

Unit 1

Deconstructed DBQ Document Set and Teacher Context

TEACHER RESOURCE

Resource Overview

This document provides teacher support for implementing the Unit 1: Colonial World Deconstructed DBQ in the middle school classroom. It includes four documents, each designed to help students explore connections to the DBQ question while understanding the relevant historical context.

Use the context in this document to guide your students in making these connections and help them engage with the primary sources effectively.

Scaffolding note: For students who need additional support, you can assign or allow them to choose 2-3 documents. For students who need more of a challenge, provide all documents and require them to use each source at least once in their analysis.

Document Exposure Table

This table shows where each primary source in the Deconstructed DBQ appears throughout the unit. Use this overview to help with lesson planning, reinforce key concepts, or activate prior knowledge before students engage with the full DBQ.

Teacher note: As students move through the curriculum, they encounter more documents overall, but each one appears fewer times. This gradual decrease in exposure is intentional—it helps shift the responsibility for document analysis to the student, supporting the development of independent thinking and source analysis skills over time.

Document	New or Repeated Exposure	Unit Resources Using the Document
Document A: The First Charter of Virginia (1606)	Repeated	1. <i>Colonial Charters</i> Lesson Plan 2. <i>Self-governance in the British Colonies</i> Lesson Plan
Document B: The Mayflower Compact (1620)	Repeated	1. <i>Colonial World</i> Interactive Timeline 2. <i>Timeline and Place</i> Timeline Lesson Plan

Document C: The Charter of Maryland (1632)	Repeated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Colonial World</i> Interactive Timeline 2. <i>Colonial Charters</i> Lesson Plan 3. <i>Self-governance in the British Colonies</i> Lesson Plan
Document D: The Frame of Government of Pennsylvania (1682)	Repeated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Colonial Charters</i> Lesson Plan 2. <i>Self-governance in the British Colonies</i> Lesson Plan

Document Set with Teacher Context

Each Deconstructed DBQ document includes background information to help teachers understand each source. The information is organized by key concepts addressed in the DBQ question.

Scaffolding note: You can share some or all of this information with students to help them better understand the documents.

Documents

Document A: The First Charter of Virginia (1606)

<p>“GRANT and agree, that the said [Adventurers] ... shall and may begin their said first Plantation and Habitation, at any Place upon the said-Coast of Virginia or America, ... and that they shall have all the Lands, Woods, Soil, Grounds, Havens, Ports, Rivers, Mines, Minerals, Marshes, Waters, Fishings, Commodities ... and may also build and fortify within any the same, for their better Safeguard and Defense, according to their best Discretion ... And we do also ordain, establish, and agree ... that each of the said Colonies shall have a Council, which shall govern and order all Matters ... according to such Laws, Ordinances, and Instructions, as shall be, in that behalf, given and signed with Our [the king’s] Hand”</p>	<p>Plantation and Habitation: settlements</p> <p>Discretion: decision or choice</p>
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Teacher Context

The First Charter of Virginia (1606) reflects and helps establish self-government in several ways, even though it ultimately kept authority under the English crown.

How it established self-government:

The charter created a local council in Virginia, responsible for managing the colony's affairs. While this council was still under the oversight of the Virginia Company and the king, it was an early form of colonial self-governance, allowing decision-making at the local level rather than direct rule from England. The document promised that settlers would have the same rights and liberties as English citizens, even though they were across the Atlantic. This set the expectation that colonists had a say in their governance, just as English subjects did under common law.

Historical Significance

While the charter itself did not create a fully independent government, it established a model that later expanded into more representative forms of self-rule. For example: The House of Burgesses (1619) in Virginia was the first elected legislative assembly in the New World. Later colonies followed similar governance structures, reinforcing the idea that colonists should have a voice in their laws and policies. The charter encouraged the Virginia Company to govern the colony in a way that would ensure its economic success. Although the company had to answer to the king, it had considerable freedom in decision-making regarding trade, land use, and resource management.

Document B: The Mayflower Compact (1620)

"We, whose names are underwritten, ... having undertaken, ... a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northerne parts of Virginia, **doe** by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, **covenant** and combine ourselves together into a civill body politick, for our better ordering and preservation, ... constitute, and frame such just and equall laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete and convenient for the generall good of the Colonie unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

doe: do

covenant: contract or solemn promise

Teacher Context

The Mayflower Compact was a foundational document of self-government in colonial America. 41 passengers aboard the Mayflower signed it on November 11, 1620 before they disembarked at Plymouth, Massachusetts. The document laid out principles that the new society would be formed under, including self-government and the rule of law.

How It Established Self-Government

It was the first written agreement for self-rule in the New World. It laid the foundation for future democratic institutions, including town meetings and representative assemblies. It influenced later governing documents like the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (1639) and even aspects of the U.S. Constitution.

Historical Significance

The Mayflower Compact demonstrated that colonists could create their own government based on mutual consent, reinforcing the idea that government derives its power from the people. It set a precedent for self-governance in the American colonies and contributed to the broader tradition of democratic governance that shaped American political thought.

Document C: The Charter of Maryland (1632)

"We [King Charles] ... do grant unto the said now Baron[of Baltimore],... and to his Heirs, for the good and happy Government of the said Province, free, full, and absolute Power..., to Ordain, Make, and Enact Laws, of what Kind **soever**, according to their sound Discretions...of and with the **Advice, Assent, and Approbation** of the Free-Men of the same Province."

soever: of any kind
Advice, Assent, and Approbation: approval

Teacher Context

The Charter of Maryland, issued by King Charles I on June 20, 1632, granted George Calvert, Lord Baltimore, the right to establish a proprietary colony in what is now Maryland. This document was unique compared to earlier colonial charters because it gave Lord Baltimore almost complete control over the colony, allowing for a significant degree of self-governance.

How it established self-government:

The proprietor (Lord Baltimore) had near-sovereign authority, but the settlers participated in governance through an elected assembly. Maryland's General Assembly, established in 1635,

gave freemen a voice in legislation, reinforcing representative government in the colonies. The colony became one of the earliest places in North America to experiment with religious tolerance, later formalized in the Maryland Toleration Act (1649).

Historical Significance:

Maryland's self-governing structure influenced the development of American democracy by allowing settlers to have a say in their laws. It set an early precedent for religious freedom, which would later shape American values. It demonstrated the flexibility of English colonial governance, showing that a colony could thrive under a proprietary system rather than direct royal or corporate control.

Document D: The Frame of Government of Pennsylvania (1682)

"Now know ..., that for the well-being and government of the said province ... I, the said William Penn, have declared ... all the freemen, planters and adventurers of ... the said province, these liberties, franchises, and properties, to be held, enjoyed and kept by the freemen, planters, and inhabitants of the said province of Pensilvania [Pennsylvania] for ever. ... That the freemen of the said province shall ... **chuse** out of themselves seventy-two persons of most note for their wisdom, virtue and ability, who shall meet, on the tenth day of the first month ... and act as, the provincial Council of the said province. ...

chuse: choose

Teacher Context

The Frame of Government of Pennsylvania, written by William Penn in 1682, was the founding governmental document for the Pennsylvania colony. It established a framework for self-government, religious freedom, and democratic principles, reflecting Penn's Quaker ideals and commitment to a fair, just society.

How it Established Self-government.

Power was shared between the governor and elected representatives, setting a model for later American democracy. Ordinary citizens played a role in self-government by electing officials rather than just a small elite. It influenced the Constitution, particularly ideas about checks and balances and religious liberty.

Historical Significance:

It was one of the most democratic colonial charters of its time. Pennsylvania became a model for freedom of religion and representative government. Many of its principles, including elected government, individual rights, and religious tolerance, later shaped American political thought.

