

Teacher's Guide: The Story of Pocahontas

Recommended Grade Level: 5-8

(also applicable to grades 9-12 for students requiring significant support in learning)

Suggested Time: About 50-60 minutes spread over one or more class periods, plus additional time to complete a writing assignment

Goals

Following are the big ideas that students should take away after completing this lesson:

- When colonists and Native Americans first met, they had strong reactions to each other.
- We interpret historical events in different ways based on the opinions and goals of the people who write about them.
- Historians must decide how useful and reliable different historical sources are.

Vocabulary

(See definitions on page 6.)

- adopt
- colony
- historian
- legend
- settlement
- version

Key Literacy Strategies

Following are the primary literacy strategies students will use to complete this activity:

- Using background knowledge (screen 2)
- Making inferences (screens 4, 6, 7, and 8, writing assignment 2)
- Comparing and contrasting ideas (screens 6, 9, and 11, writing assignment 1)
- Determining important information (screen 8)

Note: In addition to using the key literacy strategies listed above, students will use each of the strategies below to complete this lesson:

- Monitoring comprehension
- Synthesizing
- Making predictions
- Developing vocabulary
- Connecting prior knowledge to new learning
- Developing a topic in writing
- Identifying and using text features (photographs, captions, diagrams, and/or maps)

Overview

The Story of Pocahontas is a student-directed learning experience. However, while students are expected to work through the lesson on their own, teachers should be available to keep the lesson on track, organize groupings, facilitate discussions, answer questions, and ensure students meet all learning goals.

The following is a summary of the lesson screens:

- Screen 1: Students learn that they will explore the legend of Pocahontas and John Smith and discover that parts of that legend may not be true.
- Screen 2: Students consider what they already know about Pocahontas, and write down either one to two things they know or one to two questions they have about her.
- Screen 3: Students learn what the goals are for the lesson, which strategies they will be using to complete the lesson, and the important vocabulary words they will use during the lesson.
- Screen 4: Students watch a video that shows the popular version of the story of Pocahontas and John Smith. They also write down two to three sentences about why this version of the story—the legend—is so interesting.
- Screen 5: Students read more about the main historical characters in the story—Powhatan, Smith, and Pocahontas—and understand the context for their actions.
- Screen 6: Students watch a second video that gives a more historically accurate version of what may have happened when Smith was brought before Powhatan. They then write two to three sentences about what might have happened when John Smith was captured.
- Screen 7: Students read more about Powhatan and his daughter Pocahontas. They then list two reasons the information we know about Powhatan and Pocahontas does not support the popular story.
- Screen 8: Students answer three multiple-choice questions to show their comprehension of both the legend and the historical version of the story of John Smith, Powhatan, and Pocahontas.
- Screen 9: Students read a passage about how Smith came to write the story that became the legend of Pocahontas, why it may have seemed more important to mention Pocahontas after she had visited London, and how some historians think Smith may have misunderstood what happened to him in Werowocomoco, Powhatan’s capital. They then write down two to three sentences about why Smith did not write about Pocahontas in his first book, but included her in his later book.
- Screen 10: Students complete an interactive vocabulary activity, and then choose two words from the vocabulary list and write a new sentence for each word. These tasks demonstrate their understanding of the meanings of the words.
- Screen 11: Students use an interactive activity to assign descriptive phrases to each version of Pocahontas’ story—the legend and historical account.
- Final Assignment: Students select and complete a writing assignment about the lesson topic.

Before the Lesson

- ❑ Go through each screen of the lesson, including all the interactive activities, so that you can experience ahead of time what students will be doing. As you go through each screen, jot down your own expectations for students' responses.
- ❑ Determine if students will be working individually or in pairs on the lesson. Some students may be able to work independently with little or no support. Students who are less familiar with the subject area or who struggle with literacy skills may benefit from working with another student. An effective way to do this is to pair a stronger student with a less able reader. You can also have students work individually on certain tasks and in pairs on others, depending on their experience and needs. If students will be working in pairs on any portion of the lesson, let them know if they will be expected to type in their notes individually or together.
- ❑ Provide instruction on key vocabulary (vocabulary words are defined in the lesson on screen 3, and on page 6 of this guide).
- ❑ Determine what students already know about Pocahontas. You may want to use specific questions to start the discussion, such as: Who was Pocahontas? Where did she live, and when? How do we know about her life? What do you know about the early colonies in America? Who did they belong to? What was the relationship between early colonists and Native Americans? Record their ideas on a chart, highlighting the words that may come up in the lesson. This will give you a sense of the background knowledge and possible misconceptions that students have before beginning this lesson. If time allows, return to the chart after students have completed the lesson to add new learning and correct misconceptions. Note: You may want to record their new learning in a different-colored ink so they can see how much they've learned.
- ❑ Arrange computers with Internet access so students can work individually or in pairs.
- ❑ Before students begin, suggest a timeline for completing the lesson, mention the different types of media they will encounter, and let them know how you expect them to submit their work. You may want to provide an outline of this information on a chart, chalkboard, or whiteboard, or as a handout.

Lesson Assessments

The following are descriptions of the lesson features that will be part of the packet of materials that students will submit. Students will use the packet for reference when writing their final assignment. It also serves as a formative assessment tool to monitor students' work as they're progressing through the lesson.

- **Notes** - Students take notes on screens 2, 4, 6, 7, and 9. If time allows, review their notes before students begin their writing assignment.
- **Multiple-choice questions** - Students complete the three questions on screen 8. Walk around to make sure students answer all three questions before they continue. If students click to go to the next screen before they finish, their work will not be saved.

- **Match It!** - Students complete an interactive vocabulary activity on screen 8. They begin by placing the vocabulary terms into the correct sentences. After they finish and save their work, they will be able to check their answers against an answer key. When they are done, they will be asked to choose two vocabulary words and write a new sentence for each word. Sentences should demonstrate a clear understanding of the meaning of each word. An inappropriate response would be “Jamestown was a colony.” An appropriate response would be “Jamestown was a colony of people from England who lived together in America.”
- **Compare It!** - Students complete the comparison activity Compare It! on screen 11. Students determine whether given statements about Pocahontas, John Smith, and Powhatan represent the popular version or the historical version of the Pocahontas story. Students will not be able to check their answers online, so you will need to provide them with correct answers when they are finished with the lesson. You can choose to review the answers as a class or return the corrected packet of materials to students before they begin the final assignment.

Following are the appropriate categories for each description:

Popular

- Pocahontas rescued John Smith because she loved him.
- Powhatan stopped John Smith’s execution to please his daughter.

Historical

- Pocahontas may have been playing a part in a ritual when she saved John Smith.
 - Pocahontas was about 12 years old when she met John Smith.
 - Powhatan adopted John Smith as his son.
 - The story of John Smith’s rescue was first told by Smith himself, in a book he wrote about Virginia.
- **Final Assignment** - Students complete one final writing assignment. You can choose to let students make their own selection, or assign one according to your goals for the lesson. Use the rubric on page 7 to assess the writing assignments.

Lesson Aids and Extensions

Use the following suggestions to help students if they are stuck on a particular screen, to prepare students for completing their writing assignments, or as follow-up discussions to reinforce learning.

- **Watching Videos** - Encourage students to watch the videos more than once. After the initial viewing, provide students with a specific content focus to frame their next viewing(s) of the video. This will help them draw connections between the main topic and the information that the videos have to offer.

- **Participating in Discussions** - Organize class discussions or encourage students to talk about their questions in pairs. You may want to use the following discussion starters.
 - o Think about how Powhatan had built his empire and the power he had at the time he met Smith. Do you think he felt the English at Jamestown posed any threat to him?
 - o Do you think Powhatan would have wanted or needed to kill Smith? Do you think Powhatan would have wanted or needed to “adopt” Smith?
 - o Why would Smith have misinterpreted any ritual he became part of in Werowococo, and why would he have been reluctant to mention it in his first book?
- **Reading the PDF Text** - Before they read the PDF text on screen 9, ask students to make predictions about why Smith did not mention Pocahontas in his first book, but did write about her in his third book.
- **Sharing Student Work** - It may be motivational, and a further learning opportunity, for students to post their final essays so that their classmates, peers, and/or parents can see them. This may also provide an opportunity for students to comment on and discuss each other’s essays.

If you do not already have access to an online writing community, Teaching Matters™ provides TeXT, free classroom publishing tools that allow teachers and students to create and publish their own online eZine. More information and a free sign up are available at Teaching Matters: TeXT (<http://text.teachingmatters.org>).
- **Reflection and Self-Assessment** - After students have turned in their writing assignments, you can choose to have them assess their learning. Bring students together as a whole class or in small groups to discuss the questions below. You may want to return to the chart of their ideas developed before the lesson and record their new learning. You may also have students respond individually to the questions and then convene the class to discuss the chart.
 - o What did you learn?
 - o What was surprising?
 - o What questions do you still have?
 - o What was the easiest for you to understand and do?
 - o What was the most difficult?

Vocabulary Definitions

adopt

To choose a person, thing, custom, or idea to be your own. *Adoption* is the process of someone or something being adopted.

colony

Land that is owned and ruled by a country that is located somewhere else. *Colonists* are people who live in colonies.

historian

Someone who studies what has happened in the past and why. *Historical* means something that happened in the past.

legend

A story that has been told over many years by a group of people that often either did not really happen or is only partly true.

settlement

A community created by a small group of people who leave their homes and move somewhere new.

version

One way of telling a story that includes some information and leaves out other information.

Final Assignment Rubric The Story of Pocahontas

1. In your own words, compare and contrast the legend and the historical version of the story of how Pocahontas met John Smith.
Write at least one paragraph for the legend, and one for the historical version.
2. Why do you think the legend continues to be told, even though there is historical evidence that it may not be true? Why do we continue to have these different versions?

4	3	2	1
<p>Provides a clear and accurate response to the question. Ideas are elaborated, with three or more relevant supporting details from the reading passage, video, and other materials in the lesson.</p>	<p>Provides an adequate response to the question. Topic and ideas are generally well organized, with two relevant supporting details from the reading passage, video, and other materials in the lesson.</p>	<p>Provides a generally accurate response, with one supporting detail from the reading passage, video, and other materials in the lesson.</p>	<p>Provides an inaccurate response to the question or fails to address the question. May include misinterpretations. Understanding of the topic is not apparent.</p>
<p>Uses at least three vocabulary words (or a form of the vocabulary words) from the lesson, and uses them all correctly.</p>	<p>Uses two vocabulary words (or a form of the vocabulary words) from the lesson, and uses them both correctly.</p>	<p>Uses one vocabulary word (or a form of the vocabulary word) from the lesson, and uses it correctly.</p>	<p>Does not use any vocabulary words, or uses vocabulary words incorrectly.</p>

Scoring the Rubric

Here are two suggestions for scoring the final assignment rubric. Select the option that best meets your needs or develop your own grading system.

Option 1: This option provides one score for each submitted assignment.

Assign a score of 4 or below for the written response (first row of the rubric) and a score of 4 or below for the use of vocabulary (second row of the rubric), for a total maximum score of 8. The interpretation of scores is as follows:

Score	Grade	Narrative Interpretation
7-8	A	Excellent
5-6	B	Good
4	C	Adequate (Fair)
3 or below	D	Minimal

Option 2: This option provides two scores for each submitted assignment: one for written content and one for the use of key vocabulary. An advantage of separate scores is that you can weight students' comprehension and composition differently than you do their knowledge of vocabulary. It can also help you identify specific needs for future instruction.

Assign a score of 4 or below for the written response (first row of the rubric) and a score of 4 or below for the use of vocabulary (second row of the rubric) and then score them separately. The interpretation of scores is as follows:

Score	Grade	Narrative Interpretation
4	A	Excellent
3	B	Good
2	C	Adequate (Fair)
1	D	Minimal

The final grade may look like this: A/B (A for content and B for vocabulary use).