



## BRITISH COLONIES: JAMESTOWN

**Early pioneering life was brutal, but the settlers didn't give up.** The Jamestown colony had met overwhelming difficulties in the first few years, difficulties that almost led to its failure. Starvation, injuries, and even petty bickering came close to leading to the downfall of the new settlements. However, the remaining colonists managed to survive their first trying years of pioneer life. Little did England dream that from this weak, unstable foothold would develop thirteen strong, successful colonies, constantly expanding England's hold in the New World. These thirteen British colonies would develop strong governments that would eventually challenge the authority of England in the New World.



Help

Here is your goal for this lesson:

- Explain the factors for the successful establishment of the Jamestown Colony

## VO·CAB·U·LAR·Y

### VOCABULARY

<b>burgess</b>	A member of the Virginia lawmaking body.
<b>indentured servant</b>	A colonist who agreed to work in America in exchange for his passage.



Vocab Arcade

British settlements began all along the Atlantic coast of America in the 17th century. Although brought to the New World for different reasons, British colonists were unified in their desire to make a new life for themselves in the untamed wilderness. Britain's thirteen colonies began with Virginia in 1607, spread to New England, and a short time later expanded to the middle and southern coastal regions of the Atlantic.

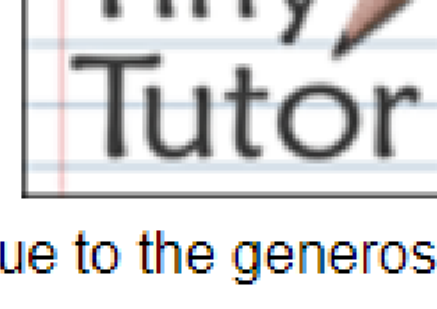
## VIRGINIA

The struggling Jamestown colony had survived its first year under the able leadership of John Smith. With the help of the Indians, the settlers stored up sufficient food supplies to weather the second winter. Homes had been built and secured against possible blizzards. However, John Smith was injured in a gunpowder explosion and was forced to return to England for medical attention. Without the direction of their proven leader, the colonists suffered many deaths during the following winter. Affairs continually grew worse until the arrival of Sir Thomas Dale. Appointed by the London Company as governor, Dale—like Smith—set up fair laws and enforced them. As an incentive to work, he gave each colonist three acres of land, knowing a man would work hard to protect and farm his own property. The plan proved to be very effective. It ended the bickering and increased production.



John Rolfe found a way to help the colony prosper when he was given tobacco seeds by the Indians in 1612. He planted it successfully and found a way to cure it that removed some of the bitterness. The new crop gave the colonists a way to make their settlement profitable. Bringing high prices in England, the tobacco was in such demand that it soon became Virginia's main crop.

Jamestown had survived its early years due to the aid of the local Indians, led by the chief named Powhatan. During that time, John Rolfe met and later fell in love with the chief's daughter, Pocahontas. She converted to Christianity and married him in 1614. She later died of smallpox during a visit to England. However, her son Thomas returned to be an important settler in the Virginia colony.

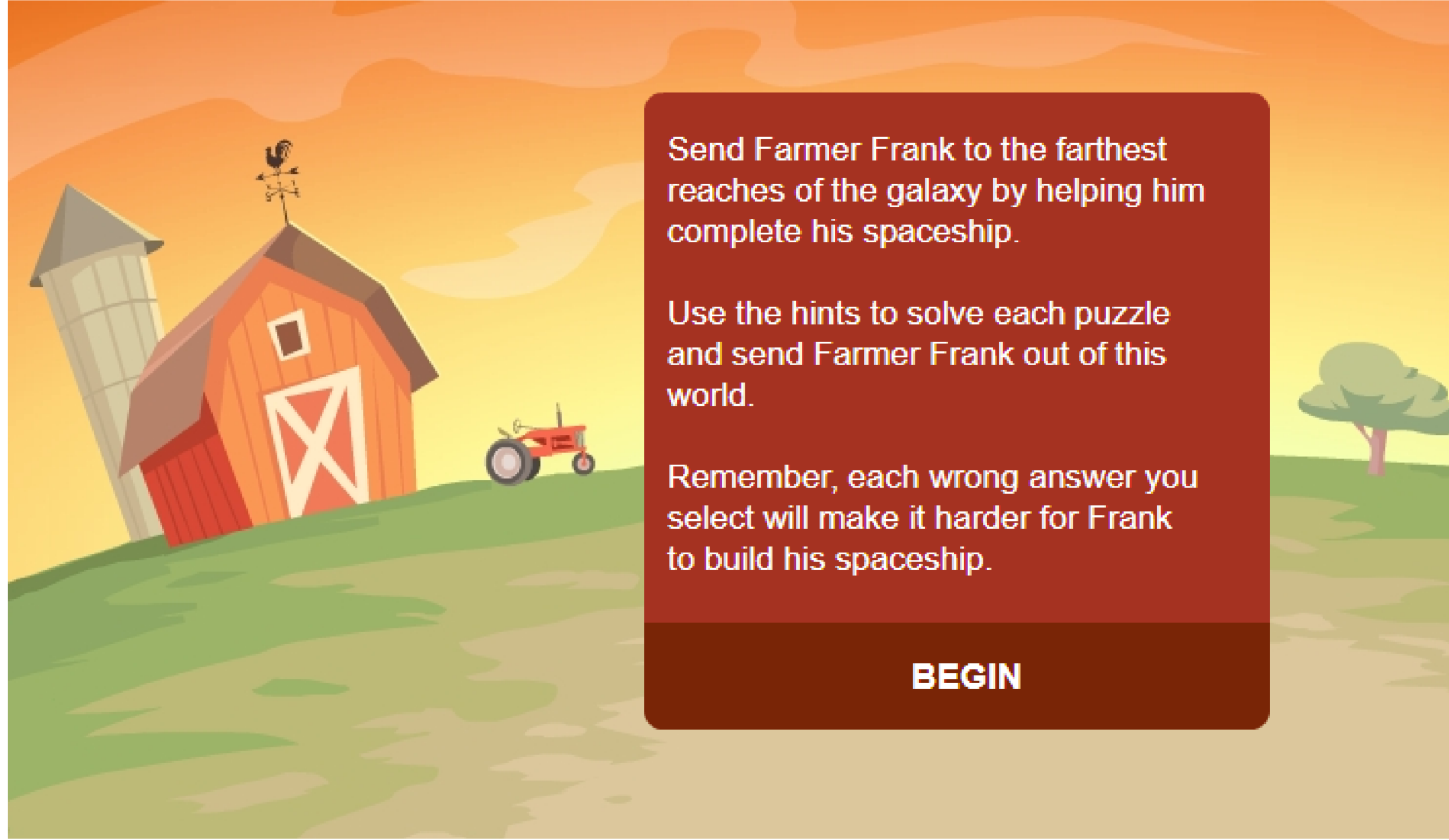


Although the English settlers had survived largely due to the generosity of the Indians, they did not always treat the Indians with the same respect or compassion. In 1607, Powhatan asked John Smith why the English used force when dealing with the Indians. Click on the "Tiny Tutor" above to hear his questions.

The demand for tobacco also presented a problem. There was a need for more workers to grow it. Many Europeans wanted to come to the New World but couldn't afford to pay their way. Therefore, in exchange for their passage to America, they pledged to work as servants for four or more years. At the end of their term, they were to be set free, sometimes given seeds and land to begin on their own. The system using these *indentured servants* dealt primarily with white men; however, the Dutch brought twenty Africans to Jamestown in 1619. They initially worked under the indenture program also. A law was passed later establishing lifelong black slavery. The law increased profits on agricultural products.

In 1619, the London Company applied changes to make life in the Jamestown community more enjoyable. In addition to making land available for ownership, the London Company sent women to the colony to marry and set up homes, ending the almost army-like existence of the men. The Bible tells us, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). When the women came to Jamestown, morale greatly improved, and the colony began to grow and prosper.

Deciding that even more people would be attracted if they were given a voice in their government, the company allowed the colonists to elect men to represent them. Each town sent two representatives called "*burgesses*" to the general assembly, known as the House of Burgesses. Meeting at the Jamestown church on July 30, 1619, the colonists shared for the first time in making their laws, giving self-government a beginning in the New World.



Question #1 MultipleChoice

Show Answer

The leader who rescued Jamestown during its first year was:

- John Rolfe
- John Smith
- Sir Thomas Dale
- Sir Walter Raleigh

Question #2 MultipleChoice

Show Answer

The Jamestown governor who gave each man land was:

- John Rolfe
- John Smith
- Sir Thomas Dale
- Sir Walter Raleigh

Question #3 MultipleChoice

Show Answer

The colonist who first planted tobacco was:

- John Rolfe
- John Smith
- Sir Thomas Dale
- Sir Walter Raleigh

Question #4 MultipleChoice

Show Answer

Those who worked to pay their way to America were called:

- serfs
- slaves
- indentured servants
- journeymen

Question #5 TextMultipleChoice

Show Answer

John Rolfe married Pocahontas, the daughter of the Indian Chief .

Question #6 TextMultipleChoice

Show Answer

Profits for growing crops  when the law was changed to allow lifelong African slavery.

Question #7 MultipleChoice

Show Answer

The lawmaking body of Virginia was called the:

- Constitutional Convention
- House of Burgesses
- House of Representatives
- Mayflower Compact

Question #8 TrueFalse

Show Answer

When Virginians could help make laws, self-government began in America.

- True
- False

Question #9 MultipleSelect

Show Answer

Which of the following are true of the developing colony at Jamestown?

- Tobacco became the main crop and made the colony profitable.
- The colony was started with families.
- The first African slaves were brought in by the Dutch in 1619.
- The London Company kept title to all the land for itself.
- The London Company did not allow the colonists any say in the government.