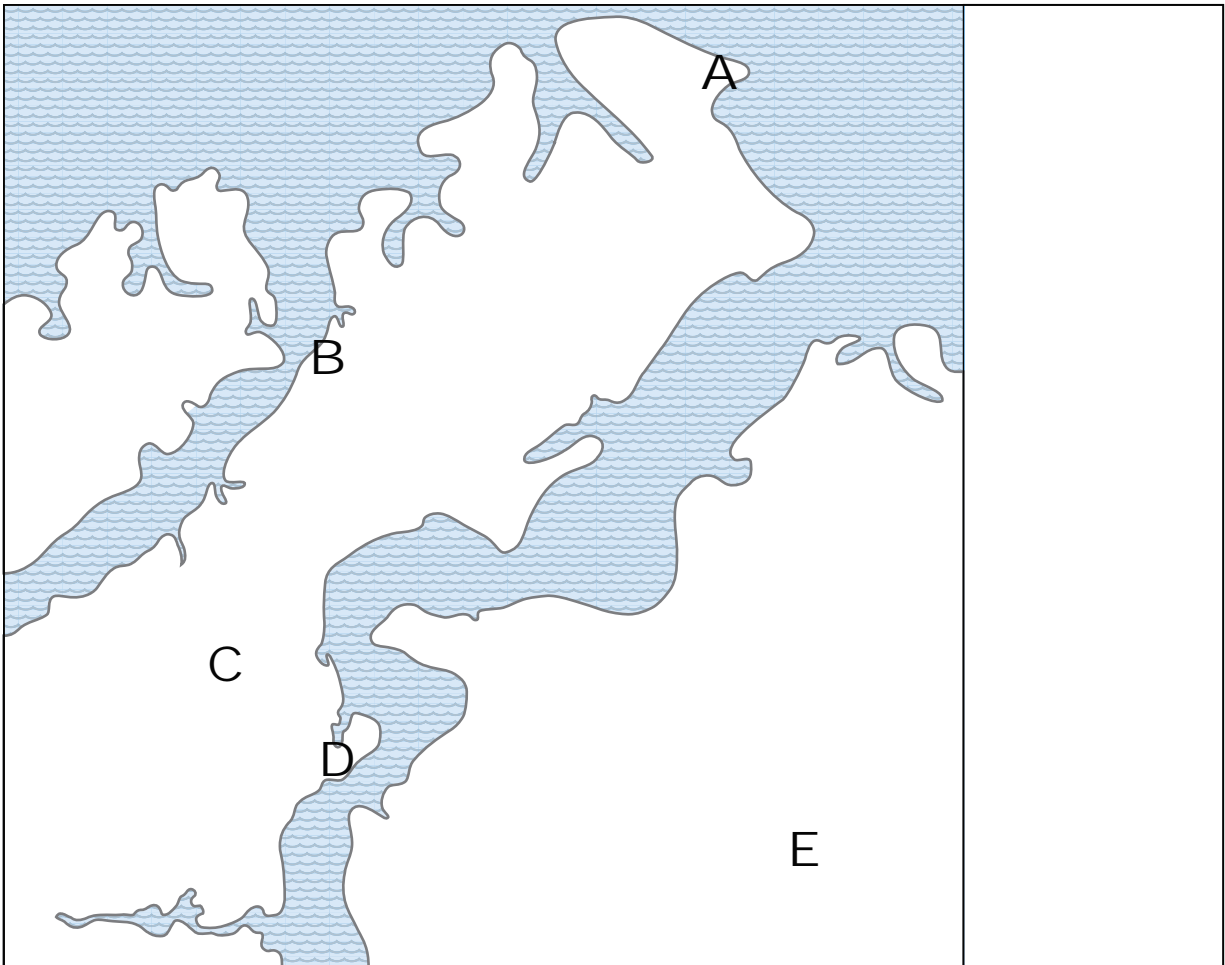
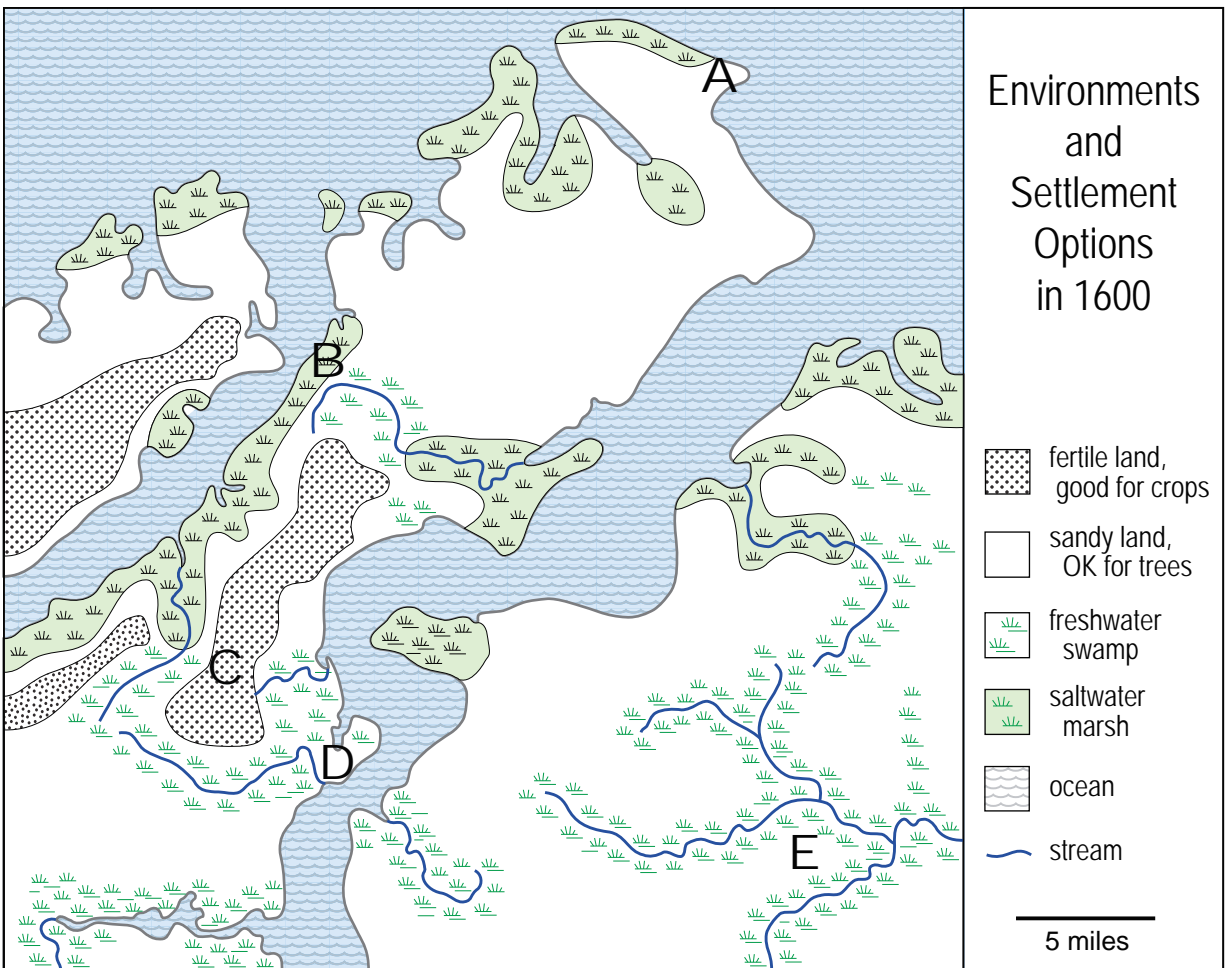


## Conditions and Connections for a Colonial Settlement



1. Which location has the best conditions for a settlement in 1600? Circle: A B C D E  
Then, briefly explain why you think that site would be good.
2. Which location has the worst conditions for a settlement in 1600? Circle: A B C D E  
Then, briefly explain why you think that site would be bad.
3. Which location has the best connections for a settlement in 1600? Circle: A B C D E  
Then, briefly explain why you think that situation would be good.
4. Which location has the worst connections for a settlement in 1600? Circle: A B C D E  
Then, briefly explain why you think that situation would be bad.
5. Put the ideas of conditions and connections together. Write a speech or design a poster to recommend one location for a settlement in 1600, and explain why that place is best.

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## United States Geography Activity

# Conditions and Connections

### Background

You and about 70 other people have spent the last month on a ship sailing toward a new home across the ocean. During that long voyage, you often talked about what kind of town you want to build and where it should be located.

Traders and scouts have given you a map that identifies five possible locations for a town. Your job is to analyze the map and make a recommendation about which place to choose.

### Conditions and Connections (Site and Situation)

Before you start trying to pick a location for your town, it might be worthwhile to think about the concept of location. This simple-sounding idea really has two parts:

**Site** - the conditions right there, in the place you are studying.

(For example, place A would have a dry landing sheltered from strong NW winds.)

**Situation** - the connections between your place and other places.

(For example, place A would be nearly 15 miles away from good cropland.)

The ability to judge geographic conditions and connections from maps is a useful skill.

It is valuable for business decision-makers, and it can also help people decide where they would like to live, work, or travel.

In evaluating places, you also have to remember that what makes a site or situation valuable depends partly on the culture of the people in a region. Here are three examples:

- 1) A rock that is rich in iron ore is a geographic condition, but it is valuable only if people have the technology to use iron. If they don't, iron ore is basically worthless.
- 2) A flood-prone field is useful for farming only if people know how to grow crops (such as rice) that tolerate flooding, or if they know how to build protective levees or drains.
- 3) A great natural harbor has little value for people who produce something that is small and light and therefore does not cost much to transport (e.g., diamond rings).

In short, every place on earth has a particular set of conditions and connections, but their value depends on the culture of the people who live there. In doing this activity, therefore, you have to put yourself into the time of the people moving to a new land in the early 1600s.

## Teacher's Notes – Conditions and Connections near Jamestowne

**Big idea:** Choosing a location for something – a house, city, factory, amusement park, etc. – usually involves thinking about two aspects of location: local conditions and broader connections. Indeed, it is almost a universal law that a location is likely to prove unsatisfactory if the choice is made solely on the basis of either local conditions or geographic connections, without regard for the other “blade” of the scissors (see bottom of page). GLCEs: 6G123, 6G322, 6G432

### Secondary objectives:

- to learn about the requirements for a colonial settlement in the early 1600s
- to practice some skills of extracting specific information from general reference maps

**Possible setup information:** Imagine you are on a ship going to a new land, a long time ago, before telephones, electricity, or cars. What kind of place would you choose for your settlement? We will try to choose a good location by discussing a map that shows some possible choices.

**Possible additional or alternative setup:** Ask about the location of a familiar town or fort – why was it put in that particular location? Perhaps it was put near a favorable millsite, or a convenient river crossing, or a valuable mineral deposit. If people were locating the town today, would they put it in the same place? (The choice of location is, in one sense, the most important question in applied geography. In this discussion, you should accept any reasonable answer, but be aware that choosing locations is an occupation that employs thousands of highly-trained analysts and well-paid consultants – there is a reason for the high salaries, because the job is not always easy!)

**Vocabulary:** conditions connections cropland defense port swamp water supply

**Procedure:** The worksheet is the core of the activity. Like other activities in this book, this can be done as an individual worksheet, small-group activity, whole-class discussion (with or without a computer projector), or takehome project.

**Answers** – accept any reasonable statement, but focus on whether students can support their statements with direct references to information obtained from the map:

- Place C has good conditions for living – fertile soil, access to fresh water, non-swampy
- Places D and E also have some good conditions – dry land, access to fresh water
- Places A and B have serious local problems – saltwater swamp, infertile soil
- Place E is protected on three sides, but is far from shore
- Places A, B, and D have potential links to other places by boat, C and E do not
- Place A is vulnerable to ocean storms; B and D are somewhat sheltered, C and E more so
- Place D is well protected from land attack; A is far away but vulnerable when approached
- Place D has good connections – sheltered harbor, river access, easy to defend

**“Aha” moment:** Turn the map 90 degrees, so that the top becomes the right side. The map now shows the area around the James River in Virginia – D is Jamestown, the first settlement; E is the site of a Native American village at the time; A is where a dissident group moved when they left the main settlement; C is the site of Williamsburg, established after the threat of Indian attack diminished and the colony needed better cropland to support an expanding population.

**Extensions, supplements, and GIS applications:** The Europe unit has a similar activity, but it “releases” information gradually, rather than in a single map, to show how opinions can change as we gain information. The SW Asia unit has a similar activity keyed to Historic Eras.

One possible extension is to do a similar activity for a local town, fort, or building. Provide maps that show specific conditions at various places, as well as connections to other places.

Another extension is to examine the locations of well-known places in terms of conditions and connections – e.g. New Orleans has superb connections at a continental scale, near the mouth of the largest river system on the continent, but local conditions are certainly questionable!