



**NSDAR Educational Resources Committee**  
**“Challenges of Establishing Jamestown”**  
**Lesson Plan**

**Contributor:** Julia Purtill

**State:** Texas

**Grade Level:** 6th-8th

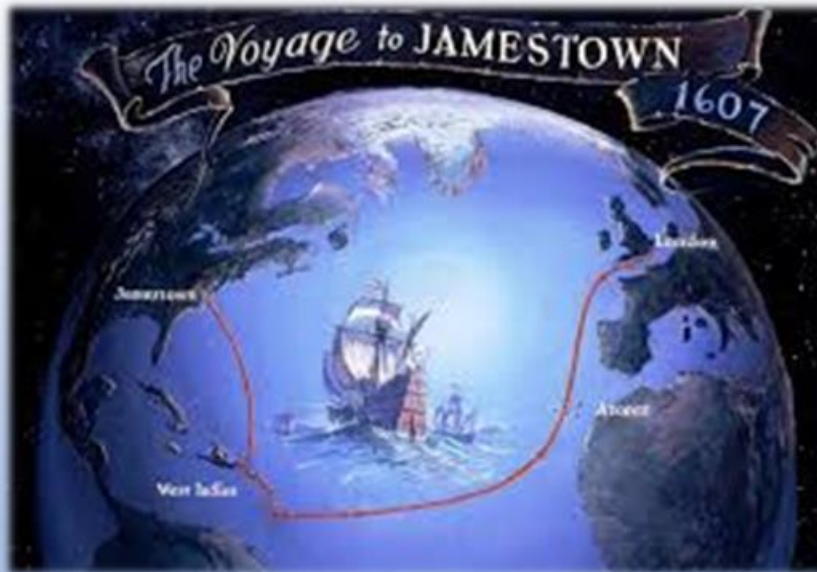
**Time Allocation:** 3-5 days

- 1. Identify the standards to be addressed:** Common Core Standards Middle School:  
Research to Build and Present Knowledge  
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.  
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.  
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.  
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.  
  
Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills 8<sup>th</sup> Grade:  
ELA and Reading 110.24 (b) (12) (A-J) Inquiry and Research  
Social Studies 113.20 (b) (1) (A-C) and (2) (A-B) Explain the significance of the founding of Jamestown
- 2. Statement of the objective and lesson outcomes:** What were the challenges of establishing Jamestown Colony, the first English settlement in America? Students will research the challenges colonists faced in establishing the Jamestown Colony, the first English settlement in America and present findings with a model of the fort.
- 3. Materials, resources, and technology to be used by teacher/students:** Literature for textual background, titles of books, materials for hands-on activities, and links to related websites stated in the following lesson procedures.
- 4. Introduction of the topic:** Use the following slides to compare those who accepted the call in 1609 from the Virginia Company to sail to America to a modern-day pioneer being the first group to settle planet Mars!

You get the call – you are part of the first wave of pioneers to initiate settlement on planet Mars!



- Atmosphere is 95% carbon dioxide
- No water
- 80 degrees below freezing
- Red dust tornadoes
- No food sources
- No shelter
- What...could be scarier.....?!?



The Jamestown Brave faced...

- 2 months at sea
- Seasickness, dysentery
- Stench, fumes, foul water
- Stormy seas
- Arrived to little or no shelter
- Diseases and malnutrition
- Something a Mars mission would not face... a hostile enemy!

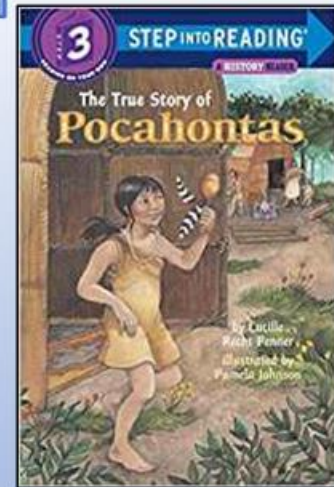
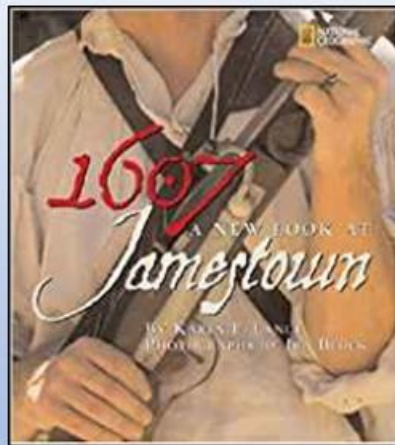
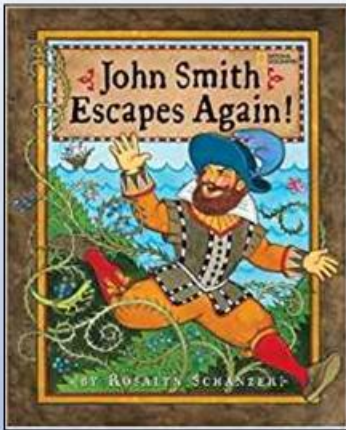
Going to Mars = Going to the colonies!

5. **Procedure for instruction:** Once the introduction has been made, the students can begin to get a grasp what the first colonists faced upon coming to the new world. At this time, exposure to a rich textual environment can begin to build student background knowledge. Read aloud to students, especially middle school students, to breach the stigma of “picture books” being read by a preteen! It allows students to create a scaffolding on which to hang future knowledge. Read-alouds left in the book nook after being teacher read will be picked up by students and re-read! Be sure to facilitate discussion after each read-aloud to gauge what students know, what they want to know and explain what they will be learning.

This is the time to present the students' job: Students will determine what challenges faced the brave men, women and children that accepted the Virginia Company's offer to come to the new country. From the first step on the ship to arriving at a newly constructed fort to begin life in a foreign land, these courageous folks were met with one hardship after another. Explain that the colonists' goal was one that was common to many explorations out of Europe at the time, to discover gold or silver to make the sponsoring company rich. However, instead of being able to focus on searching for precious metals, these poor people instead had to figure out how to survive in a strange country with the barest of resources while fending off an often-hostile enemy hindering any ventures outside the fort.

Students will choose a particular focus of one challenge colonists faced, research the topic, and present their findings to the class in an oral report accompanied with a model of the original Jamestown fort.

## Textual background



Lay additional groundwork by reading aloud picture books about the history of Jamestown settlement and how the colony first got started. Begin to bring in personalities to make it real...Captain John Smith and Pocahontas are high interest.

In addition to text, introduce teacher approved websites for students' further research. Show some of these videos to the whole group and then encourage students to re-visit sites and discover related sites. By now students will have been exposed to the issues facing the early Jamestown colonists and will be expected to choose one issue that they feel strongly about in order to focus their research. Topics to choose from should include:

- The difficult voyage across the Atlantic Ocean (no modern amenities, no radar, hurricanes, crowded conditions)
- Water supply difficulties at the fort's location
- Settlers' skills (the lack of) regarding building and hunting in wild territory
- Extreme climate most were unused to, and a drought facing the settlement that year
- Illness, fever, pneumonia
- Lack of supplies including food, tools, medical due to infrequent supply ships, lack of farming skills
- The on-again, off-again relationship with the Powhatan Indians that severely hindered hunting and gathering
- Fighting over leadership roles and colonists' reluctance to accept responsibilities of hard physical work

These are just a few sites representing topics that will encourage discussion and further individual student research.





## Kids love movies...

<https://www.historyisfun.org/video>

[www.historytube.org/gallery/classroom-videos-jamestown](http://www.historytube.org/gallery/classroom-videos-jamestown)



<https://www.historyisfun.org/video/discovering-jamestown>



<https://www.teachertube.com/video/jamestown-settlement-19705>



Students will take notes during research of books and websites and begin to focus their interest toward one particular topic for deeper research. Teacher guidance during this time as students read texts or research on the internet will help hone down topic choice and encourage elaboration of the desired subject of interest.

Keep a chart of vocabulary words pertinent to research as students encounter terms new to them or have students keep a running list of new vocabulary words they come across.

A demonstration to reinforce the dire circumstances of what the colonists faced, use beans to illustrate the survival rate of the colony. Students count 800 beans to fill a jar to show how many brave souls came to the new land. Pull 60 beans out and place in a smaller jar to represent those who survived.

## Vocabulary Basics



## Math matters



800 = number of colonists that arrived  
60 = number of colonists that survived

Another way to emphasize the scarcity of food is to cook a dish that was common at the fort, a type of gruel using oats. Use this teachable moment to explain that not all who first came to Jamestown were accustomed to hard work and since McDonald's did not exist yet, someone had to make the food while cavaliers searched for gold. Using a hotplate heat water asking students how would it have been heated back then (over a fire). What would they need for the fire (wood – they would have to cut down trees to start the fire). How would they get the water (from a nearby river) but what if the Powhatan were watching to see if they left the fort? Students will realize the amount of effort it took to make a simple meal.

## Let's Cook!

### Jamestown Gruel

Boil  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water per child, remove from heat & let each child put 1 teaspoon of oats in the pan of hot water & stir. Let cool & serve. Wonder how tasty it will be?!



- Lesson closure:** To culminate the research on the challenges facing the colonists settling Jamestown, have students create a replica of the fort. Explain that building homes the real way in Jamestown took a lot of work. Materials could not be bought at Home Depot but had to be collected and hauled from the forest and rivers and fashioned by hand in a technique called wattle and daub! This can be done with partners to be done in class or assigned as a homework project and can be accomplished in several different ways. One way is to use craft foam for the base, popsicle sticks or those gathered from outside for fencing, Lincoln Logs for the cabins, and moss found at hobby stores. An edible version is one using graham crackers, pretzels and icing. Allow students to display models as they offer their reports and celebrate their newfound knowledge of Jamestown, the first English settlement in America.



If wattle and daub sounds too messy...

Create a Jamestown fort using graham crackers, pretzels & icing!

7. **Assessment of student understanding:** As students report their findings on research of the challenges faced by Jamestown colonists and present their models of the fort, they will not only reinforce what they learned in their own research, they will continue learning as they take in their peer's discoveries as well. Assessment may be achieved by a teacher made rubric covering extent of topic research, sites and texts utilized and documented, vocabulary, mechanics, speaking skills, effort in creating a model, and any other skills determined by the teacher.