In this activity, you will learn about the passengers of the *Mayflower* and why many of the men onboard signed an historic agreement called the *Mayflower Compact*.

***Before You Watch***

* *Discuss with a partner*:

1. Have you ever had to spend time with people you didn’t choose to be with? How did it go? Did you adjust your plans to make the experience more pleasant?
2. Imagine you could leave where you’re living and start a new community with some other people.
   1. Why might you want to do that?
   2. How would you select which people you’d want to start your community with?
   3. Write a list of what you would need to set up the community.
   4. What kinds of rules or government would you want to have there?

* *Look for answers to these questions when you watch the video:*

1. Describe the types of people onboard the *Mayflower*. What were their reasons for making the journey? Why might they have had different interests?
2. What were the most important elements of the *Mayflower Compact*?
3. Did sailors sign the Mayflower Compact? Did women sign it? Why or why not?

***While You Watch***

1. Before you play the video, review the highlighted words and phrases below. Write your own definitions where space is provided.
2. **Watch the video** once all the way through and listen for the highlighted words and phrases. Next, read the transcript below and revise your definitions if the video gave you a new understanding. Watch the video again as needed.
3. Circle words and/or sections of the transcript that you do not understand.

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| **Title Card:** Much of what we know about the *Mayflower*'s voyage and the *Mayflower Compact* comes from William Bradford's book, *Of Plymouth Plantation.* |
| **compact:** |
| **NARRATOR:**Summer was fading fast, and the window for attempting the long and dangerous ocean crossing had already started to close—when on September 6th, 1620, an aging 180-tun ship called the *Mayflower* set out on her own across the North Atlantic—on what would prove to be one of the most historic voyages of the millennium. |
| **tun:** A large cask with a capacity of 256 gallons. Mariners and merchants of that era described the size of a ship by how many tuns (or equivalent volume) of goods she could carry. |
| **Nick Bunker, Author, *Making Haste From Babylon*:**  They weren’t the people that you would expect to be founding a new colony... at least half of them were Separatists—radical Protestants, who were religious exiles who had been living in Leiden in the Dutch Republic. |
| **colony:**  **Separatists:** The core members of the Pilgrims' immigrant group were Separatists, members of a Puritan sect that had split from the Church of England, the only legal church in England at that time.  **Leiden:**  Take a moment to locate Leiden, the Netherlands on a world map. |
| **NARRATOR:** Under-supplied and overcrowded, and with the “Strangers” the investors had insisted go with them – the *Mayflower* left Plymouth harbor off the south coast of England. |
| **Plymouth harbor:**  Take a moment to locate Plymouth harbor, England, on a world map. |
| **NARRATOR:** William Bradford remembered her finally setting forth under a “prosperous wind.” |
| **BRADFORD [Voice of Actor]:   “**And so they left ... but they knew they were pilgrims, and looked not much on those things, but lift up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country...” |
| **pilgrims:** |
| **Nick Bunker, Author, *Making Haste From Babylon*:** If you wanted to go to America, to Virginia or New England, you should try to leave in February or March, at the latest, so you could get there in the spring – and give yourself a full spring and summer to become accustomed to the new world and to do all the things you had to do before the winter set in. In fact, of course, they ended up leaving in September—which was about as bad as it could be. |
| **New England:** Take a moment to locate New England, U.S., on a world map. |
| **NARRATOR:** Early on the morning of Thursday, November 9th,  1620 – after more than two months at sea –  a crew member spied a line of high bluffs. It was the first land they had seen in sixty-five days. |
| **bluffs:** |
| **NARRATOR:** But even before they dropped anchor, long festering tensions between the Strangers and the Pilgrims broke out into the open. |
| **NARRATOR:**   Many of the Strangers began to speak openly of splintering off and going their own way, once they came ashore. |
| **BRADFORD [Voice of Actor]: “**This day—before we came to harbor—observing some not well affected to unity and concord, but gave some appearance of faction, that we should combine together in one body, and submit to such government and governors—as we should by common consent agree to make and choose—and set our hands to this that follows word for word.” |
| **“unity and concord”:**    **faction:**  **“by common consent agree”:** |
| **NARRATOR:** On the morning of November 11th, 1620, the Mayflower compact was offered up for signature. The vast majority of the men on aboard put their names to the paper, stating that they agreed to combine themselves “together into a civil body politic,” with the power to enact whatever laws proved necessary to preserve the group. |
| **“civil body politic”:** |
| **NARRATOR:** Years later—when William Bradford and others codified the rules of Plymouth Colony in a new Book of Laws—on the very first page they described the Compact as “a solemne & binding combination”—whose authority came from the fact that it was based upon the vote of the governed.  END OF TRANSCRIPT |

***After You Watch***

1. If your class drafted a compact, or agreement, what would be its purpose and its most important elements?
2. If the passengers on the *Mayflower* had broken apart into their factions, do you think they could have survived?
3. Not everyone aboard the *Mayflower* could read and write. How might that have affected their understanding of the document they were being asked to sign?
4. What was the key provision of the *Mayflower Compact*? Why were people aboard the *Mayflower* willing to sign it? Why do you think it was important for advancing the ideas of democracy? Who benefited from the compact and who did not? *(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space.)*

***Vocabulary Terms and Definitions***

The following are definitions for terms and phrases that appear in the While You Watch Student Handout, including a list of geographic locations that are referenced in the video.

* **Compact:** An agreement, treaty, or contract
* **Mayflower Compact:** This 1620 agreement (first called the *Mayflower Compact* in 1793) was a legal document that bound the Pilgrims together when they arrived in New England. When the Pilgrims left England, they obtained permission from the King of England to settle on land further to the south than their landing site in New England. They were meant to land near the mouth of the Hudson River (in present-day New York).  Because they chose to remain where they landed in New England, they needed a new permission (called a patent) to settle there. On November 11, 1620, needing to maintain order and establish a civil society while they waited for this new patent, the male passengers signed the *Mayflower Compact*.
* **tun:** A large cask with a capacity of 256 gallons. Mariners and merchants of that era described the size of a ship by how many tuns (or equivalent volume) of goods she could carry.
* **colony:** a country or area under the full or partial political control of another country, typically a distant one, and occupied by settlers from that country
* **Separatist:**  The core members of the Pilgrims' immigrant group were Separatists, members of a Puritan sect that had split from the Church of England, the only legal church in England at that time.
* **pilgrims:** Governor William Bradford used “pilgrim” in the general sense of a traveller, or someone on a religious quest, but around 1800, the name came to be associated with the Plymouth colonists. The term “pilgrim” is imprecise since it has been used to refer to all the Plymouth colonists generally, Mayflower passengers specifically, or only to the Separatists.
* **bluffs:** a steep shoreline

***Vocabulary Terms and Definitions (continued)***

* **Strangers:** The Separatists were joined on their journey to North America by other English colonists who did not belong to their congregation. These colonists still belonged to the Church of England, although some were Puritans. Governor William Bradford called these people “strangers” in his writings, but the word was not likely used as a title. In fact, the word meant the same then as now - someone you don’t know.
* **“..unity and concord…”:** a state in which people or things agree with each other and exist together in a peaceful way
* **faction:** a small, organized, dissenting group within a larger one
* **“...by common consent agree…”**: synonym - consensus; with the agreement of all
* **a civil body politic:** a group of persons politically organized under a single governmental authority

*The following are geographic locations referenced in the video. Take a moment to locate these on a world map.*

* **Leiden, the Netherlands**
* **Plymouth harbour, south coast of England**
* **New England, U.S.**