

Documents: The Starving Time

Name: _____

Time: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Analyze the document. Spelling and grammar are a part of the grade.

Background: Jamestown was founded in 1607 by the Virginia Company for the purpose of finding gold to turn a profit. Poor leadership led to a great loss of life from disease and starvation. John Smith, an adventurer, temporarily took over the colony and instilled strict discipline based on the concept that if a person wanted to eat, they had to work. Under his leadership, some supported him while others hated him, but Jamestown stabilized. After becoming injured in a gunpowder explosion, Smith returned to England in 1609 just before the Starving Time. Below, is an excerpt of Smith's account of the Starving Time from his book *The Generall Historie of Virginia* (1624) based, in part, on information given to him by others.

Now we all found the losse of Captaine Smith, yea his greatest maligners could now curse his losse: as for corne provision and contribution from the Salvages [Natives], we had nothing but mortall wounds, with clubs and arrowes; as for our Hogs, Hens, Goats, Sheepe, Horse, or what lived, our commanders, officers and Salvages daily consumed them, some small proportions sometimes we tasted, till all was devoured; then swords, armes, pieces, or any thing, wee traded with the Salvages, whose cruell fingers were so oft imbrewed [imbrued] in our blouds [bloods], that what by their cruelties our Governours indiscretion, and the losse of our ships, of five hundred within six moneths after Captain Smiths departure, there remained not past sixtie men, women and children, most miserable and poore creatures; and those were preserved for the most part, by roots, herbes, acornes, walnuts, berries, now and then a little fish: they that had startch in these extremities, made no small use of it; yea even the very skinnes of our horses.

Nay, so great was our famine, that a Salvage we

slew and buried, the poorer sort tooke him up againe and eat him; and so did divers [diverse] one another boyled and stewed with roots and herbs: And one amongst the rest did kill his wife, powdered [salted] her, and had eaten part of her before it was knowne; for which hee was executed, as hee well deserved: now whether shee was better roasted, boyled or carbonado'd [grilled], I know not; but of such a dish as powdered wife I never heard of.

This was that time, which still to this day we called the starving time; it were too vile to say, and scarce to be beleaved, what we endured: but the occasion was our owne, for want of providence industrie and government, and not the barrennesse and defect of the Countrie, as is generally supposed.... Yet had wee beene even in Paradiice it selfe with these Governours, it would not have beene much better withe us; yet there was amongst us, who had they had the government as Captaine Smith appointed, but that they could not maintains it, would surely have kept us from those extremities of miseries.

Cap't John Smith

Central Ideas. A central idea is the overall topic of the entire piece. Main ideas are important topics that support the central idea.

1. What is the central idea of John Smith's account of the situation in Jamestown?
 - E. The colonists took to cannibalism to survive.
 - H. Poor decision making led the colonists to become desperate.
 - O. Native Americans caused many of the problems of the Jamestown colonists.
 - Y. The leaders tried to save the colony but many people refused to take their advice.

Words in Context. Define words based upon how they are used in the writing.

“...it were too vile to say, and scarce to be beleaved, what we endured: but the occasion was our owne, for want of providence industrie and government...”

2. What does the word “industrie” mean as it is used in the quote above?
- D. business
 - I. hard work
 - L. the guidance of God
 - Q. leadership

Facts vs. Opinions vs. Reasoned Judgment

Fact: A conclusion that can be proven true and/or is absolutely accurate to all people involved.

Opinion: belief or preference about something that cannot be proven or accepted by all people.

Reasoned Judgment: a conclusion based upon facts and evidence that may not be entirely accurate.

“of five hundred within six moneths after Captain Smiths departure, there remained not past sixtie men, women and children”

3. Identify the statement above as fact, opinion, or reasoned judgment.
- A. fact
 - N. opinion
 - Z. reasoned judgment

Textual Evidence.

4. What legal examples does William Lloyd Garrison give that show the brutality of slavery?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

History in Context.

5. What is learned about Jamestown and this time period from Captain Smith’s writing?
- E. Jamestown was a successful settlement.
 - H. Settlers risked their lives in going to Jamestown.
 - O. Native Americans were to blame for all of the suffering at Jamestown.
 - Y. The English regretted ever trying to start a colony in the New World.