

JAMESTOWN (part 2) Reading Comprehension

The Jamestown colony flourished under the strict rule of John Smith. Nevertheless, the London Company (which was now called the Virginia Company) had formed a new government that was to be led by Thomas De La Warr. The new charter issued by the Virginia Company called for the appointment of a governor rather than a president. John Smith, who nearly died after igniting himself in a canoe, returned to England for good. Since De La Warr was unable to make the trip immediately, Thomas Gates was named interim governor. Unfortunately, Gates' ship wrecked off the coast of Bermuda, and he was unable to resume the trip until new ships were built.

Meanwhile, the Virginia Company was in the process of reformulating its philosophy on potential profits in Jamestown. By 1609, it became obvious that profits would have to be realized over a long-term basis rather than immediately. The Virginia Company began reorganizing business possibilities to resemble those that had been successful in controlling the populations in Ireland. They proposed to bring England to the New World by sending families to Jamestown. Families were promised their own parcels of land for seven years of communal labor at Jamestown. This, the Virginia Company believed, would cause colonists to have a permanent stake in the welfare of the community as a whole, which would result in increased productivity and profit. Those that were not wealthy enough to pay their passage to the New World would have their trip subsidized (paid for) in exchange for seven years of labor. Those individuals became servants.

With John Smith out of the picture, and with the lack of a visible leader at Jamestown (because of Gates' shipwreck), Powhatan saw an opportunity to rid himself of the white settlers once and for all. Hence, Powhatan ordered his people to stop trading with the settlers. Without any leadership, and more specifically without the leadership of John Smith, the settlers once again became complacent and stopped contributing to the welfare of Jamestown. Trading teams that departed from Jamestown to Powhatan's lands rarely returned and were presumed dead. Without corn from the Algonquins, with settlers who refused to work and with Powhatan's warriors seemingly closing in around them, the winter of 1609–1610 became known as the "Starving Time." Colonists were forced to eat cats and dogs, and some were even executed for digging up human corpses to eat. When Gates finally arrived in 1610, only about 60 of the 500 settlers were still alive. Gates decided to abandon the settlement and nearly set sail with the remaining settlers for England. While Powhatan and his people celebrated wildly, Thomas De La Warr arrived with three fully supplied ships with a mission to stay indefinitely.

De La Warr and Gates reestablished the tough discipline that had led the colony to success under John Smith. Under the set of rules developed by Gates and enforced by Sir Thomas Dale (the future governor of Virginia), settlers would be brutally punished for breaking the rules. Settlers were shot, burned at the stake, and hung at the gallows. Such transgressions as cursing carried physical torture or public humiliation as consequences.

During this time, relations with the Indians worsened. The settlers were still dependent on the Indians for food and became more and more violent in their quests to obtain it. The Indians, in turn, responded in kind, resulting in a bloody series of killings on both sides.

1.) What does the word “indefinitely” mean in the following sentence?

While Powhatan and his people celebrated wildly, Thomas De La Warr arrived with three fully supplied ships with a mission to stay indefinitely.

- a.) for a long time
- b.) for a short time
- c.) for no time
- d.) under certain conditions

2.) According to the business philosophy of the Virginia Company of London, settlers would be productive if...

- a.) they loved their governor.
- b.) they were threatened with death.
- c.) they had a stake in the community as a whole.
- d.) they were promised gold.

3.) When did Powhatan decide to stop trading with the colonists?

- a.) When John Smith was gone.
- b.) When he realized Jamestown had no real leader.
- c.) Both A and B
- d.) Neither A or B

4.) What is the general theme of the passage?

- a.) The colony would have been more successful with more discipline.
- b.) The settlers were unfair to the Powhatan Indians.
- c.) Pocahontas took a special liking to John Smith.
- d.) The Jamestown colony constantly struggled to survive in its early years.

5.) Under the leadership of John Smith, the Jamestown colony...

- a.) disintegrated
- b.) split
- c.) thrived
- d.) flourished

6.) According to this passage, at what point were the settlers no longer dependent on the Powhatan Indians for food?

- a.) After the Starving Time
- b.) After the arrival of Thomas De La Warr
- c.) After discipline was reestablished at Jamestown
- d.) By the end of this passage, the settlers were still dependent on the Powhatans for food.

7.) What happened last?

- a.) The Starving Time
- b.) Gates decides to abandon the settlement.
- c.) John Smith departs.
- d.) Thomas de La Warr arrives.

8.) When Thomas Gates returned to the Jamestown settlement, _____ of the settlers were alive.

- a.) few
- b.) most
- c.) all
- d.) none

9.) Profits from the settlement of Jamestown would come...

- a.) quickly
- b.) immediately
- c.) never
- d.) eventually

10.) How did the settlers respond after the departure of John Smith?

- a.) They continued to work hard for the welfare of the settlement.
- b.) They decided to return to England.
- c.) They became lazy and selfish again.
- d.) They responded by carrying on the rules of John Smith.