

RHODE ISLAND COLONY

By Aubree Larsen

- **FOUNDING:** Roger Williams established Rhode Island in 1636. After being banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony for his religious beliefs, he purchased the land from the Narragansett Indians. He named the site of his settlement Providence, in gratitude to God. He established the practice of allowing all men to vote, regardless of their religion. He encouraged members of unpopular religious groups to settle in Rhode Island.
- **CHARTER:** In 1644 Williams obtained a charter from the English Parliament and eventually the settlements of Providence, Newport, Warwick, and Portsmouth joined together to become the colony of Rhode Island. The colony was then granted a royal charter in 1663. The first governor appointed under this charter was Benedict Arnold- the great grandfather of the Revolutionary War traitor of the same name.
- **NAME:** It was originally called “Roodt Eylandt” by Dutch Explorer Adrian Block which mean Red Island in reference to the red clay on the shore. The name was changed to Rhode Island when it was taken over by the English. The official name of the state is the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.
- **SLAVERY:** The first slaves were in Rhode Island by 1652 and the colony was an active participant in the slave trade. Slave laws in Rhode Island were more severe than in other New England colonies to do the higher ratio of slaves to whites in the colony. In 1784 the Rhode Island legislature passed the first measure for gradual emancipation, which meant that children born to current slaves could be freed after a period of apprenticeship. (Current slaves were not freed.)
- **INDEPENDENCE:** Rhode Island was the first colony to renounce allegiance to King George III on May 4th, 1776. This is known as “Rhode Island Independence Day.”
- **CONSTITUTION:** Rhode Island supported the Articles of Confederation and refused to participate in the Constitutional Convention. It was the last state to ratify the Constitution

Teaching Ideas for the 13 Colonies

- **PUZZLE:** Enlarge a map of the 13 colonies so that it takes up multiple pages. Students can color, label, and cut out the colonies as puzzle pieces. They can put the puzzle together to practice learning the colonies. You may want to have them color the New England, Middle, and Southern colonies all the same colors.
- **REVIEW GAME:** Prepare fact strips about the three regions of the 13 colonies. Give each team a different color of the set of strips (I usually do 3 teams). Set up three buckets labeled "New England," "Middle," and "Southern." Teams will have a race with only one student from each team at a time putting the facts in the correct bucket. Award points for the team that finishes first, then give points to the teams for each one they get right.
- **NOTE TAKING:** Prepare a graphic organizer with columns across the top for the three regions of 13 colonies and rows across the side with categories such as religion, industry, climate, schooling etc. This can be used for a teacher presentation or a jigsaw activity.
- **SIMULATION:** This is a highly engaging and successful simulation game about triangular trade. It is a great introduction to mercantilism and helps the students understand why the colonies felt like they were being taken advantage of by Great Britain. The students will remember this activity and you can easily refer back to it when teaching about the Revolution. Find it here:
<http://www.huntington.org/uploadedfiles/files/pdfs/lhthtriangulartrade.pdf>

Works Cited

- Alchin, Linda. "Rhode Island Colony." *Land of the Brave*. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 May 2014.
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