

Virginia Studies VS.3

English Colonization and the Founding of Jamestown - (new 2023 standards)

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VS.3A: WHY DID ENGLAND WANT TO COLONIZE NORTH AMERICA?

a) explain the reasons for English colonization

In the early **1600s**, many countries in Europe—including England, Spain, and France—were in a **race to grow their wealth and power**. One way to do this was by **building colonies** in the “New World” (North America).

In the early 1600s, Europe was experiencing **many challenges**, including a shrinking number of **natural resources**.

England had several **reasons** for starting a **colony**:

 **Competition**: Other countries were **building empires**, and England didn't want to be left behind.

 **Economic Opportunity**: They hoped the colony would bring money through **new trade routes, natural resources**, and maybe even **gold and silver**.

 **Lack of resources** in Europe: Forests were being cut down and **farmland was limited**. The land in **North America** was seen as fresh and **full of potential**.

 **New markets**: England wanted people in the New World to **buy and sell goods**.

VS.3B: WHY DID THE ENGLISH SETTLE AT JAMESTOWN?

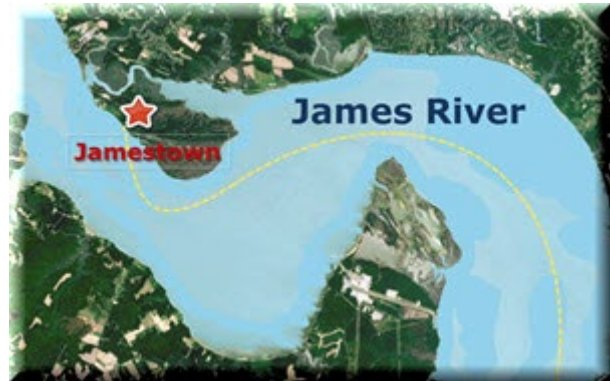
b) describe the economic and geographic influences on the decision to settle at Jamestown

Jamestown was chosen in **1607** to be the site of the **first permanent English settlement** in North America. The location was selected for both **economic** and **geographic** reasons:

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Geographic reasons:

- The land was **surrounded by water on three sides**, which made it **easier to defend** from enemies.
- It was located along the **James River**, and the water was **deep enough for ships** to dock easily.
- They believed there was **fresh water** (though it later turned out to be **brackish** or **salty** at times).

Economic reasons:

- Being **near a river** made it easier to **trade goods** and **communicate** with England.
- The settlers hoped to use the land to **grow crops** and collect **valuable** materials.

 But there were **problems**: the land was **swampy**, the **water** wasn't always safe, and mosquitoes spread **disease**.

Even so, the colonists stayed and built what became the foundation of English America.

VS.3C: WHAT WAS THE VIRGINIA COMPANY OF LONDON CHARTER?

c) describe the importance of the Virginia Company of London Charter (April 10, 1606) in establishing the Jamestown colony;

Before the colonists arrived, a company called the **Virginia Company of London** asked **King James** for **permission** to start a colony.



Virginia Company of London advertises America to Englishmen in 1609

On April 10, 1606, the King gave them a **charter**—a **legal document** that:

- Gave the company the **right to settle** in Virginia.
- Promised that the settlers would have the **same rights as English citizens**, even though they were far away.
- Helped **attract investors** to fund the trip and support the colony. An **investor** provides money in the hope of later profits.

This charter was important because it made the **Jamestown colony official and legal**, and connected the colonists back to **English law and government**.

VS.3D: INTERACTIONS BETWEEN ENGLISH COLONISTS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

d) describe the interactions between the English colonists and the Indigenous people, including the role of the Powhatan in the survival of the colonists

When the English arrived in **1607**, they settled on land that already belonged to many **Indigenous groups**, including the **Powhatan**.

The **English colonists** found life in Virginia **harder than they had expected** as many of the English colonists did not have **experience** with **growing crops** or manual labor.



Chief Powhatan was the leader of a powerful group of over **30 tribes** in eastern Virginia. These tribes had lived in the region for **thousands of years** and knew how to **survive** by:

- **Growing** crops like corn, beans, and squash
- **Fishing** and hunting
- Using **natural resources** wisely



Chief Powhatan - leader of over 30 tribes



At first, the Powhatan and the English **traded** with each other:

- The **English** gave metal tools, glass beads, and cloth
- The **Powhatan** shared food, animal skins, and local knowledge



This **trade** helped the English **survive** their first years in Jamestown. They didn't know how to **grow food** in Virginia's climate, and many of them were **not farmers**.



At first, the Powhatan and the English traded with each other, but then conflicts developed



But the **relationship** between the two groups didn't always stay friendly.

Sometimes there was **cooperation**, but sometimes there was **conflict**.



Historians tell us that the full story of their interactions is **complicated**.

Some records show moments of **peace**, while others describe **tension** and **fighting**.

VS.3E: HARDSHIPS FACED BY THE SETTLERS AND HOW THEY SURVIVED

e) describe the hardships faced by settlers at Jamestown and the changes that took place to ensure survival including, but not limited to trade with the Powhatan, the leadership of Captain John Smith, land ownership, and the successful commercial cultivation of tobacco

The Jamestown **colonists struggled** greatly in the early years. Life in Virginia was much harder than they expected. Here's why:

Hardships:

- Many settlers **did not know how to farm** or build homes.
- The **swampy land** made them sick.
- Mosquitoes spread **disease** like malaria.
- There wasn't enough **clean drinking water**.
- They spent too much time **looking for gold** instead of preparing for winter.

Changes that helped them survive:

- Captain John Smith** took charge. He said, "**He who does not work shall not eat.**" This made people take responsibility.
- The colonists **traded with the Powhatan** for food and supplies.
- The colony began to allow **private land ownership**, so people worked harder to grow their own food.
- In time, they learned to **grow tobacco**, a cash crop that made money and helped the colony succeed.



Captain John Smith
"He who does not
work shall not eat"

VS.3F: THE ARRIVAL OF AFRICANS AND WOMEN IN THE COLONY

f) analyze the impact of the arrival of Africans and women to the Jamestown settlement



In 1619, Africans first arrived at Fort Comfort, VA

Africans:

- In **1619**, a group of Africans were **forcibly taken** from their homeland in **West Central Africa** (modern-day Angola).
- They arrived at **Point Comfort** (near today's Fort Monroe, Virginia).
- These Africans brought valuable **skills and culture**, and they helped the colony by working on farms and in trades.
- Many were **forced into slavery**, a system where people were treated as **property** and made to work without freedom.
- Indentured servitude**, while different from slavery, was a system of **forced labor**, and was already a practice in the Virginia colony.
- Indentured servants**, work for a period of time in exchange for their passage.
- As agriculture production increased and **tobacco** became a profitable **cash crop**, the Virginia colony chose to rely more on **enslaved labor**.

Over time, Virginia created **laws** that made slavery **legal and permanent**, and based it on **race**. These choices had a lasting impact on American history.

Women:

- In **1620**, more English **women** arrived in Jamestown.
- They helped start **families** and create a **community**.
- Their arrival helped Jamestown grow into a **permanent settlement**, instead of just a temporary camp for men.



1620 - Women arrive and help start families

VS.3G: THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (1619), THE FIRST REPRESENTATIVE LEGISLATIVE BODY IN ENGLISH AMERICA

g) identify the significance of establishing the General Assembly (1619), the first representative legislative body in English America

As Jamestown grew, Virginia's system of **government evolved**.

- In **1619**, the royal governor of Virginia called a meeting of the **General Assembly** for the first time.
- The General Assembly included two representatives, called **burgesses**, from each of the divisions of Virginia, along with the **governor's council** and the **governor**.



The establishment of the **General Assembly** was the **first elected body in English North America**. It gave colonists the opportunity to take part in **controlling their own government**.

- The **governor's council** consisted of Virginia's **wealthiest and most important men**. They held their positions on the governor's council for a lifetime.

Key Takeaways

- **England wanted a colony** to get **rich**, gain **power**, and **compete** with other countries.
- **Jamestown was chosen** for its river **location** and **defense**, but it had many challenges.
- The **Virginia Company of London charter** gave settlers the **right to start a colony** and **keep their rights**.
- Indigenous people **helped the colonists survive**, but the relationship had both **good and bad times**.
- Jamestown settlers faced **many hardships**, including hunger and disease.
- The colony changed over time through **leadership, trade, farming, and hard work**.
- The arrival of **Africans** and **women** shaped the future of the colony—bringing **skills, culture, labor, and family life**.
- Sadly, the colony also made decisions that led to the **growth of slavery**, which became a dark part of our country's past.