

# Virginia: Jamestown and Its People

The feature article that precedes this lesson plan provides an introduction to the state of Virginia. Virginia has many historical sites, including Jamestown, the first permanent settlement in the United States. This lesson plan is divided into two parts and uses Jamestown and several of its famous residents as the basis for classroom activities. Depending on the time available, you can choose to do either Part I or Part II, or both. Within each part, you can also choose which activities to include. The activities in both parts can also be completed over several lessons.

## Part I: Jamestown

The activities in Part I are about the settlement of Jamestown. While you do not need to use all of the activities, they will work best if they are done in the order in which they are given. Activity 1 provides important background information. If you choose not to do Activity 1 with your class, you will need to give students a brief summary of the passage called “Jamestown Settlement” so that they can complete the subsequent activities. These activities are aimed at intermediate-level learners; however, Activity 2 can also be used at beginning levels.

**Purpose:** Students will become familiar with the settlement of Jamestown, and will practice describing objects (artifacts) and their use.

**Goals:** Students will be able to categorize, describe, interpret, and present artifacts, using descriptive vocabulary and WH- questions. Students will also practice giving explanations, expressing opinions, and hypothesizing.

**Materials:** “Jamestown Settlement” passage (below), several examples of familiar objects (e.g., coins, buttons, bottles) and unfamiliar objects (obsolete tools, etc.). Pictures of the objects can also be used.

### Activity 1: A Short History of Jamestown (35 minutes)

**Goals:** To listen for general information; to activate background knowledge

1. Before reading the passage to the students, ask them to identify and tell what they know about the first *settlement* (or first area settled) in their country. Ask them if they have seen *artifacts*—objects made and used a long time ago—from their country’s past and what the artifacts were. Tell them they are going to listen to a short history of the first settlement in the United States, called Jamestown. If possible, point out the locations of Virginia and Jamestown on a map.
2. Tell students that you will read a passage about Jamestown. Ask students to try to write down the important dates and events as you read the passage. Read the passage called “Jamestown Settlement” to the students. Then ask students to share the dates and events they have written down.
3. Write the following statements on the board (or, if possible, have this already written on the board, or on paper, but do not show it to the students before they have heard the passage for the first time):
  - (1) The King of France gave a group of merchants permission to establish a new settlement in North America.
  - (2) These merchants landed on the East Coast of the United States near Florida.
  - (3) The settlers had a very difficult life.
  - (4) Jamestown is still the capital of Virginia.
  - (5) Over the years, the buildings in Jamestown disappeared.
  - (6) Only a few objects have been found where Jamestown was located.

Ask students to write the numbers 1–6 on a piece of paper. Tell students you will read the story again, and that they should write *true* or *false* for each statement.

4. Read the story again. Go over the answers with students. If a statement is false, ask how it can be made true. [Answers: 1. F; 2. F; 3. T; 4. F; 5. T; 6. F]
5. Read the passage a third time, if necessary, and discuss any questions the students still have.

## Jamestown Settlement

In 1606, King James of England gave a group of merchants permission to establish a new settlement in North America. Approximately 100 men and boys sent by the Virginia Company set sail for their destination. They landed on a little peninsula on the east coast of what is now Virginia on May 14, 1607. They named the settlement Jamestown in honor of the King and built a fort, James Fort, soon after. This was the first permanent English settlement in the New World.

That first year the settlers faced starvation, a freezing winter, and fighting among themselves and with Indians living in the area. Many settlers died. The settlement survived, though, and over the years it became the place where tobacco, representative government, and slavery were first introduced. However, more disasters, such as fires and attacks by neighboring peoples, forced the people of Virginia to move their capital from Jamestown to Williamsburg in 1699.

Jamestown fell into ruins. People believed that the ocean tides had changed the peninsula and washed away much of the settlement, including the fort. But discoveries in the 1990s show that this was not true. Archaeologists—scientists who dig up and study objects people used a long time ago—have been working at the site that once was Jamestown. Since 1994, they have excavated about half a million artifacts that tell us a lot about the people who lived there.

### Activity 2: Categorizing and Describing Artifacts (45–60 minutes)

**Goals:** To build descriptive vocabulary; to describe objects in detail

**Preparation:** Bring several common small objects to class—for example, a coin, an earring, and a bottle. You will need one object for each group of students.

1. Tell students that archaeologists excavate many different kinds of objects, including animal and human remains. Archaeologists must describe and interpret all of these artifacts.
2. Write these words on the board: *jug, key, file, toy, bowl, axe, pot, pipe, bullet bag, whistle, dice, compass, coins, candlestick, fish bones.*

Tell students that these are some of the artifacts found at Jamestown. If possible, clarify the meaning of any unknown object with a quick drawing.

3. Write these categories on the board in columns: *Household, Work, Play.*
4. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Ask students to discuss and decide which category each object listed on the board belongs in.
5. When most groups have finished, discuss their categorizations. Write the words in the appropriate columns. (You may find that students put some objects in more than one category. In this case, ask them to explain their reasons for doing so.)
6. Tell students that categorizing an object is a first step toward describing it. Once that is done, they should think about what the object looks like. To help them do this, review descriptive adjectives as needed. Write these categories on the board: *shape, size, color, texture, material, decoration* as titles for six columns as in the chart below.

Ask students to brainstorm words for each category to complete the chart. Add other useful vocabulary.

Example:

Shape	Size	Color	Texture	Material	Decoration
square rectangular round oval triangular diamond- shaped star-shaped	big small medium- sized long short thick thin _____ cm	black brown white red blue yellow green orange pink purple beige _____ish	smooth rough bumpy scratchy	wood metal ceramic plastic	stripes dots scenery figures

- Give each group one of the objects you brought to class. Assign one student in each group to take notes. Tell students that, like archaeologists, they should think of as many descriptive words as possible for the object. Explain that the first student holding the object will say a word to describe it and then will pass the object to the next student. Students will continue passing the object and compiling their description for as long as possible, approximately five minutes. The note taker will write down all the words that students use to describe the object.
- Have groups show their classmates their object and report their list of descriptive words. Encourage discussion as to the accuracy and completeness of the descriptions.

### Activity 3: Interpreting Artifacts (30 minutes)

**Goals:** To practice answering WH- questions; to describe objects; to make conjectures

**Preparation:** Bring several objects (preferable), or pictures of objects, that are not immediately familiar to your students, for example: a specialized tool used in a particular profession, a tool used to make a craft, an unusual cooking utensil, or an obsolete piece of technology. If Internet access is available, pictures of Jamestown artifacts can be found at: [www.virtualjamestown.org/images/artifacts/jamestown.html](http://www.virtualjamestown.org/images/artifacts/jamestown.html)

- Write the following questions on the board:
  - What does it look like?
  - What is it made of?
  - How would you describe it?
  - Who used this object?
  - When did they use it?
  - What did they use it for?
  - What does this object tell you about the people and society that used it?

Tell students that, like archaeologists, they will describe and interpret an artifact using the questions as a guide. Tell them that if they do not know the answer to a question, they should make an educated guess. Encourage students to use phrases such as “I think...” and “I suppose...” if they are not sure of the answer to a question.

- Divide the class into groups. Give each group an artifact or picture of an artifact. Ask groups to discuss the questions and reach agreement on their answers.
- Depending on the size of the class, either ask groups to share their descriptions and interpretations with the class, or ask each group to join another and share.

### Activity 4: Presenting Artifacts (30 minutes)

**Goals:** To express opinions; to give explanations

- Tell students this scenario:

You have been awarded a scholarship to the University of Virginia. As a scholarship recipient, you are expected to visit schools in Virginia to tell the students about your country. You are asked to bring a large box of objects that represent your country/culture. Part of your presentation to the students will involve showing them each object and asking them to guess what it is (if it is not obvious), what it is used for, and why they think it represents your country/culture. What would you pack in the box?

2. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Tell students they should make a list of items they think should be in the box. Students should describe each item using the adjectives from Activity 2. Students should also be ready to explain why they would include these items.
3. If you have a large class, ask each group to join another and share their lists. With smaller classes, each group can share their list with the whole class. Lead groups in building consensus on the list of items to include in the box.

## Optional Online Activities

For teachers and/or students who have Internet access, the two websites listed below provide additional information and activities related to the excavation process at Jamestown.

- a. Jamestown Settlement Discovered – VOA Story: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSsKMy5ZTqk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSsKMy5ZTqk)

This three-minute video reports on the archaeological excavation at Jamestown. It includes commentary by William Kelso, the Director of Archaeology at Historic Jamestown. When using this video with students, you may want to preview the following words: *unearth, buried, river erosion, scrape, layers, a well, a time capsule, a curator, examine, catalog, analyze, a shard, pottery, put into context, porcelain, a mouthpiece, perspective.*

- b. Historic Jamestown Interactive Exercises: [http://historicjamestowne.org/learn/interactive\\_exercises.php](http://historicjamestowne.org/learn/interactive_exercises.php)

This site has two interactive archaeology modules that help students better understand how excavations are done. One module is on artifacts, and the other is on buildings. The artifacts module is less advanced than the buildings module.

## Part II: The People of Jamestown

The activities in Part II focus on some of the people who lived in Jamestown. While you do not need to use all of the activities, they will work best if they are done in the order in which they are given. Activity 1 provides important background information, so if you choose not to do Activity 1 with your class, you should give them a brief summary of the information so that they can complete the subsequent activities. In particular, Activities 3 and 4 require an understanding of the information in Activity 1. These activities are aimed at intermediate-level learners; however, Activity 2 can also be used at beginning levels.

**Purpose:** Students will become familiar with historical figures who lived in Jamestown, will practice creating and describing nicknames, and will identify and describe the consequences of different actions.

**Goals:** Students will be able to create descriptive nicknames and describe the consequences of different actions, using adjectives that describe personality and modal verbs. Students will also practice retelling a story and empathizing with characters in the story.

**Materials:** “The Life of Pocahontas” passage (below)

### Activity 1: The Story of Pocahontas (60 minutes)

**Goals:** To listen for general information; to practice note taking; to retell a story

1. If you have not done Part I, Activity 1, begin by giving students a summary of the historical information about Jamestown.
2. Tell students that three people’s names are most often connected with Jamestown: *Captain John Smith, Pocahontas* [Poh-kuh-**hon**-tuhs], and *John Rolfe*.

Write those three names and the following on the board: *Algonquin* [Al-**gong**-kwin], *Chief Powhatan* [Pou-hat-n], *Matoaka* [Mah-**toh**-khah], *Jamestown*, and *Thomas*.

Ask students if they have heard these names, or if they know anything about these people. Tell students that John Smith and John Rolfe were Englishmen, while Pocahontas was an American Indian. Tell the students that:

- Algonquin is the name of a group of Indian tribes;
- Chief Powhatan was Pocahontas's father;
- Matoaka was Pocahontas's given name; and
- Thomas was the name of her son.

Students will hear these names in the story of Pocahontas. Ask students to write down information that they hear about these names as you read the passage. (For lower-level students, write one or two words from each sentence on the board to help them follow and recall the story.) Then tell or read "The Life of Pocahontas."

## The Life of Pocahontas

- (1) Pocahontas was the daughter of the Algonquin Indian Chief Powhatan. She was probably born in 1595. Her name was Matoaka, but she was often called by her nickname, Pocahontas. This nickname meant "playful one." Her people lived in the area where the English established Jamestown, the first permanent settlement in the United States.
- (2) One of the leaders of the English settlers was Captain John Smith. One day while traveling outside of the settlement, Captain John Smith was captured and taken to Chief Powhatan. Chief Powhatan wanted to kill him, but young Pocahontas rushed over to him and asked her father not to do so. It is possible that her action saved Captain Smith.
- (3) After that, Pocahontas visited Jamestown often. She sometimes brought food to the settlers who did not have enough to eat. She became good friends with Captain Smith. When Pocahontas was about fourteen, Captain Smith was injured and returned to England. For about three years, no one saw Pocahontas in Jamestown.
- (4) During that time, fighting between the settlers and the Indians started. In 1613, the Indians captured several settlers and supplies, and the settlers captured Pocahontas. The settlers told Pocahontas' father, Chief Powhatan, that they would not let her go until he returned the English prisoners and supplies. Chief Powhatan did not return all the supplies, so negotiations stopped and the English did not let Pocahontas go. After that Pocahontas lived comfortably with the settlers, and eventually she and the English settler John Rolfe fell in love. They were married in 1614 and had a son, Thomas.
- (5) In 1616, John Rolfe, Pocahontas, and their young son went to London with a group of settlers. The purpose of their trip was to ask for more money for the settlements. Pocahontas was welcomed as a princess because she was the daughter of an Indian chief. In London, she saw her old friend, John Smith, again.
- (6) On the trip back to Virginia in 1617, Pocahontas became very sick. She died on the ship. She was twenty-two years old. Pocahontas will always be associated with the first permanent settlement in the United States.

3. On the board, draw six boxes representing the six parts of the story. Make the boxes big enough to include details of the story. Ask students to retell as much of the story as they can. Write their sentences, phrases, and words in the appropriate boxes. Leave spaces in the appropriate places for missing information. When students have retold as much of the story as they can, discuss any necessary grammar changes.
4. Ask students to copy in their notebooks what is on the board (boxes and parts of the story), leaving the same spaces for missing information.
5. Tell students to look at their notes and listen as you tell the story again. They should listen for information that is missing from their notes and try to write it down.
6. Ask students to tell the story again so that you can fill in more information on the board.
7. Tell the story a final time. Ask students to listen for any other missing information and write it down.
8. Ask students to retell the story to a partner. When they finish, they should decide who has the most complete version.

### Activity 2: Giving Nicknames (30–45 minutes)

**Goals:** To make associations; to use imagination; to get to know classmates better

1. If you did Activity 1 from Part II, elicit from students what the nickname *Pocahontas* meant. If necessary, remind students that the meaning is "the playful one." Tell students that this nickname was probably

given to her by her parents or friends because it reflected her personality.

2. Review adjectives that describe personality, for example: *helpful, patient, energetic, talkative*. One way to do this is by listing on the board all the adjectives students call out. Add some new ones to the list. Avoid negative adjectives for this activity.
3. Give students slips of paper. Ask them to write two adjectives that describe themselves and to list their hobby or favorite pastime, for example: *happy, friendly, playing soccer*. Tell students not to put their names on the slips of paper.
4. Depending on the size of the class, either read each slip to the whole class or divide the class into groups of five and assign group leaders to read each slip in their groups. After each slip is read, ask students to suggest a possible nickname for the writer—for example, *smiling goalie* for someone who wrote *happy, friendly, playing soccer*.
5. Then write the questions below on the board. Ask groups to discuss them.
  - Would you like to tell the group which nickname you were given today?
  - If so, what do you think about this nickname? Is it a good name for you?
  - Did you think someone else's nickname was good for them? Why?
  - Do you already have a nickname?
  - If so, would you like to tell the group what it is and how you got that nickname?

### Activity 3: Writing a Diary (60 minutes)

**Goals:** To practice informal writing; to ask and answer questions; to use imagination; to empathize

**Preparation:** Write the following journal topics on the board:

- **Write about your Indian village.** What are the houses made of? What do they look like? What other buildings are in the village? What kind of clothes do people wear? What kind of food do they eat? What do the men do during the day? What do the women do? What do people do for fun? What do you like about your village?
  - **Write about your first meeting with Captain John Smith.** What did he look like? What was he wearing? What did he say? How did he talk? Did he talk to you? What kind of person did you think he was?
  - **Write about your life in Jamestown.** What do you do on weekdays? What do you do on weekends? Do you miss your village? How are the settlers in Jamestown similar to or different from the people in your village? Have you had any cross-cultural misunderstandings?
  - **Write about your trip to the big faraway city of London.** What was it like to travel so far by ship? Did you miss your family? How did you feel in the crowded city? What did you see there? What did you eat? Did you like London?
1. Tell students to choose one of the topics. Ask them to put themselves in Pocahontas's place and to write a journal entry about the chosen topic from her point of view. Tell students that the questions are intended to help them get ideas. This activity can also be done in groups: assign students to groups and have them work together to write a journal entry about one of the topics. (You can also assign the topics to individual students or groups to ensure that students don't all write about the same topic.)
  2. When students have finished writing, ask them to exchange their journal entries with a partner. Tell students to read their partner's journal entry and to write several questions and/or comments, such as requests for clarification or more information, at the end of the entry. If the activity is done in groups, ask groups to exchange their journal entries.
  3. Have students return the journals to their owners. Ask students to respond to the questions and comments they received about what they wrote.
  4. Ask students to exchange journals again. This time, they should write a final comment, telling their overall impression of the entry, and return the journal.
  5. Collect the journal entries and the follow-up written dialogue. Add your comments.

### Activity 4: Being a Friend (50 minutes)

**Goals:** To describe personal qualities; to empathize; to look at consequences; to practice using modals

1. Tell students that stories written about Pocahontas say that she was a friend to the settlers in Jamestown. For example, she brought food to the settlers when they were starving, and she delivered messages from her people to the settlers.

2. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Ask groups to brainstorm and write down qualities that they associate with friendship. If you have done Activity 2: Giving Nicknames, remind students of the adjectives they listed to describe students' personalities.
3. Depending on the size of the class, either ask students to share their ideas and make a class list on the board, or ask each group to join another and share ideas. Add your own. Some possibilities are: A friend... *is loyal, is honest, can keep a secret, is there when you need him or her, tells you the truth even if it's not what you want to hear, understands you, respects you.*
4. Write the following example situation and questions on the board. Have students answer the questions based on the text, "The Life of Pocahontas."

**Situation:** Pocahontas saw that the settlers were starving.

- a. What did she do?  
*She \_\_\_\_\_.*
  - b. What quality (or qualities) did her actions reveal about her personality?  
*Her actions showed that she was \_\_\_\_\_.*
5. Remind students that we have choices about how we react to situations and that those choices can result in very different outcomes. Write the following questions on the board:
    - a. What could she have done?  
*She could have \_\_\_\_\_.*  
*She could also have \_\_\_\_\_.*  
*Or she could have \_\_\_\_\_.*
    - b. What would be the result of each possible action?  
*If she had \_\_\_\_\_, the settlers might have \_\_\_\_\_.*
    - c. What quality (or qualities) would each possible action show?  
*Her actions would show that she was \_\_\_\_\_.*

Ask students to think of different possible answers to the questions, based on the Pocahontas situation. Then have students compare their answers. Emphasize all the different possibilities and outcomes. Be prepared to help students use modal verbs correctly in their answers.

6. Now dictate the following situations, or write them on the board.
  - My sister's good friend had a party but didn't invite my sister.
  - A student lent money to his friend, but the friend never paid back the money.
  - Elena heard classmates telling lies about another classmate.
7. Ask students to discuss these situations using the questions in item #5 above. (Students will be answering questions 5a, 5b, and 5c.) Remind students that they can react to the situations in a variety of ways.
8. Invite students to share some of their answers to the questions.

### Optional Extension Activity (30 minutes)

1. Ask students to think about situations in school, at home, in their community, and in their country where the qualities of a friend could change the result of the situation. Ask groups to discuss and then write down one situation. They should give enough description/details to make the situation clear. (It may be more effective not to have the names of group members on the paper. Give each group a number instead.) While students are discussing and writing, circulate to make sure each group has chosen a different situation.
2. Collect the situations when groups have finished. Mix up the papers and give one to each group. Be sure that groups do not receive the situation they created. Ask them to write three questions about the situation using the questions in Step 5 of the previous activity as examples.
3. Collect the situations with questions when groups have finished. Mix up the papers and give one to each group. Be sure groups do not receive their own. Ask students to discuss the situations and answer the questions. Each group should summarize its situation and possible outcomes in writing.
4. To end the activity, ask the groups to share their summaries with the class.

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