Tobacco Crosses Seas

How Virginia's land helped produce goods for export

5.C.1.5.C "export of natural resources and John Rolfe's development of tobacco as a cash crop"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the natural resources, circle the goods sent to England, and number the three steps that show how growing tobacco led to money for Virginia.

A Crop for Sale

1. In the early 1600s, settlers in Virginia hoped the colony would earn money from goods shipped across the Atlantic Ocean. An export is a good sent to another place for sale. Virginia had forests that provided timber, a natural resource. Settlers could cut trees and ship wood to England. Yet shipping wood was costly, and the colony needed a product that English buyers would pay more to get.

2. John Rolfe tried growing a kind of tobacco that appealed to buyers in England. Virginia's fertile soil and long growing season helped the plants grow. By 1614, colonists were shipping Virginia tobacco to England. Buyers paid for it, so tobacco became a cash crop, a crop grown mainly to sell. Money from tobacco sales helped the colony buy supplies it could not make for itself.

3. As demand for tobacco rose, colonists planted more fields. They cleared forests and took land used by Native peoples. Growing and preparing tobacco took much work. At first, many workers were indentured servants, people who agreed to work for a set time. Later, enslaved Africans were forced to do much of this labor. Virginia's soil helped make tobacco exports possible, but the trade also changed land and people's lives.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Virginia's soil and growing season help tobacco become an export?

2. Why did John Rolfe's choice of tobacco help Virginia earn money from England?

3. How did exporting tobacco help the colony get supplies?

4. How did growing more tobacco for export affect land and workers in Virginia?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise Virginia's leaders after tobacco sales increase. In 3 to 4 sentences, propose one choice that could reduce a harm caused by growing more tobacco, and explain how your choice might affect exports.

ANSWER KEY

Tobacco Crosses Seas

GRADE 5 · 5.C.1.5.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the natural resources, circle the goods sent to England, and number the three steps that show how growing tobacco led to money for Virginia. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Virginia's soil and growing season help tobacco become an export?	**Fertile soil and a long growing season helped colonists grow tobacco that they could ship to England.**
2	Why did John Rolfe's choice of tobacco help Virginia earn money from England?	**He grew a kind of tobacco that English buyers liked, so they paid for tobacco shipped from Virginia.**
3	How did exporting tobacco help the colony get supplies?	**The colony used money from tobacco sales to buy supplies it could not make for itself.**
4	How did growing more tobacco for export affect land and workers in Virginia?	**Colonists cleared forests and took land used by Native peoples. Indentured servants worked in tobacco fields, and later enslaved Africans were forced to do much of the labor.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would ask leaders to limit how much forest settlers clear for tobacco fields. This would leave more trees standing and reduce the loss of land used by Native peoples. With fewer new fields, colonists might ship less tobacco to England. Leaders would need to weigh that loss of sales against the harm caused by clearing more land.

For Part 1, accept forests or timber and fertile soil as natural resources, and wood and tobacco as goods sent to England. The numbered steps should trace growing tobacco, shipping it to England, and receiving payment. For Part 3, accept a different reasonable choice if the student explains both a reduced harm and a possible effect on exports.