

Lesson 1: Hard Times in Virginia

Vocabulary

charter a document that permitted colonists to settle on land

stock a share in a company

cash crop a crop grown for profit

indentured servant a person who agreed to work for another person in exchange for the cost of the ocean voyage to North America

House of Burgesses the first law-making body in the English colonies

The Lost Colony of Roanoke

England wanted colonies in the Americas. England did not want Spain to control all of North America. Also, English leaders hoped to find gold and other natural resources. An English colony set up on Roanoke Island in 1585 was not a success. In 1587 John White started another colony on Roanoke Island. White returned to England. When he went back to the island in 1590, the colonists were gone. Roanoke is called “The Lost Colony” because no one knows what happened to the colonists.

The Battle of the Spanish Armada

Spain did not like England moving into North America. English sea captains had also been taking riches from Spanish ships. Spain attacked England in 1588. The Spanish Armada, a huge fleet of warships, sailed to England. The English navy defeated the Spanish Armada using smaller, faster ships with powerful guns.

The Jamestown Colony

In 1606 the Virginia Company was formed to set up a colony in North America. **Stocks**, or shares in the company, were sold to pay for setting up the colony. The company received a **charter**, or land grant, from King James I of England. In 1607 colonists settled in an area on the eastern coast of Virginia and named the area

Jamestown. The area was filled with disease-carrying mosquitoes and unhealthy water. People began to die soon after they arrived.

John Smith and the “Starving Time”

Some colonists in Jamestown spent their time looking for gold instead of setting up their colony. John Smith became leader of Jamestown. He made the colonists build houses, dig wells, plant crops, and fish. Smith left Jamestown in 1609. After he left, many people in Jamestown died. In 1610 new settlers and supplies from England helped save the settlers.

Tobacco Helps Jamestown Grow

Tobacco became Virginia’s first **cash crop**, a crop grown for profit. Farms grew quickly. The farms needed more workers. This brought **indentured servants**, or people who worked to pay off the cost of the trip from England.

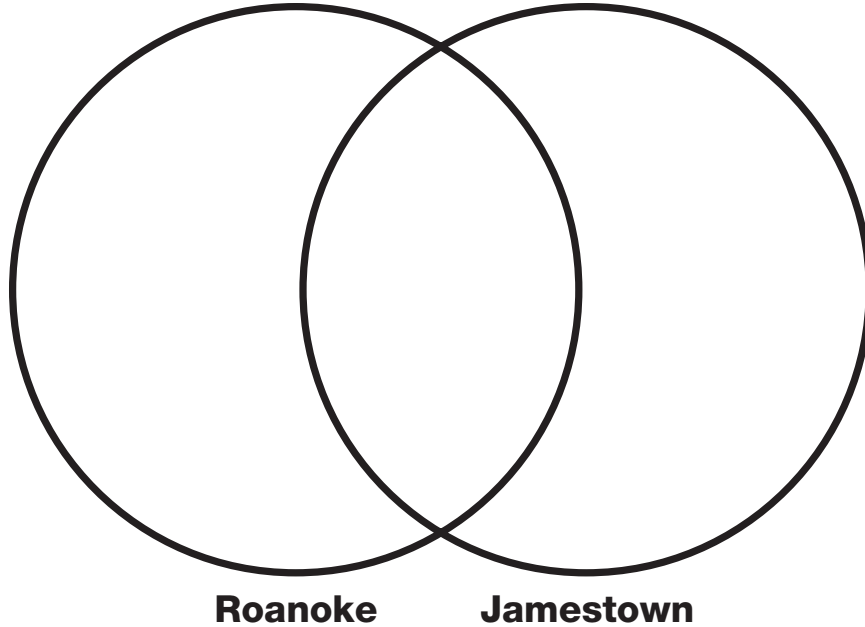
Self-Government in Virginia

The Virginia Company set up the **House of Burgesses**. It was the first law-making body in an English colony. The House of Burgesses began the tradition of self-government in the English colonies.

Lesson 1: Review

1. **Compare and Contrast** Fill in the diagram below comparing and contrasting these details about Roanoke and Jamestown:

- Why did some English leaders want to build colonies in North America?
- How did John Smith help the Jamestown colony?
- How did tobacco help Jamestown grow?



2. Why did England want to begin a colony on North America’s eastern shore?

3. How did England defeat the Spanish Armada in 1588?

4. Why did Jamestown almost fail? How was it able to survive?

5. **Critical Thinking: Make Decisions** Do you think the Virginia Company set up the best type of government for the Jamestown colony? Why or why not?
