



**JAMESTOWN - JOURNEY OF DEMOCRACY**  
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**OFFICIAL CURRICULUM OF AMERICA'S 400<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**  
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**Europeans and Native Americans: A Tale of Two Cultures**  
Prepared by the University of Virginia Center for Politics

**Purpose:** Students will examine the barriers to cooperation between cultures and examine ways in which citizens can overcome conflicts of perspective by using the experiences at Jamestown as a case study.

The concept of the “New World” was a European one. For thousands of years prior to the arrival of the Jamestown settlers, humans had created civilizations in what is now North America. This lesson will introduce students to the Powhatan society that was flourishing in Tsenacomoco (North America) and Werowocomoco (the Powhatan capital) and compare it to the settlement that was barely surviving at Jamestown.

**Objective:**

1. Students will be able to compare the social, political and economic structure of Powhatan and the English in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in order to determine the causes of conflicts between the cultural groups at Jamestown.
2. Students will analyze instances of conflicts between citizens in order to propose methods, which citizens can use to resolve conflicts peaceably.

**Key Words:**

Civilization	Chiefdom	Werowance
New World	Tsenacomoco	Werowocomoco

**Materials:**

1. Teacher Transparency, *Fort at Jamestown*  
(Dabney, Virginius. *Virginia: The New Dominion*. Doubleday and Company: New York, 1971.)
2. Teacher Transparency, *Indian Town of Secoton*  
(Hulton, Paul. *America 1585: The Complete Drawings of John White*. University of North Carolina, 1984.)
3. Student Handout, *Potential for Harmony*  
(Gleach, Frederic. *Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia*. University of Nebraska, 2000.)
4. Graphic Organizer, *Tale of Two Cultures*
5. Student Assessment, *Letter to England*
6. Assessment, *Letter to England Evaluation*
7. Graphic Organizer, *Modern Conflicts*

## Procedure:

1. **Warm Up/Motivation.** Place the term, *New World* on the board and ask students to define what is meant by these words.
  - What comes to mind when you hear the term *New World*?
  - Why did Europeans refer to the Americas as a *New World*?
  - For who was the term *New World* meaningless? Why?
  - How does the term *New World* reflect European attitudes towards Native Americans?
2. Instruct students to brainstorm the concept of **civilization** by creating a web connecting all of the characteristics of the word. Review the answers with the students by asking the following questions:
  - What makes a society **civilized**?
  - If you were to look at the remains of a town, what would indicate to you that this was a **civilization**?
3. Project the teacher transparency, *Fort at Jamestown*. Ask the students to describe what they see in the picture and how that reflects our concepts of a **civilized** society.
4. Project the teacher transparency, *Indian Town of Secoton* and ask the students to analyze the image.
  - What activities are going on in this society?
  - What characteristics make this society civilized?
    - Evidence of agriculture
    - Specialization of labor
    - Evidence of religion
    - Housing/Architecture

Compare and Contrast the two illustrations. What is missing from the Jamestown settlement? Which society appears to be more “civilized” according to our definition? How would each of these groups, the English and the Powhatan, regard each other in terms of superiority?

Distribute the student resource, *The Potential for Harmony*. Students should read the quote and excerpt and answer the questions. The handout begins with a quote from George Horse Capture regarding the potential for cooperation between groups and suggesting the reasons why it did not occur. The excerpt describes the similar aspirations of the Powhatan and English in regards to their neighbors in Virginia.

4. Divide the students into two groups. Give each student a copy of the graphic organizer, *Tale of Two Cultures*. Students will be assigned to research either the Powhatan or English societies in Virginia. The following site/resources will assist students in their research.

Powhatan:

- Virtual Jamestown- [www.virtualjamestown.org](http://www.virtualjamestown.org)
- Powhatan Indian Village- <http://flacon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/vaindainspowindex.html>
- The Powhatan Indians- [www.baydreaming.com/powhatan.htm](http://www.baydreaming.com/powhatan.htm)

English:

- [www.virtualjamestown.org](http://www.virtualjamestown.org)
- [www.apva.org](http://www.apva.org)
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamestown,\\_Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamestown,_Virginia)

6. After students have completed their research create new groups combining equal numbers from each research group. Distribute chart paper and markers to each group and instruct the students to identify areas where there might have been cooperation and conflict between the two groups. Have the students discuss the following questions:
  - What prevented the English/Powhatan from seeing each other as equals?
  - How did differing ideas of land ownership/property rights contribute to conflicts between the English and the Powhatan?
  - Originally trade promoted cooperation among the Powhatan and English settlers. Why did trade eventually lead to conflict?

For further discussion: To what extent do English views towards non-Europeans explain their treatment of Indians? The institution of slavery beginning in 1619 at Jamestown?

7. As an assessment activity ask the students to create a letter to England from the viewpoint of an Englishman or a Powhatan. Distribute the student assessment, *Letter to England*. In the letter the students should address the following issues:
  - A description of the Powhatan empire in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and how its power was distributed
  - A description of Powhatan society and how it compares and contrasts to that of the Jamestown settlers
  - The benefits of cooperation with the Powhatan for both Englishmen and Powhatan
  - The causes/results of conflict between cultural groups
  - Suggestions for future settlers in establishing relations with the Powhatan

Use the qualitative checklist, *Letter to England Evaluation* to help students review and refine their letters. A space has been provided for both peer and teacher evaluation.

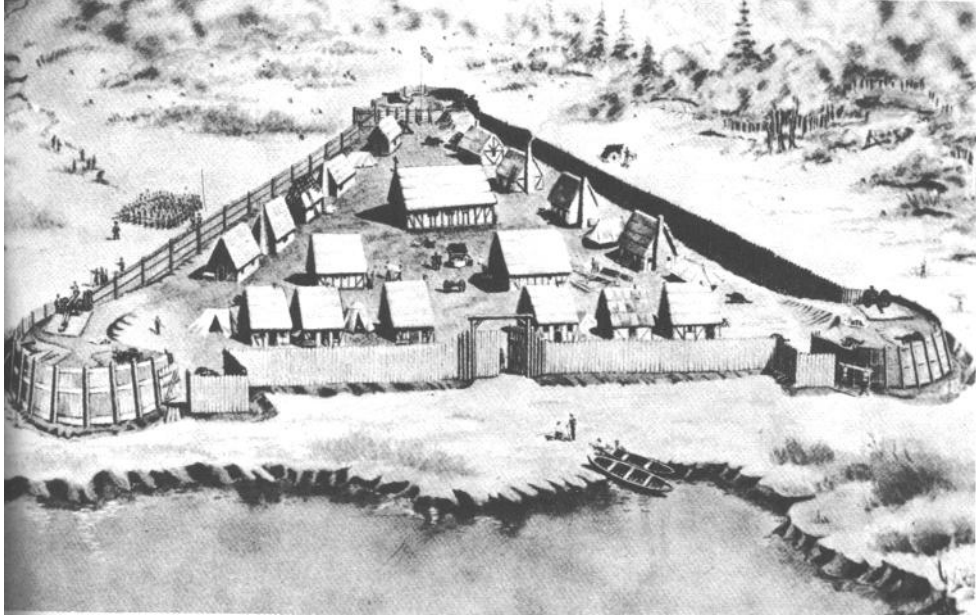
8. Make a connection with the Jamestown experience by asking students to identify other instances in current events when ethnocentrism or a belief in one's superiority over another has led to conflicts between nations, segments of a society, or individuals.

Examples:

- The Civil Rights Movement in the United States
- Women's suffrage movement in the United States
- The Federal Recognition of Indians
- Gay Rights
- Arab-Israeli conflict
- Ethnic Cleansing in Rwanda
- South Africa/ Apartheid
- Nazi Germany

Using the chart, *Modern Conflicts*, ask the students to research a contemporary issue in which conflict is caused by an inability to view experience from a diverse point of view. Students should present their issues to the class and break into small groups to discuss possible strategies for ending conflict.

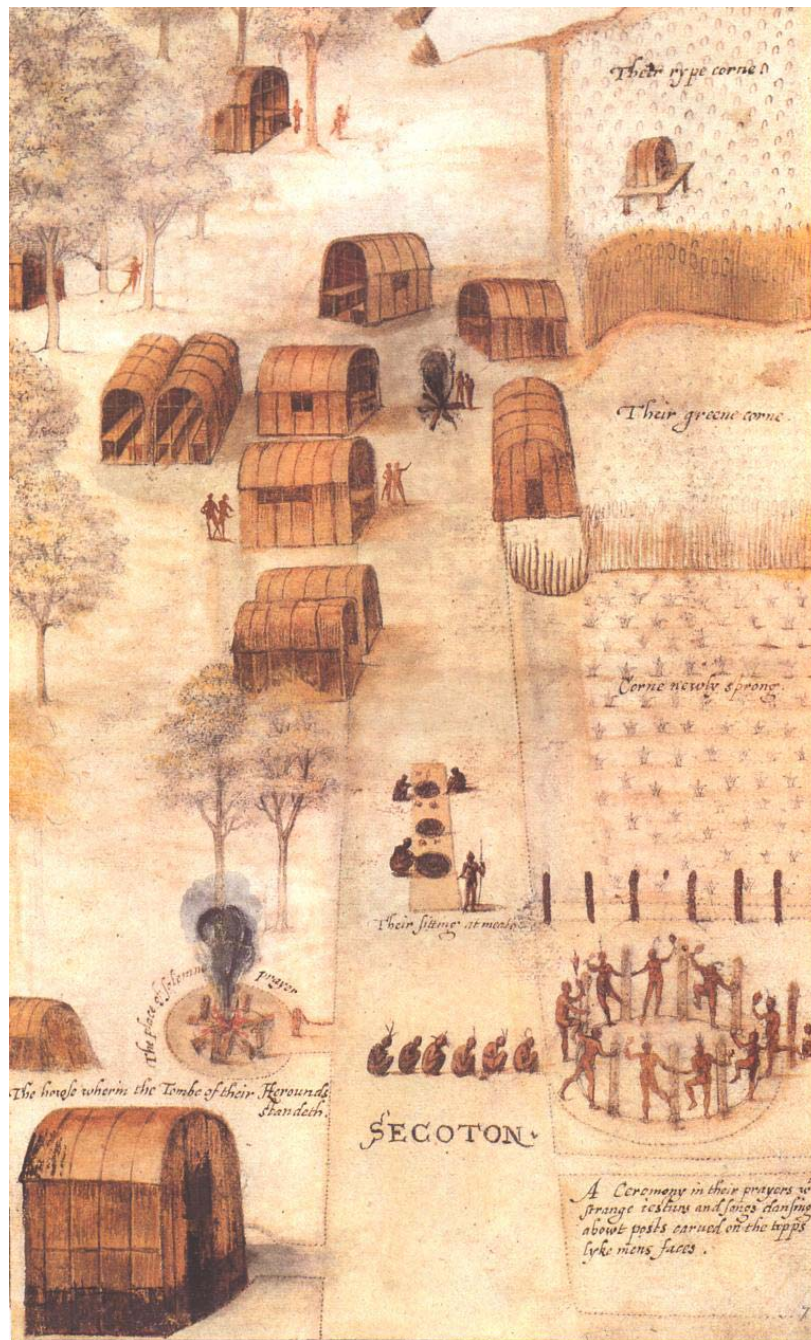
## The Fort at Jamestown



Describe what you see in this picture.

How does this reflect our concept of a civilized society?

# The Indian Town of Secoton



What activities are going on in this town?

What characteristics make this society civilized?

## Potential for Harmony

Read the following quote from George Horse Capture's, *An American Indian Perspective*.

When the two races first met on the eastern coast of America, there was unlimited potential for harmony. The newcomers could have adapted to the hosts' customs and values or at least understood and respected them. The discovery could have been the start of a new and better age. But this did not happen. The vast differences in basic beliefs and values of the two groups continually proved that they could not live together in peace. (*Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia: A Conflict of Cultures. Page 106.*)

- What does George Horse Capture mean by “the potential for harmony?”
- What prevented the newcomers from understanding and respecting the customs and values of the Indians?
- Do you agree with the author that groups with widely different beliefs and values cannot live together in peace?

During the early years of the colony the Powhatans and the English made mutual attempts to civilize each other. Through actions which were largely misunderstood by the other group, each group initially sought to demonstrate to the other its superiority in the relationship and to persuade the other to adopt “appropriate” ways of living. Each group also had certain material goods that the other wanted, and the trade in these goods was a significant aspect of their relationship. The Powhatans sought goods that might be understood as objects of sacred power- particularly copper and brass beads, but also swords and guns. The English primarily sought food from the Powhatans. Both groups employed trade, negotiation and military strength in the pursuit and demonstration of advantage, each group on its own terms. All can be seen as attempts to bring the other to **civility**.

(*Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia: A Conflict of Cultures. Page 3.*)

- What does the term **civility** mean in the last sentence?
- Based on the excerpt, what was the major cause of conflict between the English and Powhatan?
- Could the conflict have been prevented? Why or why not?

**A Tale of Two Cultures: Graphic Organizer**

	Powhatan Culture	English Culture
Legal System/ Law		
Religion/Spirituality		
Power Structure and Government		
Land And Property Ownership		
Attitudes about the Environment		
Economic system and relations with other group		

## Letter to England

Imagine that you are a European who has recently traveled to the “New World.” Upon your arrival you realize that this is not a new world, but a world that has been flourishing and prospering for many centuries prior to your arrival.

Or

Imagine that you are a member of the Powhatan. You have been living in Tsenacomoco (North America) for many, many generations prior to the arrival of the Europeans. You discover that the newcomers plan to stay on your lands.

Write a letter to England assuming the identity of either a seventeenth century Englishman or Powhatan. In your letter you should refer to your research, class discussions, and personal thoughts and opinions about the interaction of culture in Virginia. Include the following topics in your letter:

- A description of the Powhatan Empire prior to the arrival of the English and how its power was distributed.
- A description of Powhatan and English societies. Compare and contrast the societies.
- The benefits of cooperation for both the English and the Powhatan.
- The cause and results of conflicts between the cultural groups.
- Suggestions for future settlers in establishing relations with the Powhatan.

Use this space for outlining your ideas and planning your letter:

**Letter to England  
Evaluation Sheet**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Student Evaluation</b>	<b>Teacher Evaluation</b>
Identified self as Powhatan or Englishman	5		
Accurately described the Powhatan Empire in the 17 <sup>th</sup> Century	15		
Described the society of the Powhatan	10		
Described the society of the English at Jamestown	10		
Compared and contrasted the two societies	10		
Identified the benefits of cooperation between the two cultures	15		
Described the causes and results of conflicts between the two groups.	15		
Proposed suggestions for establishing relations with the Powhatan	20		
<b>Total Points:</b>	<b>100</b>		

Comments:

**Modern Conflicts**

**Opportunities for Harmony**

Conflict: \_\_\_\_\_

Region of the Conflict	
Background/ History	
Causes	
Groups Involved	
Possible Solutions	
Obstacles to Solving the Conflict	