**1. The Mayflower Voyage (1620):**

* The Pilgrims, a group of English Separatists seeking religious freedom, sailed aboard the **Mayflower**.
* They landed at **Cape Cod** in November 1620 after a challenging 66-day voyage.

**2. The Mayflower Compact:**

* Before disembarking, the Pilgrims drafted and signed the **Mayflower Compact**, a social contract establishing self-governance and rule by majority.

**3. First Winter (1620-1621):**

* The settlers faced harsh conditions, lack of food, and disease. Almost **half of the 102 passengers** perished during the first winter.

**4. Native American Assistance:**

* In spring 1621, the Pilgrims formed an alliance with the **Wampanoag Confederacy**, led by Chief **Massasoit**.
* **Squanto**, a Native American who spoke English, taught the Pilgrims crucial survival skills, such as planting corn and fishing.

**5. First Thanksgiving (1621):**

* After a successful harvest, the Pilgrims celebrated a three-day feast with the Wampanoag, now recognized as the **First Thanksgiving**.

**6. Growth and Challenges:**

* Over time, Plymouth grew as more settlers arrived, but challenges persisted, including difficult winters and economic struggles.
* The colony remained small compared to others like the Massachusetts Bay Colony, founded later in 1630.

**7. Plymouth's Legacy:**

* Plymouth Colony eventually merged with the Massachusetts Bay Colony in **1691**, but its principles of self-governance and religious freedom influenced later American ideals.