

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Mayflower Compact

*The Mayflower Compact was a document written and signed by the Pilgrims as they arrived in the New World in 1620. The group had originally planned to go to the Hudson River area, which was part of the Virginia Colony. Bad weather, however, put them farther north, near the coast of Massachusetts. Since they had did not have permission to start a colony in Massachusetts, and therefore had no governing laws, the Pilgrims decided to set up their own society and rules while they waited for permission from England. The document is named for the Pilgrims' ship, the Mayflower. The original document has been lost. Below is the text as written by William Bradford, one of the signers, in 1646.*



A 1930 painting of the signing of the Mayflower Compact.

In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France, and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, etc.

Having undertaken for the Glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith and Honour of our King and Country, a Voyage to plant the First Colony in the Northern Parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, Covenant and Combine ourselves together in a Civil Body Politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod, the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, in the year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King James, of England, France and Ireland the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini 1620.

## Understanding the Context

Answer the following questions.

Based on the context of the passage, what does “Covenant and Combine ourselves together in a Civil Body Politic” mean?

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The passage refers to laws being passed “as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good.” What does “general good” mean?

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## Understanding the Context

Answer the following questions.

**Actual wording of answers will vary.**

Based on the context of the passage, what does “Covenant and Combine ourselves together in a Civil Body Politic” mean?

**It means they are joining together to create their own government.**

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The passage refers to laws being passed “as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good.” What does “general good” mean?

**It means the laws should be fair for all the residents.**

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