

# Why Capitals Move

Read how problems and opportunities led Virginia leaders to choose a new capital.

**VS.4.e** “explaining the reasons for the relocation of Virginia’s capital from Jamestown to Williamsburg; and”

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## 1 READ AND MARK \_\_\_\_\_ Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline each reason leaders moved away from Jamestown or chose Middle Plantation. Number the reasons in the order you find them so you can explain the move.

### From Jamestown to Williamsburg

- ① For many years, Jamestown was the capital of Virginia. Government leaders met there to make laws. By the late 1600s, however, Jamestown had serious problems. Its low, swampy land could be unhealthy, especially during warm months. Mosquitoes and sickness made life difficult. The town also had limited room for the growing government and nearby homes.
- ② In 1698, the statehouse at Jamestown burned. This building was where Virginia's lawmakers met. Leaders needed a new place for government work. They chose Middle Plantation, a community farther inland. It stood on higher, healthier ground and was easier to reach from several settled areas. The College of William and Mary was already nearby, bringing students, teachers, and activity.
- ③ In 1699, the government moved from Jamestown to Middle Plantation. The new capital was renamed Williamsburg to honor King William III. The move gave Virginia leaders a safer, more useful place to meet. The fire was an immediate problem, while Jamestown's unhealthy setting and lack of space were continuing problems. Together, these reasons explain why the capital changed.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What happened in 1698 that made leaders need a new place for government work?

2 What were two continuing problems at Jamestown that helped cause the move?

3 Why was Middle Plantation a good place for the new capital? Give two details.

4 How did the statehouse fire and Jamestown's other problems work together to cause the capital to move?

## 3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Pretend you are advising a Virginia lawmaker in 1699. Write three sentences that recommend moving the capital to Williamsburg, using at least two reasons from the reading.

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**PART 1 • READ AND MARK**

Underline each reason leaders moved away from Jamestown or chose Middle Plantation. Number the reasons in the order you find them so you can explain the move. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

**PART 2 • ANSWERS**

| # | QUESTION                                                                                               | ANSWER                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | What happened in 1698 that made leaders need a new place for government work?                          | <b>The statehouse at Jamestown burned.</b>                                                                                                                                      |
| 2 | What were two continuing problems at Jamestown that helped cause the move?                             | <b>Jamestown had low, swampy, unhealthy land where mosquitoes and sickness were problems, and it had limited room for the growing government and homes.</b>                     |
| 3 | Why was Middle Plantation a good place for the new capital? Give two details.                          | <b>It was farther inland on higher, healthier ground, and it was easier to reach from several settled areas. The College of William and Mary was also nearby.</b>               |
| 4 | How did the statehouse fire and Jamestown's other problems work together to cause the capital to move? | <b>The fire created an immediate need for a new meeting place. Jamestown's unhealthy setting and lack of space gave leaders continuing reasons to choose a better location.</b> |

**PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)**

Virginia should move its capital to Williamsburg. The old statehouse burned, so lawmakers need a new meeting place. Williamsburg is on higher, healthier ground and is easier to reach from settled areas.

Accept equivalent cause-and-effect explanations supported by the passage. For the open response, look for a clear recommendation and at least two accurate reasons for relocating the capital.