

## CLOZE NOTES FOR POCAHONTAS

1. What are some challenges that historians might face when evaluating sources about Pocahontas?

Answers may vary but should include some commentary on bias, evaluating for accuracy, time gaps for capturing the Pamunkey perspective since oral histories were not recorded until more recently, the possibility of John Smith exaggerating or misunderstanding his account of Pocahontas saving him, and the persisting legend/myth of Pocahontas.

2. When was Pocahontas born?

Unknown, though historians believe 1595-1597

3. What other names was Pocahontas known by?

Amonute, Matoaka, Nonpareil, Lady Rebecca

4. Name three different activities that Pocahontas might have done to support life in the Powhatan community as a young woman:

Besides bearing and rearing children, women were responsible for building the houses (called *yehakins* by the Powhatan), which they may have owned. Women did all the farming, (planting and harvesting), the cooking (preparing and serving), collected water needed to cook and drink, gathered firewood for the fires (which women kept going all the time), made mats for houses (inside and out), made baskets, pots, cordage, wooden spoons, platters and mortars. Women were also barbers for the men and would process any meat the men brought home as well as tanning hides to make clothing.

5. What is a Beloved Woman?

A Beloved Woman is a medicine woman. She is trained in "reading the land" and in the ways of the *medewewin* (medicine dance). She is involved in the *manito aki* (ceremonial/spirit world).

6. What are some of the struggles endured by the first 100-man crew who arrived at Jamestown under the Virginia Company of London?

Answers may vary. They settled in a swamp and they were not prepared for problems with drinking water and growing crops. They struggled with class issues and felt like some of the labor was beneath their dignity. They depended heavily on assistance from the Native Americans.

7. What are some variations in the story of Pocahontas saving John Smith?

Answers may vary. In his 1608 account, Smith described a large feast followed by a talk with Powhatan in which he did not meet Pocahontas for the first time until a few months later. In 1616, Smith describes the dramatic act of selflessness which would become legendary: "... at the minute of my execution", he

wrote, "she [Pocahontas] hazarded the beating out of her own brains to save mine; and not only that, but so prevailed with her father, that I was safely conducted to Jamestown." In the 1624 version two men were killed while John Smith was minding his own business outdoors.

In the Pamunkey version, Smith came across a hunting party and was captured and paraded around to prove that he was a human to the other villages. The "rescue" was a ceremony, initiating Smith as another chief. It was a way to welcome Smith, and, by extension, all the English, into the Powhatan nation by having him be "reborn" into the tribe. The Pamunkey version states that Pocahontas would not have been present, as children were not allowed at religious rituals. Afterwards, Pocahontas would have considered Smith a leader and defender of the Powhatan people, as an allied chief of the English tribe.

8. Approximately how many colonists came to Jamestown in 1607? **100** 1609? **500** How many were left in 1610? **60** Imagine that you were in a small settlement and you saw the population increase and decrease that rapidly. What feeling might you experience if you were a survivor in 1610? Would you have wanted to stay in Jamestown? Explain. **Answers will vary.**

9. We do not know how Pocahontas felt towards Jon Rolfe or the British who held her captive. Some historians argue that Pocahontas developed Stockholm Syndrome, which is a condition that causes hostages to develop a psychological alliance with their captors as a survival strategy during captivity. Others argue that she and Jon Rolfe must have actually fallen in love. There is no right or wrong answer but imagine that you were Pocahontas' best friend and you would be able to talk to her about wanting to marry Jon Rolfe and asking her father for permission right in the middle of those skirmishes. What would you want to say to her or ask her about?

**Answers will vary.**

10. Where was Pocahontas buried and when? **St. George's in Gravesend, England on March 21, 1617**