

Name: _____

Colonial America

The Lost Colony of Roanoke



Directions: Read the following passage then answer the questions.

The Quest for Roanoke

In the late 16th century, England had its sights set on the New World. Queen Elizabeth wanted to compete with Spain and tap into the riches of the New World. Spain had colonies in the Americas that were rich in gold and silver. Queen Elizabeth was eager to challenge Spain and stake her claim in the New World.

A Vision of New Beginnings

Sir Walter Raleigh was Queen Elizabeth's friend and a famous explorer. He saw the potential for a thriving English colony in the Americas. Roanoke Island was just off the coast of present-day North Carolina. It had a fertile landscape and a strategic location. He thought that this would be the perfect place to start anew. In 1585, he sent Sir Richard Grenville and some settlers to build the first English colony in America.

John White and the Rough Start

One other man played a crucial role in the story of Roanoke: John White. He became governor of the new colony. But the new colony faced many challenges. The colonists had conflicts with the local Native American tribes. They also suffered from a lack of food and resources. White and others returned to England to request help and more supplies. A small group of 15 settlers remained on the island to maintain an English presence.

White's Return and The Arrival Virginia Dare

In 1587 Sir Walter Raleigh sponsored another expedition to Roanoke. This new attempt was led by John White. When White returned to Roanoke, he found the bones of the previous group. There were no survivors. This was chilling, but then something happened that brought hope to the colonists. John White's granddaughter Virginia Dare was born.

Virginia was the first English child born in the New World. Many felt that her birth was symbol and an omen of their efforts in Roanoke. But this arrival did not change the fortunes of the colonists. Soon they ran low on food and supplies again. So, John White returned to England to restock.

White's Delayed Return and The Mysterious Disappearance

White had hoped to return much faster, but war with Spain was on the horizon. Queen Elizabeth ordered that all ships remain in port for war efforts. When White finally did return to Roanoke in 1590, all he found was the word "CROATOAN" carved on a post. His family was gone. He searched for as long as he could. But he never found them. This event ended Raleigh's attempts to colonize Roanoke. The fate of those lost colonists remains a mystery.

Name: _____

Colonial America

The Lost Colony of Roanoke

Directions: Read the following passage then answer the questions.



Reading Questions

1. Why was Queen Elizabeth motivated to set up a colony in the New World? _____

2. How do you think that Queen Elizabeth felt about Spain's success in the Americas? _____

3. Why do you believe this?

4. What evidence does the text provide to show that the colony faced significant challenges? _____

5. What was the significance of Virginia Dare's birth to the colonists? _____

6. Given the challenges faced by the settlers, do you think they were adequately prepared? _____

7. Why do you believe this? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

8. How would you summarize the central challenge that the Roanoke expeditions faced? _____

9. What event caused John White to delay his return to Roanoke? _____

10. Why do you think Sir Walter Raleigh quit attempting to colonize Roanoke? _____
