Surviving Jamestown

How settlers responded to a difficult new environment

5.C.1.8.A "adaptation to an unfamiliar and harsh environment"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the problems of salty water and scarce food, then circle one action the settlers took to face each problem so you can link a challenge to an adaptation.

A Difficult Place to Settle

1. In 1607, English settlers built Jamestown beside Virginia's James River. Ships could reach the settlement by water, but the new place had dangers the settlers did not know well. During dry spells, river water near the settlement became too salty to drink. Marshes nearby had mosquitoes that spread sickness. The settlers also faced a short food supply, far from the farms they had known in England.

2. The settlers changed their plans to meet these challenges. They dug a well to seek fresh water when the river was salty. To get food, they traded with nearby Powhatan communities for corn. They also tried to grow crops in unfamiliar soil and seasons. Ships from England brought supplies, but the settlers could not count on a ship arriving whenever they needed one.

3. In 1609, a long dry spell made the search for water and food harder. Fighting between the English and Powhatan communities stopped much of the corn trade. Supply ships were delayed, too. With food from trade and ships harder to get, many settlers starved during the winter of 1609 to 1610. Their choices show how people may adapt, yet remain at risk in a harsh place.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What problem did digging a well help the settlers face?

2. How did trading with nearby Powhatan communities help the settlers survive?

3. Why did the settlers try to grow crops as well as trade for corn?

4. How did fighting weaken one way the settlers had adapted to the food shortage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a group moves to a cold, treeless island with fish in nearby waters and a short growing season. In three or four sentences, describe two changes the group could make to find food and stay warm, and explain how each change meets a challenge.

ANSWER KEY

Surviving Jamestown

GRADE 5 · 5.C.1.8.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the problems of salty water and scarce food, then circle one action the settlers took to face each problem so you can link a challenge to an adaptation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What problem did digging a well help the settlers face?	**They dug a well to seek fresh water because river water near Jamestown could become too salty to drink.**
2	How did trading with nearby Powhatan communities help the settlers survive?	**Trading gave the settlers corn when their food supply was short.**
3	Why did the settlers try to grow crops as well as trade for corn?	**Growing crops gave them another possible source of food instead of relying only on trade.**
4	How did fighting weaken one way the settlers had adapted to the food shortage?	**Fighting stopped much of their corn trade with Powhatan communities, making food harder to get.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The group could catch fish in nearby waters instead of depending only on crops. Fishing would help them find food when the growing season ends. They could build shelters with stone and thick layers of sod because the island has no trees. The thick walls would help keep out the cold.

Accept answers that connect each Jamestown action to a problem stated in the passage. For Your Turn, look for one workable change that provides food and one that helps people stay warm, with an explanation of each.