

Regulating Trade

As you have read, under the theory of mercantilism, colonies existed in order to serve the economic needs of their parent country. They were a source of raw materials and a place to sell the home country's goods.

In 1651, the English Parliament passed the first of several Navigation Acts to support mercantilism. By these laws: (1) Shipments from Europe to English colonies had to go through England first. (2) Any imports to England from the colonies had to come in ships built and owned by British subjects. (3) The colonies could sell key products, such as tobacco and sugar, only to England. This helped create jobs for English workers.

In many ways, the Navigation Acts benefited the colonies. Colonial traders had a sure market for their goods in England. Also, the law contributed to a booming shipbuilding industry in New England.

Still, as colonial trade expanded, many colonists came to resent the Navigation Acts. In their view, the laws favored English merchants. Colonists felt that they could make more money if they were free to sell to foreign markets themselves. Some colonists got around the Navigation Acts by smuggling—that is, by importing and exporting goods illegally.



A Boston merchant counts up the profits from shipping.

Checkpoint Why did many colonists resent the Navigation Acts?

★ Looking Back and Ahead As the 13 colonies grew, colonists established lawmaking bodies and developed the economy. In the early days, England's monarchy and Parliament influenced the decisions the colonies made. Yet, the colonies were far from England, and colonists were developing their own ideas. In the next section, you will look at the structure of colonial society.

Section 1 | Check Your Progress

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Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- (a) Identify** What political rights had England's citizens won by 1688?

(b) Apply Information Why do you think those living in the 13 colonies believed they were entitled to those rights?
- (a) Recall** What were the Navigation Acts?

(b) Identify Economic Costs and Benefits How did the Navigation Acts affect the colonial economy?

Reading Skill

3. Use Word Clues to Analyze

Meaning Use its part of speech to help you analyze the meaning of *boomed* in this sentence: As a result of a law that allowed colonists to build their own ships, the shipbuilding industry in New England *boomed*.

Key Terms

Complete each of the following sentences so that the second part further explains the first part and clearly shows your understanding of the key term.

- Based on English traditions, colonial legislatures _____.
- The English Bill of Rights protected the rights of individuals, including *habeas corpus*, _____.
- John Peter Zenger was accused of libel, _____.

Writing

- List at least two examples from colonial society to support this main idea: English colonists believed they should have the same freedoms as English citizens.