

The "Starving Time": Jamestown

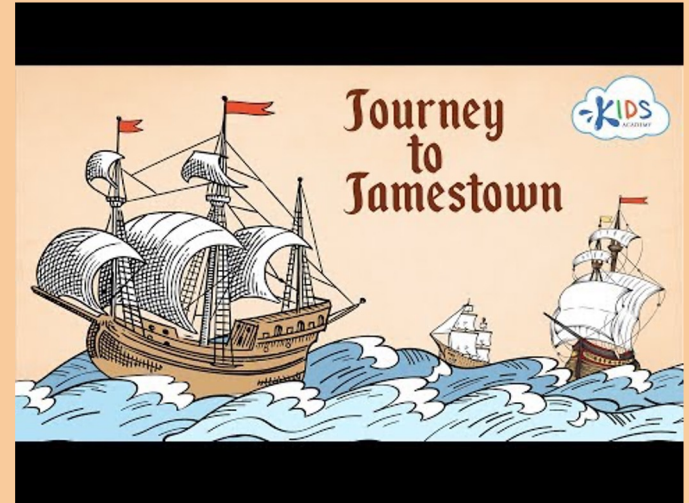


Jamestown

We are going to learn about an event called the “starving time” in England’s first successful colony in America.

The early years were very difficult and it looked like the colony would never survive.

Wait until you read what happened!



Resource 1: Story of The Starving Time

It took nearly 20 years after the attempt at Roanoke for people in England to try setting up a colony in America. Why? Spain invaded England so they went to war. And we can imagine that not a lot of people would want to go to America after learning that the people who went to Roanoke in 1587 disappeared.

Why Was the Choice of Location a Bad One?

Twenty years later, in May of 1607, three ships carrying 104 men and boys arrived in Jamestown, Virginia. The location they chose to start their colony was not a good choice. The land was swampy - not good for growing crops - and there was very little fresh water to drink. Plus, there were a lot of mosquitoes that spread diseases.

The colonists did not do the things that are needed to make a colony survive. Instead of planting crops that would provide food, some searched for gold. And there was no gold to be found! And many of the people were not used to doing hard work back in England. They did not expect to have to work hard in America.

Four months after they arrived, only 40 or so of the original 104 colonists were still alive. Yikes!

What did Jamestown Need?

Jamestown needed a leader and along came John Smith. You may have heard of him and we will come back to him soon. Smith had the colonists build a fort (see an image below) and told the colonists that, "he that will not work, shall not eat!" People started working. He also started trading with Native Americans for food.



Capt. John Smith

Life in Jamestown started to improve.



Building the Jamestown Fort



The Original Jamestown Fort/Colony

What Went Wrong?

In 1608, two ships arrived and brought 170 more settlers and supplies. That seems like a good thing but now there were more people and less food to go around.

Word reached England about all of the problems. In 1609, they sent 9 ships with many more colonists and supplies. The bad luck just kept happening. The ships ran into a hurricane that destroyed some of the supplies and caused some ships to run aground. In August of 1609, the ships that survived the hurricane arrived in Jamestown with 300 more colonists, few supplies, and very little food.

Meanwhile, John Smith was injured in a gunpowder explosion in 1609 and had to return to England. Now Jamestown was low on food, had more people to feed, and was without the kind of leader that they needed.

What Were Relations Between the English Colonists and Native Americans Like?

At the same time, Native Americans were also going hungry. Historians now believe that the worst famine in 700 years hit Jamestown at this time. A famine is when food is very scarce. Now more English colonists were arriving, taking the Native Americans land, and hunting for the same food needed to feed their people.

Chief Powhatan ordered his men to attack any colonists or livestock found outside of the Jamestown fort. Now the colonists could be killed just looking for food. One colonist wrote, "*Indians killed as fast outside the fort as starvation and disease did within the fort.*"

What Happened During the Starving Time in Jamestown?

The winter of 1609-1610 is now known as "the starving time." Colonists began eating horses, dogs, cats, mice, and even shoe leather. Grossest of all, historians have found strong evidence that they even dug up graves and ate dead bodies.

When a ship from England arrived in May of 1610, they found that only 60 colonists out of the nearly 570 English colonists left alive.

Starting a colony was dangerous business and VERY hard work. For this reason, we should have a lot of respect for the people who started our country. But we should also remember that a lot of that work was done by people who were enslaved.

What are the four most important scenes in the story?

Resource 2: The Starving Time Story Map

Step 1: Draw the four most important scenes from the story in the blue boxed spaces below.

First...	Next...	Then...	In the end...

Step 2: Use your own words to describe what happened in each scene that you drew.

First...	Next...	Then...	In the end...

Now create your story map of the four most important scenes from the Starving Time.

IV.
NOVA BRITANNIA:
OFFERING MOST
Excellent fruites by Planting in
VIRGINIA.

Exciting all such as be well affected
to further the same.



LONDON
Printed for SAMUEL MACHAM, and are to be sold at
his Shop in Pauls Church-yard, at the
Signe of the Bul-bead.
1609

1. What is the purpose of this document?

1. Why might it have been created?

1. Based on what you have learned about Roanoke and Jamestown, is this advertisement giving people honest information? Explain your conclusion.

Plain language translation:

New Britain (new colony owned by England)
Offers excellent benefits if you settle in Virginia

Printed in London, England 1609

People who invested their money trying to create a colony where they could make money did not want to give up.

They wanted more people to move to Jamestown, Virginia.

One strategy they used included advertising.

This poster was created to get people to move to Virginia and invest their money in Virginia.

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Disinformation = the intentional
spreading of false information

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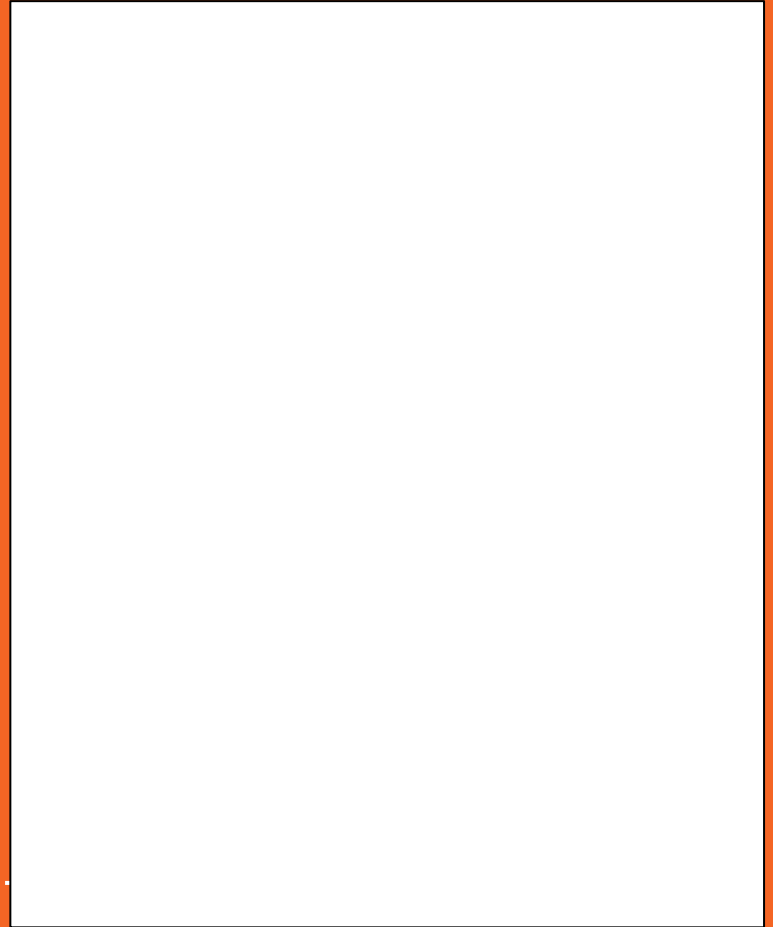
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Activity

Design a poster that would have provided the people of England accurate information about Virginia around 1610.

Be sure to use words and at least one drawing.



Check for Understanding

1. This list below contains **CAUSES** and **EFFECTS** of the “starving time” in the Jamestown colony. Write each one in the **CAUSE** or **EFFECT** column to show which was a cause and which was an effect.

- men refused to work
- poor location of Jamestown
- famine
- advertising only good things about Jamestown

CAUSES	EFFECTS

Check for Understanding

2. Use the chart to organize the events in the correct chronological order.

- The starving time
- John Smith became the leader of Jamestown
- Jamestown was settled
- John Smith returned to England

Order of Events	Events
1st event	
2nd event	
3rd event	
4th event	

Check for Understanding

Two different accounts of John Smith's injury appear in the boxes below.

Account 1	Account 2
<p>The injury that forced John Smith to return to England in 1609 was caused by an accident. It probably happened when a spark from the pipe he was smoking hit his gunpowder bag.</p>	<p>The terrible injury was no accident but a deliberate attempt to kill him. John Smith once said that three English colonists "plotted to have murdered him in his bed."</p>

3. Which of the following **BEST** explains why there are different accounts of John Smith's injury?

- A. One of the people writing the account was lying
- B. One of the people writing the account was biased
- C. The people who wrote the accounts did not like John Smith
- D. The people who wrote the accounts used different evidence