Jamestown at a Crossroads

Trace how survival, trade, and land shaped a colony.

5.C.1.5 "Analyze the early successes and challenges of Jamestown, by explaining the leadership and diplomacy of Captain John Smith challenges of the Starving Time and the value of Powhatan trade to sustain the colony export of natural resources and..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two actions that helped Jamestown survive, circle two challenges to survival, and draw an arrow from tobacco farming to its effect on land.

A Colony That Changed

1. In 1607, English settlers built Jamestown beside a Virginia river. Their new fort needed food, but many settlers were unready to farm. Captain John Smith pushed the settlers to work and sought food through trade and talks with Powhatan people. Powhatan farmers could supply corn, which helped the English survive. Still, trade was not always peaceful, and the colony depended on its neighbors.

2. Smith left Virginia in 1609 after an injury. That winter, called the Starving Time, the settlers faced a terrible food shortage. Poor harvests, disease, and fighting with Powhatan people made it hard to get food. Ships carrying supplies arrived too late to prevent many deaths. Of about 500 people at Jamestown in the fall, only about 60 were alive by spring.

3. After the Starving Time, settlers looked for ways to make money. They sent Virginia's natural resources, including timber, to England. John Rolfe developed a type of tobacco that English buyers wanted, making it a cash crop grown for sale. Tobacco fields needed more land. Powhatan communities controlled and used their lands, while English settlers claimed land for their farms. As English farms spread onto Powhatan land, relationships grew worse.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did John Smith's actions and trade with Powhatan people help Jamestown in its early years?

2. Why did so many settlers die during the Starving Time, even though Powhatan people had traded food with them earlier?

3. How did Rolfe's tobacco change both what settlers could sell and how they used land?

4. Why did the spread of English farms worsen relationships with Powhatan communities?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence museum label explaining how Jamestown changed from depending on Powhatan corn to selling tobacco, and why its growth caused conflict over land. Use at least two cause-and-effect words, such as because, so, or therefore.

ANSWER KEY

Jamestown at a Crossroads

GRADE 5 · 5.C.1.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two actions that helped Jamestown survive, circle two challenges to survival, and draw an arrow from tobacco farming to its effect on land. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did John Smith's actions and trade with Powhatan people help Jamestown in its early years?	**Smith pushed settlers to work and sought trade with Powhatan people, whose corn helped feed the colony.**
2	Why did so many settlers die during the Starving Time, even though Powhatan people had traded food with them earlier?	**Poor harvests, disease, and fighting made food hard to get, and supply ships arrived too late to prevent many deaths.**
3	How did Rolfe's tobacco change both what settlers could sell and how they used land?	**Settlers could grow tobacco to sell to English buyers, but tobacco fields required more land.**
4	Why did the spread of English farms worsen relationships with Powhatan communities?	**English settlers claimed land for farms that Powhatan communities already controlled and used.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Jamestown depended on corn from Powhatan farmers because its settlers struggled to grow enough food. Later, John Rolfe's tobacco gave the settlers a crop to sell, so they planted more fields. These fields spread onto land Powhatan communities already controlled and used, so relationships worsened.

Accept answers that connect Smith's leadership and Powhatan trade to survival, and tobacco farming to competition over land. Students may name any two passage-supported survival challenges in their markings.