

John Smith



John Smith was born in England around 1580. He became a soldier and in 1601 Turks captured Smith, selling him into slavery from which he eventually escaped. By 1604 Smith had returned to England and in 1606 set sail for America with a colonial expedition that landed in Virginia. The expedition founded the settlement at Jamestown, Virginia in May 1607 and in 1608 Smith was chosen to be president of the colony. Smith insisted that all the colonists work, stating: "He that will not work shall not eat, except by sickness he be disabled." While this attitude may have saved the colonists from starvation in that first year, it did not make him popular with the citizens of Jamestown.

Smith explored the area of Virginia around Jamestown. While exploring he was captured by the Native American chief Powhatan and, according to legend, he was saved from being put to death by the intercession of the chief's daughter, Pocahontas. We know he was captured by Powhatan but we don't know for certain if the rest of this story is true.

Smith was president of the Jamestown colony from 1608 to 1609, when he returned to England after being badly burned in an accident. However, it is possible that an enemy of his was responsible for the fire. The trading company in England called the London Company had financed the colony and owned it. After he recovered his health, they refused to re-appoint John Smith as governor and he never returned to Virginia.

Instead, in 1614 he returned to North America to explore the territory called "North Virginia." "North Virginia" was actually the area of New England later colonized by the Pilgrims in 1620. During his explorations he also mapped the Chesapeake Bay area of Delaware.

He brought the "treasures" of New England, which were furs and fish, back to England. Upon returning to England, Smith supported further colonization in America. John Smith wrote several books about his adventures in America.

Name: _____

Date: _____

John Smith Graphic Organizer

Who	What	When



Where	Why	How

Name: _____

Date: _____

John Smith Multiple Choice Questions

Circle the correct answer.

1. Where was John Smith born?
 - a. Italy
 - b. England
 - c. Portugal

2. Who sold John Smith into slavery?
 - a. Turks
 - b. Colonists
 - c. Indians

3. What is one reason why John Smith was an unpopular leader?
 - a. He was not smart enough to lead
 - b. He made everyone work hard
 - c. He made poor decisions

4. After returning to England in 1609 why didn't John Smith ever come back to Virginia?
 - a. The London Company would not re-appoint him as governor
 - b. He was afraid he would be captured again by Powhatan
 - c. He wanted to search for gold elsewhere

5. Besides being an explorer, John Smith was also a
 - a. Soldier and sailor
 - b. Governor and writer
 - c. All of the above

6. In addition to exploring Virginia and New England, where else did John Smith travel in America?
 - a. Chesapeake Bay
 - b. Montreal
 - c. Florida

Name: _____

Date: _____

John Smith Short Answer Questions

1. Do you think that John Smith was an action-adventure hero like Indiana Jones? Explain why or why not.
2. Do you agree with John Smith's idea that everyone who eats should work? Explain why or why not.
3. Do you think that John Smith was really saved by Pocahontas? Why would someone make up a story like that?
4. Why did the London Company own Jamestown instead of the King of England?
5. Why didn't John Smith ever return to Virginia?
6. John Smith was sent to America to find gold. He eventually brought back furs and fish. Do you think that the London Company was happy with the outcome of their investment in the exploration?
7. What are some explorations that people are doing today similar to John Smith's explorations?
8. Would you like to read any of John Smith's books? Explain why or why not.

John Smith Answer Key

Multiple Choice

1. b.
2. a.
3. b.
4. a.
5. c.

Short Answer Questions

1. John Smith was always escaping from harrowing situations.
2. Individual response.
3. Individual response.
4. The London Company financed the expedition, not the king.
5. His pride was hurt at not being re-appointed governor. But since he had been an unpopular governor, he would not have received a warm welcome back.
6. Not at first. But there was a good market later.
7. Searching for oil and exploring space.
8. Individual response.