would be drawn into conflict, whereas the location and size, relative to British lands, of Spanish settlement meant they were not seen as a serious threat.

### Activities

- 1 Complete a copy of the table below to compare how different the British and French colonies in America were by 1740.

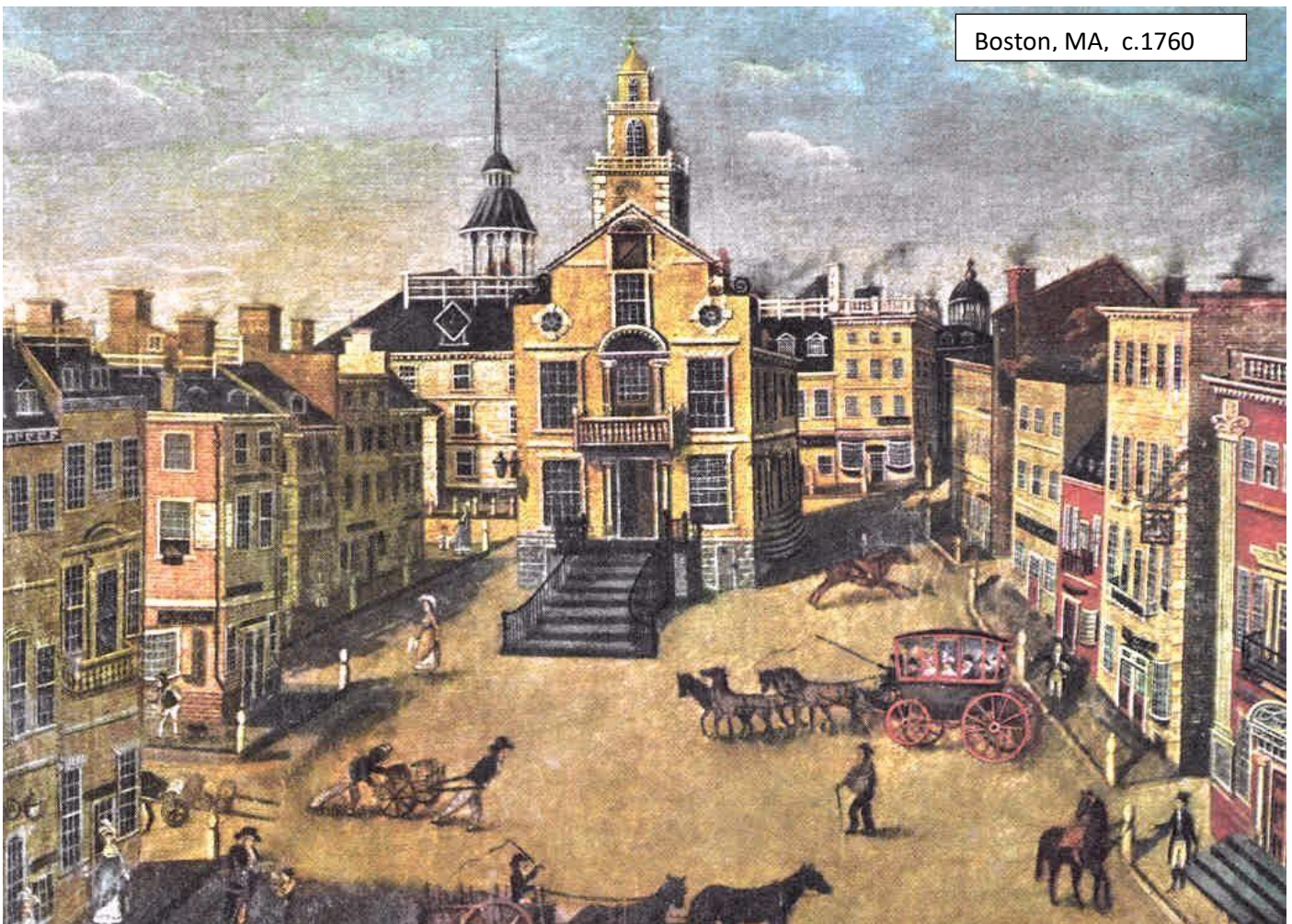
Factor	British colonies	French colonies
Population growth		
Economic activity		
Migration		
Religion		
Political outlook		
Interference from the 'mother' country		

- 2 Then consider how these differences might cause conflict in the future.

## How had colonial society and the economy developed in British North America by 1740?

The economy of the British colonies grew dramatically in the period from 1650 to 1740, averaging a growth rate of some three per cent per year. This was, in part, as a result of increased trade between Britain and the colonies, but also because of trade between the colonies. Within the American colonies there was evidence of economic diversification, with industrial enterprises such as textiles, iron production and shipbuilding starting to develop. These developments were encouraged by the availability of credit and investment from Britain, but also because the population of the colonies was growing. More land was available and this was exploited to produce crops, most notably tobacco in the south, for export. British settlers on the Eastern

Seaboard were gradually settling the area near the coast known as the **Tidewater** and due to overpopulation people were moving inland into the area known as the **Backcountry**. The colonists themselves were prosperous and wanted to increase their influence by moving into the interior. They were encouraged to do this by the British government who wanted to see as much prosperity as possible in the colonies. The growing prosperity also led to what has been called a 'Consumer Revolution', with many colonists buying more and better goods, mostly from Britain.



## The importance of mercantilism in the development of the economy

The British government's support for increased colonial prosperity was due largely to the belief in mercantilism. This meant that they believed the colonies' main purpose was to serve the economic interests of Britain by providing it with raw materials, a market for British goods and employment through shipping. It also meant that Britain could collect customs duties on **enumerated goods** that were sent from America to Britain before they were shipped onwards. All of this meant that the greater the colonial prosperity, the greater the advantages for the British government.

This mercantilist policy was upheld by a series of Navigation Acts which had been passed by parliament between 1651 and 1673. These stated that only English ships could carry colonial goods and that these ships had to be crewed by largely English crews, providing a considerable boost to the English shipping industry. The British government also passed laws that restricted colonial manufacturing of goods, such as woollen yarn and cloth, beaver hats and even iron.

Although it might be expected that such laws would have created anger among the colonists, this was often not the case because the system was only loosely enforced. The high duties that the Navigation Acts stated should be levied were rarely collected. The lack of enforcement was in part caused by those who were supposed to collect the duties remaining in Britain, and instead sending deputies to the colonies who were often open to bribery. Attempts to tighten control were made but the colonists continued to avoid the laws and smuggling flourished. However, the major reasons why the colonists supported the system was because it provided them with a protected market in Britain and the wider Empire, which was especially important for tobacco, and because American shipping was able to benefit from the exclusion of foreign ships from trade.

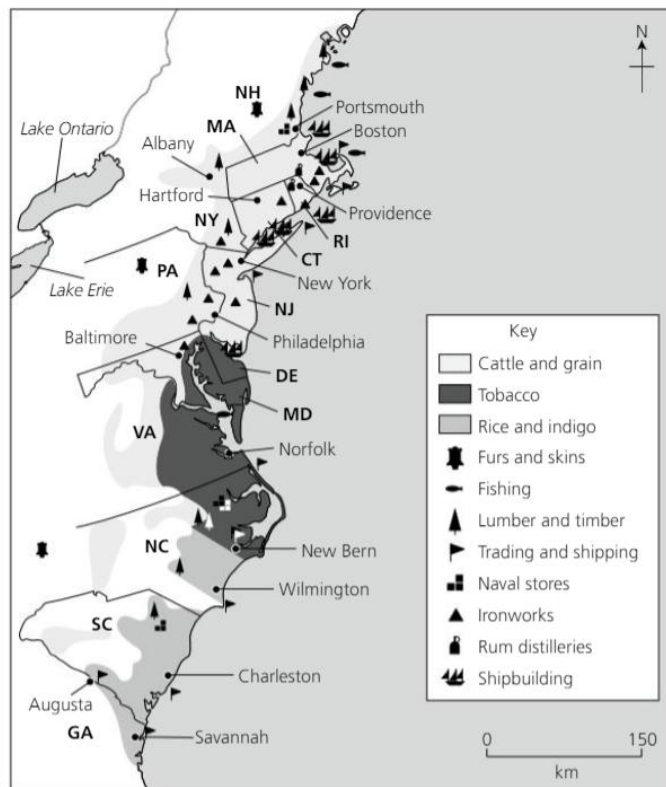
## Agriculture and fishing

Despite the growth in manufacturing, 90 per cent of the working population in the colonies farmed for a living. There were, however, considerable contrasts and differences between regions.

It is helpful to see the colonies as three distinct regions and it is in the middle and southern colonies that agricultural activity was particularly dominant. In the middle colonies, it was wheat and flour that was the mainstay and these were often exported to other colonies or across the Atlantic. However, in the southern colonies, where, unlike the north and mid-Atlantic colonies, slaves were used, tobacco was the most important product. Grain, rice and indigo were also produced. The value of tobacco exports rose significantly from £14 million in the 1670s to £100 million by the outbreak of the American War of Independence.

In New England, poorer soils meant that agriculture was mainly **subsistence farming**. There were many fishermen exploiting the rich seas around Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, which provided a plentiful supply of cod, which was then dried and often exported. The New England colonists were also involved in a lucrative trade with the French and British West Indies and this brought in sugar and molasses, which New England distillers turned into rum.

Colonial economy by 1740 ▶



## Colonial society

Colonial society was very different from that of Britain. Although there were some very wealthy people in the colonies who often owned considerable estates, they did not have the social prestige or titles that the landowners in Britain had. The elite in the colonies were more likely to be hard-working capitalists who made their money through the commercial exploitation of their estates or by land speculation, whereby they bought land in the hope that it would increase in value.

Below the elite there were three main social groups:

- professionals, property-holding farmers or plantation owners and craftsmen
- labourers
- slaves.

The first group included people such as teachers and doctors, who were seen as pillars of the local community and often held positions of public responsibility. Many in this group owned their own farms, but they were not large-scale land holders and often worked the land with the help of their families. In the towns, many were either shopkeepers or craftsmen.

In the second group were those who worked for others or rented land as tenant farmers. However, their numbers were limited to about 20 per cent of the adult male population, many of whom had only just arrived. This was because many could afford to purchase cheap frontier land.

The final group were the black slaves – African Americans – most of whom were located in the South and worked on the farms and plantations, although some were domestic servants within the houses of the elite in the North or in the homes of the plantation owners in the South.

## The growth of the middle class

The historian Richard Hofstadter has put forward the view that the number and influence of the middle class in the colonies was far greater than in Britain and that they were over-represented, whereas the poor and what might be termed the aristocracy, were under-represented. This was because of the availability of land, which meant that most people were able to own land as there was so much available. The North American colonies were some five times the size of Britain. Whereas in Britain, most of the population were tenant farmers and most colonial farmers owned their land. Craftsmen did well and because of the shortage of skills were able to demand high wages.

This view is open to challenge because there is little evidence that colonial society provided the opportunity for people to make a fortune and climb up the social ladder because society was still very hierarchical. This view has been emphasised in the work of the historian Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* and society was even more rigidly structured in the south because of the great differences in the scale of land and slave holdings.

## Religious and educational developments

Both of these developments played a crucial role in the structure of colonial society. Many of the original settlers had gone to America to avoid religious persecution in Britain. Although most were Protestants there was a great diversity of denominations and this was further encouraged by immigration from other countries. As a result, there was no overall dominant religious denomination, which was in stark contrast with both New Spain and New France. This led to a degree of religious toleration, unlike the other nations. However, this toleration was largely confined to Protestant groups and there was a general anti-Catholic feeling, as in England, which played a role in the later conflicts, particularly with France. The colonies were also affected by a religious revival called 'The Great Awakening' at the start of the eighteenth century. This movement led by Methodists and Baptists emphasised the personal relationship between the individual and God, with some arguing that this encouraged an egalitarian and democratic spirit among people, which would help to fire opposition to the nature of British rule later in the century.

Similarly, educational developments have also been seen to play an important role in creating a society more receptive to new ideas, which would again encourage the colonies to challenge British rule later in the period. The encouragement given to education meant that literacy rates in the colonies, at 75 per cent of adult males by 1763, were 15 per cent higher than those in Britain. This also encouraged the growth in the number of printing presses and bookshops, with the result that **Enlightenment** ideas influenced an ever-increasing number of people and caused them to think about the nature of the society in which they lived.

## Activities

This section has suggested that there were a number of developments taking place in the British colonies before 1763 that either strengthened or weakened the relationship of the colonies with Britain.

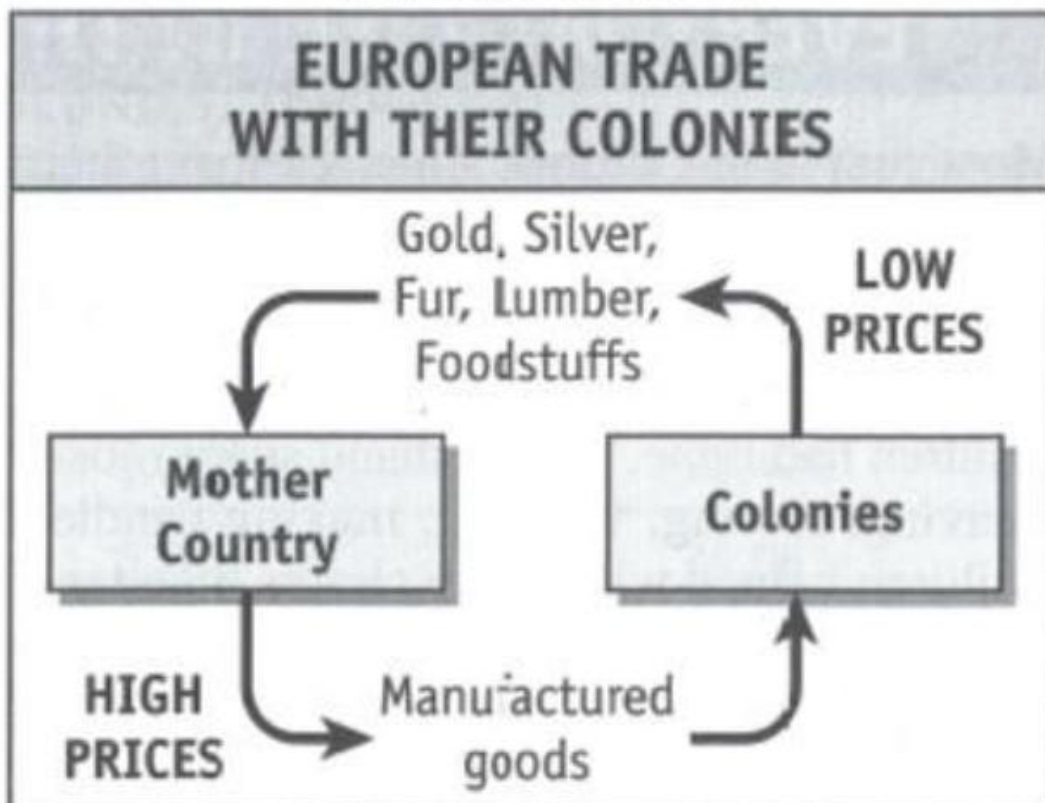
1 Complete the table below to provide a summary of these developments.

Development	Strengthened relations with Britain	Weakened relations with Britain
Mercantilism		
Industrial growth		
Agricultural developments		
Social structure		
Religious developments		
Educational developments		

2 Which of the developments do you think did the most to strengthen relations with Britain? Explain your answer.

3 Which of the developments do you think did the most to weaken relations? Explain your answer.

## Mercantilism



## Glossary of key terms.

**Absolutist** A state where the ruler has all the power.

**Annul** To abolish, usually a law.

**Arbitrary government** Rule that is not restricted by laws.

**Assimilation** The belief that Native Americans should adopt American lifestyles and values.

**Attrition** Reducing something's strength or effectiveness through sustained attack or pressure.

**Backcountry** The areas of the Eastern Seaboard that are inland.

**Belligerents** The term used when states are officially recognised as being at war with each other.

**Blockade** The use of naval forces to prevent ships entering or leaving ports.

**Bonds** Issued in order to borrow money from lenders. Those who purchase bonds receive an annual return on the sum invested and the bonds can be bought and sold.

**Braves** Native American warriors.

**Charter** A document that grants rights and privileges to an organisation.

**Commuted** The reduction of a judicial sentence to a lighter punishment.

**Compensated emancipation** When slave holders were given financial compensation for the freeing of their slaves.

**Concurrent powers** Powers shared by different elements within the US constitution.

**Guerrilla warfare** Fighting done by irregular forces not formal armies.

**Habeas corpus** A legal means of ensuring that prisoners are not held without being officially charged with a crime and tried.

**Impeached** Impeachment is a process by which a US president can be put on trial.

**Internal taxes** Taxes on items at the point where they were produced within the colonies.

**Judiciary** All the judges in a country who, as a group, form part of the system of government.

**Militia** A force that was made up of all those of military age who could be called out in a time of emergency.

**Nations** The term used to describe the larger Native American tribes, for example, the Sioux nation.

**Polygamy** The taking of more than one wife.

**Popular sovereignty** The authority of a state and its government is created and sustained by the consent of its people, through their elected representatives.

**Posses** Groups of people gathered by the sheriff/local law officer, to help catch a criminal.

**Privateers** Private person or ship that engages in maritime warfare under a commission of war.

**Privy council** The council of the monarch who give advice on administration and government.

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**Constitution** A set of rules by which a country is governed.

**Despotism** Absolute power that is usually exercised in a tyrannical or oppressive way.

**Divine right** The belief that a monarch's right to rule had been bestowed by God and that they were answerable only to God.

**Electoral college** A special assembly elected just to elect a US president in accordance with the votes cast in each state.

**Embargoing** Preventing trade as a means of exerting political pressure.

**Enlightenment** Term used to describe the intellectual movement of the eighteenth century, which encouraged people to believe in reason and progress.

**Enumerated goods** Items that were affected by the Trade and Navigation Acts and therefore had to be carried in British ships.

**Executive** The power of the government to put laws into effect.

**External taxes** Taxes on items at the point where they are imported into the colonies.

**Federal government** A system in which government is shared between a central executive and local states.

**Foreclosures** Forcing debtors to sell their property to pay debts.

**Founding Fathers** The name given to the delegates to the conference of 1787 who made the Constitution.

**Fugitive slaves** Slaves who had run away from their owners.

**Railheads** Rail terminuses, where cattle were collected before being transported east or north to Chicago.

**Self-determination** The right of a people to determine their own future.

**Senate** The upper chamber of Congress. Each state elects two senators.

**Specie** Metal currency, usually gold or silver.

**Squat** To occupy land to which you have no right.

**Subsistence farming** The growing of enough crops to feed the family with no surplus to sell.

**Tariff** A customs duty on imported goods.

**Tarred and feathered** The stripping of victims who were then covered with hot tar and rolled in goose feathers.

**Tidewater** The areas of the Eastern Seaboard nearest the coast.

**Turnpike** A road on which a toll is charged.

**Underground Railroad** A network of secret routes and safe houses used by African American slaves to escape into the free states and Canada with the aid of abolitionists and allies.

**War state** A state in which resources, human and economic, are dedicated to waging war by a strong central government.

**West Point** The United States Military Academy located in West Point, New York.

**Whiggism** Political philosophy in seventeenth century Britain which supported parliamentary government and religious toleration.

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