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Our First Families

KidsPost Article: "The Unboring Illustrated True Story of the Washington Area from 1600 to Right Now, Part 1"

Lesson: An introduction to the first Americans who settled along the Potomac River

Level: All

Subjects: History, social studies

Related Activity: Language arts, art

About This Series: This is the first of nine illustrated segments about the history of the Washington area. Each installment will treat a different period—European settlement, the creation of the nation's capital, the Civil War era, the turn of the century, up to the present. The series is meant to be a provocative starting point for young people rather than a definitive history. Its aim is to provide context to where we live. to convey the idea that life here evolved in rich and exciting ways that transcend the conventional portrayal of Washington as only a seat of government. Students in each of the three jurisdictions-Maryland, Virginia and the Districtwill find something meaningful in

September: First Families: The Journey Begins

Our knowledge of the Native Americans who lived in the Washington area is fragmentary, especially compared with the voluminous record of the years that followed their disappearance. A complete picture, even a semicomplete picture, is unattainable.

But this is a learning opportunity for young people in several respects. First, it is a chance to study how researchers unearth the buried past and how they use fragments to piece together the larger picture. There's a speculative element of course. An archeologist or an anthropologist says we know X and we know Y. Put together they suggest—but do not prove—Z.

Second, it is opportunity to view drawings and read accounts of individuals who were the first Europeans to come to this area. We can discuss the extent of their objectivity and the influence their culture had on their observations of an unfamiliar one.

Third, it is a lesson in intellectual discipline (and humility) that is truly valuable. On some subjects, in some fields, we just have to accept that we can only know so much. Of course, we try to fill in the blanks. But we do not fill in the blanks with fiction or idealized images, as has happened so often, particularly with early studies of Native American culture. Returning to the equation above: If "Z" is the best we can do for the moment, we will take it, recognizing it for what it is, a deduction.

Read and Discuss

Give students "Q and A," a reproducible that provides basic information about the people who lived in this area. For a more comprehensive article, download "Life in America 400 Years Ago: When Algonquian Culture Ruled Our Region." What do students understand about people living in our region 400 years ago?

In the Know

On the Web

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/education/kidspost/nie/A99958-1995Jun14.html

"Life in America 400 Years Ago: When Algonquian Culture Ruled Our Region" Stephen Hyslop in this Post Horizon article provides a good introduction to Native Americans who lived in this area.

➤ Rountree, Helen C. *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia: Their Traditional Culture*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1989.

An anthropologist at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Roundtree provides readable information using the accounts of John Smith and other English colonists.

➤ Rountree, Helen and Thomas E. Davidson. *Eastern Shore Indians of Virginia and Maryland*. University of Virginia, 1997.

A closer look at the Native Americans who lived east of the Chesapeake and their relations to the land and each other.

- ➤ Potter, Stephen. Commoners, Tribute and Chiefs: The Development of Algonquian Culture in the Potomac Valley. University of Virginia Press, 1993. Dr. Potter, an archeologist based at National Park Service headquarters in D.C., combines archeology, anthropology and ethno-history for a scholarly study of the rise of the Chicacoans.
- ➤ Egloff, Keith and Deborah Woodward. First People, the Early Indians of Virginia. Virginia Department of Natural Resources, 1993.

The Virginia archives of Indian artifacts provided the extensive collection upon which state historians reconstructed what aboriginal life might have been like from 9500 B.C. to the 1800s. Includes descriptions of Virginia's eight surviving tribes.

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Our First Families (continued)

KidsPost Article: "The Unboring Illustrated True Story of the Washington Area from 1600 to Right Now, Part 1"

Check out Geography

A map of D.C. in the early 1600s is provided. Give students "Map It." Note the topographic features: hills and low lands, creeks and rivers, inlets and islands.

Create a Timeline

"Timeline: 1400-1600" is divided into two main sections—the North American experience and that of the rest of the world. A few significant examples from history and discovery, inventions and technology, arts and literature are indicated. You might have students add examples from their current study. For example, if Africa is being studied in class, add examples from there.

Examine the First Draft of History

The story of Native Americans has often been filtered through clouded lenses with both favorable and unfavorable consequences for them. Through this activity, the accuracy of detailing a way of life and the romanticization of Native Americans can be illustrated. Watercolorist John White actually saw his subjects and left us a series of eyewitness portrayals of the Powhatan Native American Culture. Then Theodor De Bry used White's watercolors to make engravings about the same culture. To see the neo-classical sheen he put on these images, begin with the first in a series of pairs of White and De Bry illustrations (http://je fferson.village.virginia.edu/vcdh/ jamestown/images/white_debry_ html/plate32.html) and compare White's "Indian Woman and

Young Girl" with De Bry's. Give students "First Draft of History" to study "Indian Woman and Baby of Poemiooc," view a virtual village and compare and contrast images. To answer question four, give students copies of "Toward Nacotchtank."

Read Art

Provide students copies of "Growing Up in the Potomac Valley." In this handout, students learn about the life of younger members of the Powhatan and Piscataway chiefdoms. Information for this reproducible, came from Rountree's works and the commentary of Paul Hulton and David Beers Quinn (American Drawings of John White, 1577-1590) found on the Jamestown site. Compare and contrast your students' way of life with that of those living in the 1500s.

Give students "Toward Nacotchtank." What aspects of growing up are illustrated in this artwork? Where are these found in the image? Have students "read" the Patterson work more carefully. Using the key to the illustration found on page 13, guide students on a close reading.

Learn about Law and Order

Based on eyewitness observations, contemporary accounts (Pocahontas and others) and archeological evidence, scholars have attempted to understand the power structure and maintenance of order within and between the chiefdoms. Have students read "Mamonotowick,"

In the Field

➤ http://www.historyisfun.org/

Jamestown Settlement and Yorktown Victory Center

Select "Jamestown Settlement" for information about the Powhatan Indian Village at the Jamestown Settlement in Virginia. Historical interpreters demonstrate preparing food, processing animal hides and weaving natural fibers into cordage.

www.nmai.si.edu/

National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI)

Get visitor information for the Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Md., and plans for the NMAI to open on Sept. 21, 2004, on The Mall. Visit the "Education" section for teaching materials. If in New York City, view the George Gustav Heye Center exhibits.

- ➤ The Piscataway Indian Museum in White Plains, Md.
 Open Sundays, 1-4 p.m.
 Maryland Indian Cultural Center 16816 Country Lane
 Waldorf, MD 20601
 301-372-1932
- ➤ http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/eam/index.htm

The Earliest Americans

The National Park Service Archeology and Ethnography program provides basic information on their study of nominated archeological sites to preserve the legacy of the earliest Americans. On the Record section in "The Southeast" provides a map of archeology sites that PaleoIndians inhabited.

➤ http://www.cr.nps.gov/ archeologv.htm

Links to the Past: Archeology

Discoveries of the National Park Service archeologists and their partners.



Our First Families (continued)

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Werowances and the People." Discuss the early concepts of law and order.

Do a Crossword Puzzle

The crossword puzzle is built upon terms associated with the way of life of the Algonquian culture - the Conoy chiefdom of southern Maryland and the Powhatan chiefdom of eastern Virginia.

Enrichment

For an introduction to bartering and more Native American resources, visit *www.washpost.com/nie*. Select Lesson Plans. Click on "A World of Money," the first of the Post NIE online guides.

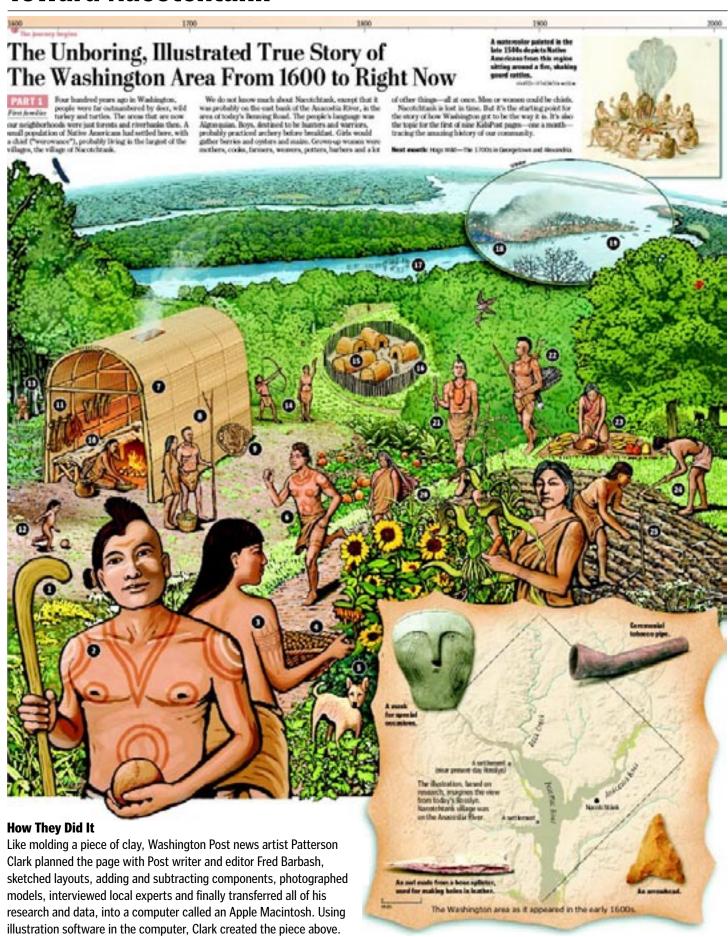
Kev (from page 5)

- 1. Stickball, anyone?
- 2. Body paint.
- 3. Tattoo.
- 4. Acorns, boiled for food and medicine.
- 5. Dogs were great rabbit chasers.
- 6. Messenger.
- 7. Home sweet home; a small long house.
- 8. Fishing spear.
- 9. Drying a beaver pelt.
- 10. Sleeping platform.
- 11. Drying tobacco leaves.
- 12. Soccer practice.
- 13. Seeking a god's help.
- 14. Longbow practice.
- 15. The chief (werowance) lived here.
- 16. Palisade (a fence), to protect chief.
- 17. Fish trap (weir).
- 18. Fire wall to trap deer (winter).
- 19. Bowmen in canoes to shoot the deer.
- 20. Woman carrying maize (corn).

Crossword Answers



Toward Nacotchtank



Map It

This map represents the area that is present-day metropolitan Washington, D.C. An Algonquian-speaking people lived here more than 400 years ago. Nacotchtank is believed to have existed on the bank of the Anacostia River where it meets the Potomac. Descriptions from early explorers and research suggest that another settlement existed on the Virginia side of the Potomac River across from what is now Roosevelt Island.

- 1. Locate the Potomac River, the Anacostia River and Rock Creek.
- 2. What other rivers and streams are indicated on the map?
- 3. Indicate a north, south, east and west orientation.
- 4. How is higher elevation indicated on the map?
- 5. Locate present-day Roosevelt Island, Rosslyn, Georgetown, Alexandria, Silver Spring and Capitol Hill on the map.
- 6. How might the geography of the area have influenced the way the first families lived here?





Q&A

What did the Washington region look like in the 1500s and early 1600s?

Canopied hardwood forests gave way to terraced fields and then marshland as the landscape descended to the Potomac and Anacostia rivers. Captain John Smith in his *Historie* describes the area: "The river above this place maketh his passage downe a low pleasant valley overshadowed in manie places with high rocky mountains from whence distill innumerable sweet and pleasant springs."

Where did the Native Americans live at the time?

Descriptions from early explorers and research suggest a village—called Nacotchtank—on the bank of the Anacostia where it meets the Potomac. Another settlement existed on the Virginia side of the river across from what is now Roosevelt Island. Yet another was just south of Alexandria at Cameron Run.

Who were the people who lived here?

They were Algonquian-speaking people. They are generally not identified as a "tribe" but as a chiefdom or a sphere of power. South of the Potomac River, the most powerful was the Powhatan chiefdom, the sphere of the paramount chief named Powhatan, father of Pocahontas. North of the Potomac was another politically complex culture—the Conoy chiefdom. Piscataways are the largest group of the Conoy chiefdom.

How many lived in our area?

Scholars are not sure. Rough estimates put the number at no more than 2500, but these figures are not very reliable.

How did they live?

They lived off the land and the river.

They hunted deer, bear and other wild animals. They trapped fish in "weirs"—V-shaped structures built in the rivers that the fish swam into but couldn't get out of. They gathered berries and acorns. And they consumed oysters in large quantities, gathered from the wetlands around the river. They grew crops—especially maize and tobacco.

From evidence found in Rock Creek Park, archeologists believe that Indians dug quartzite, then chipped, flaked and polished stones into weapons and tools.

How did they travel?

They walked and they paddled, using canoes made from hollowed-out tree trunks. They did not use horses.

How do we know about them?

Captain John Smith met them in 1608 as he sailed up the Potomac. He made a map of where the Native Americans lived (there were far more settlements in Virginia's northern neck) and wrote about his experiences. Other early visitors also left behind written descriptions and drawings. The Native Americans did not write and left no written evidence, though archeologists have found tools, arrowheads and other evidence that tell us something about how and where they lived.

What happened to the Native Americans who lived around here?

Starting in the 1600s, Europeans began settling in the area, trapping beavers, then engaging in the tobacco trade and finally organizing the towns of Alexandria and Georgetown. The local Native Americans gradually vanished from this area as Europeans moved in. They probably went westward across the Blue Ridge.



Research and reporting by Fred Barbash

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NORTH AMERICA WORLD Arts History Literature Invention Timeline (1400-1600) **962-1806:** Holy Roman Empire 1400 1000-1600: Algonquian Language cultures **1400-1600:** Renaissance, Italy 1406-1408: Forbidden City construction begins in Beijing 1417: Works of Confucius published - 1450: Gutenberg invents movable type 1495: Leonardo Da Vinci paints the Last Supper 1500 1500-1600: Renaissance, Europe = 1512: Michelangelo completes Sistine Chapel ceiling - 1517: First Europeans reach China by sea 1520-1566: Reign of Suleyman, the Lawmaker 1600

- 1492: Christopher Columbus lands on an island in the Caribbean
- 1497: John Cabot claims Newfoundland for England; Europeans begin to fish on the Grand Banks, leading to contact with coastal tribes
- 1515: European fishermen investigate the possibilities of trade in animal furs. The fur trade becomes a major economic force throughout North America.
- 1550: The League of the Iroquois forms to avoid continuing conflict among Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga and Seneca
- 1585: British Colony of Roanoke; Cartographer John White makes an important series of watercolor drawings of people and places -
- **1587:** Second Colony of Roanoke; Virginia Dare born -
- **1590:** Theodor De Bry reissues Thomas Hariot's Virginia with engravings by De Bry -

1400 1500 1600



Growing Up in the Potomac Valley

After taking its first breath, a baby was dipped in cold water. A tie to the natural world and life lived near water was begun. Water—for bathing, fishing and cooking—would be part of a Native American's daily life along the Potomac.

Babies were strapped to cradle boards until they could crawl. They might first notice the earrings made of shell beads or freshwater pearls worn by adults. The flash of red of a native cardinal or the smell of burning wood as meals were prepared or a dugout canoe was created would fill their senses.

Children explored their world without clothing to bind their movement. Men wore a loincloth and women an apron made of deerskin. Moccasins and leggings were worn when venturing into woodlands to gather wild berries or to hunt. The native white-tailed deer also were used to craft cloaks for cold weather. The right side of the head of hunters was shaved to keep the bowstrings from becoming entangled in the hair.

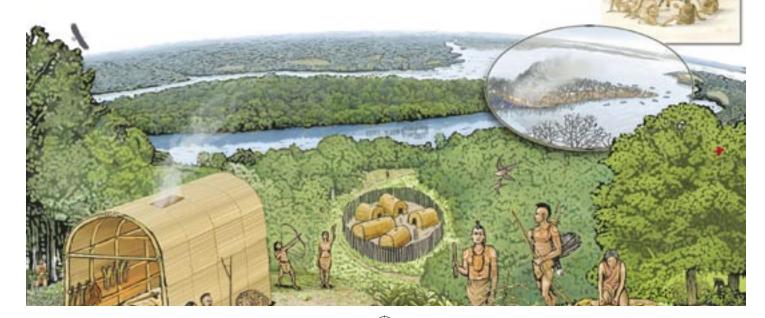
Men taught their sons to hunt and fish and to prepare for war. Mothers were observed throwing moss and bones into the air; only after successfully hitting these targets were their sons given breakfast. Daughters were taught to prepare meals, make pottery, weave baskets and mats, repair houses and care for the young.

Meals depended on the season and abundance. Geese, sturgeon, bass, crabs and deer supplemented meals of beans, corn, nuts and wild berries. Tuckahoe or wild potatoes, squash and ground mulberry could be used to create a broth. Powhatan words that have entered our vocabulary include "succotash," "opossum" and "raccoon." Tools were created from sharpened reeds, the spurs from wild turkeys, bills of sharp-billed birds, and sharp edged mussel shells. Beaver teeth were even spliced to sticks.

In spite of the many tasks to be completed, there was time for dancing, playing of instruments and games. Early European explorers wrote about four games that they witnessed being played.

- Kick a ball to a goal. The boys and women were not allowed to "fight nor pull one another doune" or "strike vp one anothers heeles as we doe."
- Hit a ball with crooked sticks. The ball was made of leather and stuffed with hair. Teams would drive the ball "between two trees appointed for their goal."
- Footraces in groups. A prize was hung in a tree for the winner to reach.
- Football. Men dropped a "litel balle" from their hands and kicked it with the top of their foot. The winner was the one who kicked it the greatest distance.

The first Americans who lived by the Potomac could be observed working the land and fishing, sitting in silence for hours or dancing as the sun set over the life-sustaining waters.





First Draft of History

The eyewitness account is valued. It takes us to the scene, allowing us to experience people, places and events. At the end of the 16th century, John White and Thomas Hariot provided their observations of the New World.

"Virtual Jamestown" (http://
jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vcdh/
jamestown/images/white_debry_
html/introduction.html) provides an
accessible collection of watercolors by
John White and engravings of Theodor
De Bry. According to the introduction
to the project:

"In 1585 White, an artist and cartographer, accompanied the voyage from England to the Outer Banks of North Carolina under a plan of Sir Walter Raleigh to settle 'Virginia.' White was at Roanoke Island for about thirteen months before returning to England for more supplies. During this period he made a series of over seventy watercolor drawings of indigenous people, plants, and animals. The purpose of his drawings was to give those back home an accurate idea of the inhabitants and environment in the New World. Despite their extraordinary significance, the watercolors were not published until the twentieth century. In 1590, Theodor De Bry made engravings from White's drawings to be printed in Thomas Hariot's account of the journey. Hariot, a mathematician, had also been part of the 1585 voyage."

Scientist Hariot and artist/ cartographer White spent early and middle winter of 1585-86 with the "Chesepieans," collecting information about the Chesapeake Indians and the area that is now Norfolk, Portsmouth, Chesapeake and Virginia Beach. When we view these early illustrations, we see the world as contemporaries of Sir Walter Raleigh and Captain John Cook first learned of it.

1. View the work of John White and Theodor De Bry in plate 34, "Indian Woman and Baby of Poemiooc." (http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vcdh/jamestown/images/white_debry_html/plate34.html)

What details remain the same? What differences do you note between the paired works? Remember White drew the first illustrations. De Bry had White's art and Hariot's accounts on which to base his engravings. How might "audience" have influenced both artists?

- 2. Read the commentary that accompanies the paired artwork. Write a paragraph in which you compare and contrast the two illustrations.
- 3. View plate 31, "Indian Village of Pomeiooc." (http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vcdh/jamestown/images/white_debry_html/plate31.html)

Compare the two illustrations.
Select "Pomeiooc in Virtual Reality."
John White used his imagination and knowledge of cartography to paint a "bird's-eye-view" of an Algonquian village in 1585. A University of Virginia professor of architecture and his students applied modern technology to create a virtual village. Compare their Quicktime view with White's watercolor and De Bry's engraving.

4. Using the knowledge you have gained from viewing 16th and 21st century renditions of our first Americans, examine the artwork found in "Toward Nacotchtank." Study the work of artist Patterson Clark for groupings, gestures, objects and activities. What do you know about the way of life of those who first settled on the banks of the Potomac River?





Law and Order

Mamonotowick, Werowances and Commoners

Custom and accepted roles for leaders provided order in the chiefdoms.

Captain John Smith in his reports stated that the order imposed on the people by their rulers surpassed that of "many places that would be counted very civil." South of the Potomac River, Powhatan was the *mamonotowick*, the most powerful position. The paramount chief of 30-40 Algonquian tribal groups, Powhatan would decree what was right to do and it was done. Under him were werowances (male chiefs) and weroansquas (female chiefs). These leaders lived in the largest long-houses with many rooms and were given prized items such as pearls. Similar arrangements were observed north of the Potomac.

In matters that directly affected them, weroances gave orders that were obeyed. It was they who were ultimately responsible for the well-being of the community. Helen Rountree in Eastern Shore Indians of Virginia and Maryland that chiefs "had to consult with councils of priests and outstanding warriors (appointed from certain families, at least among the Piscataways) before they could give orders, especially

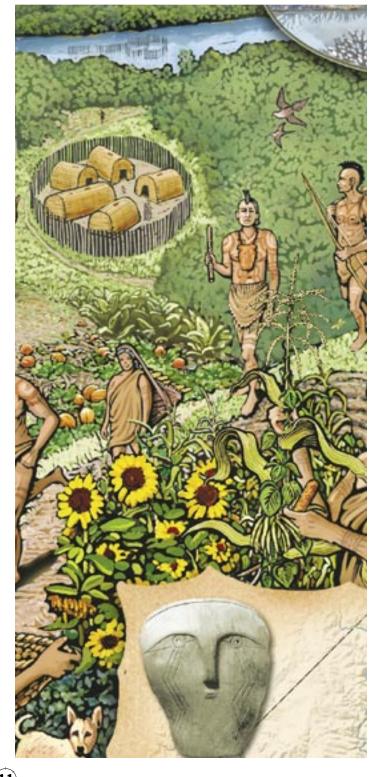
military ones." Conjurors or priests were also called upon during planting, harvest and squalls. Early records indicate that council meetings were held at Greenleaf Point, the lower point of Fort McNair.

Murder, infanticide and stealing from one's own people were considered major crimes. The Europeans who first settled in the area witnessed the significance of being an outsider, or "non-human," when items were stolen from them or members of their group were attacked.

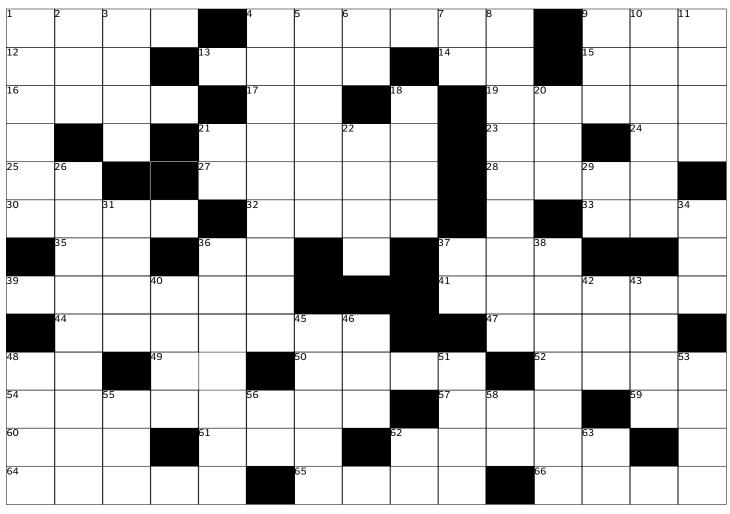
Assisting in one of these actions made one as guilty as the one who committed the act. The community required justice. Several English witnessed clubbing to death, breaking of bones and "being deade his bodye was burnt" as punishment.

When it came to personal grudges, custom guided the actions of the common folk. For wrong actions, compensation was expected. Personal revenge seemed to be allowed.

Much as the palisades that were built around villages to protect one's community, custom and the wisdom of weroances brought order and a sense of well being to daily life.



Algonquian and Other Words



ACROSS

- 1. This aquatic animal was a staple of their diet.
- 4. Gourds enjoyed as fresh fruit
- 9. Used with a line and hook to catch fish
- 12. Mineral containing metal
- 13. A staple of the diet; maize
- 14. Each (abbr.)
- 15. "__ (two words) of little faith."
- 16. Tall grass that was sharpened to create a spear
- 17. Current rate (abbr.)
- 19. Waterfowl that were cooked
- 21. Crusts that form over wounds
- 23. __ _ i ο ι
- 24. Initials of U.S. President for whom an island in the Potomac is named
- 25. Sworn statement (abbr.)
- 27. Major source of transportation made from log
- 28. A footprint or broken twig could provide a .
- 30. A long tooth used to get food or defend against an attacker
- 32. A celestial body visible at night
- 33. Curved path of an arrow

- 35. Mailing code for Colorado
- 36. Comes between la and do.
- 37. Library of Congress (abbr.)
- 39. Shrewdness
- 41. Wild bird native to the area, associated with thanksgiving
- 44. An Algonquian word for a white, nocturnal mammal
- 47. Movement of eagle or one's spirit
- 48. Preposition
- 49. Light (abbr.)
- 50. The rivers' sedimentary deposit
- 52. Unknown writer (abbr.)
- 54. Native songbird of Virginia
- 57. Hardwood tree whose nuts were boiled for food and medicine
- 59. Shenandoah University (abbr.)
- 60. Teaspoon (abbr.)
- 61. Preposition
- 62. "___ of passage"
- 64. Description of a lustrous, polished surface
- 65. Duck eaten by Powhatan; dark greenish blue color
- 66. Bright surfaces would reflect the ____ of the sun

DOWN

- 1. Wooded area where deer and bear were hunted
- 2. Anger
- 3. Planted to produce the next season's
- 4. Worn when hunting in wooded areas; made of deerskin
- 5. Straying away from the proper path
- 6. Lane (abbr.)
- 7. Northeast (abbr.)
- 8. Keen in sense perception and judgment
- 9. Eggs of a fish
- 10. Mollusk that was eaten and shells used for several purposes
- 11. Native inhabitant, a source of food and clothing
- 18. One who takes advantage of another
- 20. Long fish with smooth, slimy skin
- 21. South Carolina (abbr.)
- 22. Wild hog
- 26. Algonquian dish made of lima beans and green corn
- 29. United Airlines (abbr.)
- 31. Liquid food made from meat, fish or vegetable stock

- 34. Someone was placed on watch over the maize to ___ out and make noises to scare away "fowles an beasts."
- 36. To bear witness
- 37. Light (abbr.)
- 38. Fish that make grunting noise; town in Virginia
- 40. Soil rich in humus; to knead
- 42. Kansas (Associated Press abbrev.)
- 43. Greek god of love
- 45. Illustrations made in America (three words/abbr.)
- 46. Military (abbr.)
- 48. Deeds
- 51. Work
- 53. Hard-shelled dry fruits or seeds, used for food or medicine
- 55. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (abbr.)
- 56. Negative response
- 58. Preposition
- 62. Royal Academy (abbr.)
- 63. South American (abbr.)



Academic Content Standards (The main lesson addresses these academic content standards.)

This lesson addresses academic content standards of Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. Among those that apply are:

Maryland

Social Studies

United States History (2.0). 2.1 Students demonstrate understanding of societies in the Americas, Western Europe, and Western Africa and how they interacted increasingly after 1450. 2.1.5.2 analyze the social, economic, and political characteristics of societies native to North America

Reading

Students will demonstrate their ability to read for information by examining, constructing and extending meaning from articles, editorials, content texts and other expository materials related to the content areas. Grades 4-5 are able to summarize text in a manner that reflects the main ideas, significant details and its underlying meaning.

A complete list of State Content Standards of Maryland can be found at http://www.mdk12.org/mspp/standards/.

Virginia

History

United States History to 1877. 5.1 The student will describe life in America before the 17th century by

- identifying and describing the first Americans ... Indians of the Eastern forest (Iroquois, etc.) ...
- explaining how geography and climate influenced the way various Indian tribes lived:
- evaluating the impact of native economies on their religions, arts, shelters and cultures.
 5.2 The student will trace the routes and evaluate early explorations of the Americas, in terms of
- the political, economic, and social impact on the American Indians

English

Reading/Literature: The student will demonstrate comprehension of a variety of literary forms.

· Write about what is read.

A complete list of Standards of Learning of Virginia can be found on the Web at http://www.pen.k12.va.us/.

Washington, D.C.

Social Studies

Chronology and Space in Human History.
Students understand chronological order and spatial patterns of human experiences, by placing the stories of people and events in the context of their own time and place.
By the end of Grade 5, the student will demonstrate an understanding of how European colonization and settlement affected the lives of indigenous peoples of Africa and the Americas

Historical Inquiry, Analysis and Judgment. Students use varied methods and sources in research and writing. By the end of Grade 3, the student will

• Distinguish between historical facts presented in historical documents and narratives;

By the end of Grade 5, the student will

- Understand ways of identifying and testing evidence from societies that left no written records;
- Know the difference between primary and secondary sources and identify the uses of each.

A complete list of Standards for Teaching and Learning of the District of Columbia Public Schools can be found at http://www.k12.dc.us.