

# Werowocomoco

Greetings Parents, Educators and Students!

Welcome to Werowocomoco's educational outreach program. Whether you are visiting the excavations or working on-line, this resource packet is meant to assist in your introduction to the archaeology, historical significance, and research agendas of Werowocomoco.

## How to use this guide:

Below, you will find helpful text, images, and reproducible activities aimed at orienting teachers and students to Werowocomoco's exciting past and present.

- Pages 1-2 are designed to give the reader a brief overview of Werowocomoco in historical and cultural context. To aide readers, Algonquian words will first appear in bold italics; *modern* pronunciations can be found on page 13.
- Pages 4-7 describe some of the archaeological project designs and discuss the important partnerships that are conducting research at Werowocomoco.
- Pre-visitation materials can be found on pages 7-8. A series of recommended websites are described and listed, followed by a selected reading list for educators. Combined, these resources may be utilized to develop pre-visitation or follow up content about Werowocomoco, Virginia Indians, and archaeology.
- Werokids! on pages 9-16 is meant to either be used as a reproducible reading for 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders, or as a guide for classroom discussions about archaeological terminology and methodology. Vocabulary words are defined on page 13, followed by a word search activity. Both the word search and the reading section may be used in tandem or separate from classroom discussions.
- Pages 15-16 are focused on developing research questions using primary documents. This section may be used in conjunction or separate from the previous lesson activities.
- Relevant Standards of Learning (SOLs) can be found on pages 17-19, along with a brief explanation of core subject correlations.
- The project sponsors and research team members can be found on page 6.

Again, welcome to Werowocomoco and please have an enjoyable and educational visit.

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# Werowocomoco



A seventeenth-century engraving of Powhatan at his Werowocomoco residence (left); The site of Werowocomoco, in 2004, overlooking Purtan Bay in Gloucester County, Virginia (right).

Rising from the forest floor and the York River's edge, the powerful community of **Werowocomoco** once flourished in what is now Gloucester County, Virginia.

Werowocomoco (site 44GL32) served as the capital of the **Powhatan** chiefdom that dominated most of coastal Virginia by the early seventeenth century and included perhaps 15,000 Algonquian-speaking Natives.

Currently, archaeologists, students, tribal leaders, and several institutions have joined together at this historically significant Eastern Woodland center of power. They are seeking to better understand the origins of the Powhatan chiefdom, the complexities of Powhatan society, and the interactions between Natives and Europeans during the early contact era in Virginia. This unique alliance of partners combines archaeological methods, colonial narratives and contemporary Native commentary to generate a more complete picture of Werowocomoco and its place in history.

Colonial documents and Native oral tradition indicate that **Wahunsenacawh**, better known as Chief Powhatan, held the position of **Mamanatowick**, or “great king” over numerous settlements. The Powhatan world of **Tsenacommacah** with its horticultural-foraging

communities was grouped into approximately 30 political districts. Their villages line the banks of the Virginia Coastal Plain. Powhatan society was defined by differences of status, authority, and wealth and included **werowances** whom the English described variously as kings, commanders, or chiefs.

*Werowances* and other emissaries traveled to Werowocomoco to negotiate alliances and trade. As the most influential leader of the period, Chief Powhatan developed extensive trade networks and tribute systems that enriched the prestige of Werowocomoco, and reinforced the town's prominence in society, politics, and religion.



Dusk on Purtan Bay (left). Werowocomoco excavation units (right).

The English arrived in Tsenacommacah in May 1607 and established James Fort on the Powhatan (James) River. While exploring the region in December of 1607, Captain John Smith was captured by Chief Powhatan's brother, **Opechancanough**, along with Powhatan warriors, and brought to Werowocomoco. Stories involving the interactions of Chief Powhatan, his daughter **Pocahontas**, and John Smith at Werowocomoco have entered into the realm of American culture, history, and folklore.

In 1609 to distance himself from the English settlers, Wahunsenacawh relocated to the village of Orapaks, in what is now New Kent County. After ending centuries of Native dominance, the English redefined the land now called Virginia. Werowocomoco faded as a place of prominence as English speakers developed their own important places and imposed Western ideas and culture on the land.

Four hundred years later, Powhatan people are returning to Werowocomoco.



Jeff Brown (Pamunkey), Dr. Martin Gullivan and Dave Brown discussing a feature excavation near the Werowocomoco waterfront (left); A Werowocomoco Research Group and Virginia Indian Advisory Board meeting (from left to right: Reggie Tupponce, Sr. (Upper Mattaponi), Kerry Canaday (Chickahominy), Dr. Danielle Moretti-Langholtz, Mark Custalow (Mattaponi), Thane Harpole, Bob Ripley, and Dave Brown (right)).

### **Why excavate at Werowocomoco?**

Tribal members, academic researchers, and students are interested in the origins and dynamics of the Powhatan paramount chiefdom before and during the contact period. The interaction of cultures and a new understanding of events at this landscape of power have spurred investigators to address exciting new questions of research.



Students from the College of William and Mary carried out detailed mapping and feature excavations during the 2004 field season.

### **How are the excavations conducted?**

Archaeological excavations proceed through several stages in a careful and deliberate manner. Initially a survey of the *Werowocomoco* site was conducted in order to identify the size and distribution of artifacts at the site. The archaeologists then excavated small test units and finally opened broader excavation blocks. These larger excavation blocks were chosen to expose archaeological features such as soil stains from pits and house posts. Since

archaeological deposits can only be excavated once, detailed notes, drawings, and photographs of the fieldwork are kept. Artifacts, features, faunal and floral specimens are analyzed in a laboratory setting and reports of the findings with the interpretations are prepared and published.

### **What do the 17th century documents say about *Werowocomoco*?**

Several seventeenth century notables, including John Smith, William Strachey, Robert Tindall, and Pedro Zuniga document the location and provide evidence for the village's significance.



The Pedro Zuniga map (left) identifies Werowocomoco using a series of unusual symbols; The John Smith map (right) of Virginia marks the village site on Purtan Bay, with an icon of a chief's house.

### **What are researchers finding at *Werowocomoco*?**

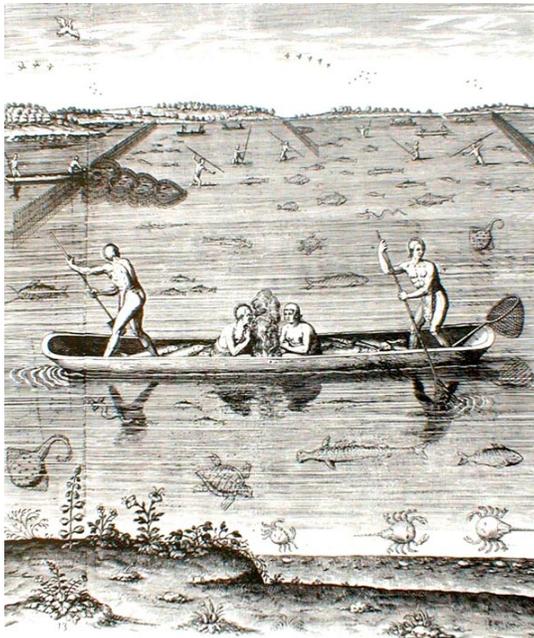
Werowocomoco's archaeological record contains evidence from a range of occupations and includes materials, such as stone points, that date from the Archaic period (starting 10,000 years ago) through the early colonial era. Beneath the top layer of soil archaeologists have found Native features from the village. The excavation has uncovered Native artifacts from the residential area dating from A.D. 1300 through the early 1600s. The materials – pottery, stone tools, bone, shell, plant remains, trash pits, and post stains – are the remains of daily Powhatan life. Pieces of copper likely traded by Jamestown colonists are also present in these deposits. In another area of the site archaeologists have found a series of ditch features that appear to separate the residential area of the village from a special area of the site. Native artifacts from the ditch area, including trade goods and decorated pottery, may be linked to *Werowocomoco's* status as a place of power.



Artifacts found at Werowocomoco include quartz and jasper arrowheads (left); huge ditch features (dark linear soil stains pictured above) at Werowocomoco indicate that the site was divided spatially (right).

### **Partners and Sponsors**

The Werowocomoco research project has received critical assistance from numerous individuals and several institutions. The project would not have been possible without the support and encouragements of landowners Robert and Lynn Ripley. Members of the Virginia Indian Advisory Board representing the Pamunkey, Mattaponi, Chickahominy, Nansemond, Rappahannock, and Upper Mattaponi have given generously of their time to meet with researchers and act as liaisons to the larger Virginia Indian community. Also critical to the research was institutional support from the College of William & Mary, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Humanities.



## **Pre-Visitation Material**

Teachers planning school visits should become familiar with a variety of resources prior to their visit to Werowocomoco. A collection of supplemental materials is available via the Internet and several publications should serve to outline salient concepts pertaining to archaeology, Virginia Indians, and the Werowocomoco Research Project.

## **Internet Resources**

### **Werowocomoco Research Project**

<http://powhatan.wm.edu/>

The village of Werowocomoco was the residence of the Virginia Algonquin chief Powhatan and the political center of the Powhatan chiefdom during the early 1600s. The Werowocomoco Research Group is studying the history and physical remains of the site. Besides the wealth of information available at the website, teachers may access the resource page to view links, download lesson plans and reading lists relevant to Virginia Indians, and discover opportunities for incorporating archaeology into their classroom instruction.

### **American Indian Resource Center**

<http://www.wm.edu/airc/>

The American Indian Resource Center (AIRC) is located within the Department of Anthropology at the College of William & Mary. A variety of materials are presented at the AIRC website, including information about Virginia's eight state recognized tribes, Virginia Indian collaborative projects, and community events. An educational video and CD-Rom about Virginia Indians' culture and history are available for teachers to use in the classroom (SOL content geared for grades 4-8).

## **Virginia Intertribal Alliance for Life**

<http://www.vitalva.org/>

Multiple resources are available at this site (events, fundraisers, etc). VITAL is the political arm of the Virginia Indian federal recognition initiative. Links to tribal websites and suggested reading lists are available at this web address. Teachers are urged to become familiar with contemporary Virginia Indian concerns and tribal objectives. The discussion of Virginia Indians' continuing place in society should be a key element to reflecting on their place in wider historical contexts.

## **Selected Reading List for Educators**

Egloff, Keith, and Deborah Woodward

1994 *First People: The Early Indians of Virginia*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.

Feest, Christian

1990 *The Powhatan Tribes*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers.

Hulton, Paul

1984 *American 1585: The Complete Drawings of John White*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Rountree, Helen C., and Thomas E. Davidson

1997 *Eastern Shore Indians of Virginia and Maryland*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.

Rountree, Helen C., and E. Randolph Turner III

2002 *Before and after Jamestown: Virginia's Powhatans and their Predecessors*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Waugaman, Sandra F., and Danielle Moretti-Langholtz

2000 *We're Still Here: Contemporary Virginia Indians Tell Their Stories*. Richmond: Polari Publishing.

## **Wero Kids!**

*For teachers, parents, and younger students of Werowocomoco, helping to better understand archaeology and appreciate the importance of Werowocomoco to Virginia and to the Nation: Grade School Werowocomoco (pronounced whero-wo-co-MO-co).*



Parents and students from the Mattaponi Indian Reservation visit Werowocomoco during an educational tour.

### **What is archaeology?**

Archaeology is the scientific study of peoples of the past, their culture and their relationship with their environment. The purpose of archaeology is to understand how humans in the past interacted with their environment, and to preserve this history for present and future learning.

### **What do archaeologists do?**

Archaeologists work in teams like time detectives. They search for clues in the soil to help view how past cultures lived and look to solve problems dealing with our understanding of

human relationships. Comparing the past and the present helps archaeologists see how humans have adapted to their environment.

Archaeologists work at excavations referred to as ‘digs’ to gather information and artifacts. Then they return to their laboratories to study their findings. Eventually, they’ll write reports about their investigations and allow other people to read and learn about their conclusions. Archaeologists help save our history from situations like natural erosion and new human development that might destroy important information such as house patterns or historic artifacts hiding in the soil.



Jeff Brown and Ashley Adkins (Pamunkey) sort washed artifacts at the Werowocomoco lab.

### **Why study archaeology?**

In some cases, archaeological sites offer the only chance we will have to learn something new about a culture that disappeared long ago or that we know little about.

Archaeological sites are a non-renewable resource; that is, once they are destroyed, the information they contained is lost forever. By learning about life long ago through archaeology we have an opportunity to better understand our environment and our collective history.

Sometimes there are written records about different people, events, and places in history. If an archeologist is fortunate, there may be things that were written long ago about the people, area, or period in history that they wish to investigate. By using written records, archaeologist can begin to research their excavations long before they even begin to dig!

Virginia's first European explorers wrote about their visits to many Indian villages, including Werowocomoco. By studying those early writings, archaeologists have been able to look for clues to see how the Powhatan lived. When the excavations started at Werowocomoco, new information began to be uncovered that better helps us understand how the Powhatans of 400 years ago lived and how they viewed their world.

### **How do archaeologists find sites?**

Archaeologists have an understanding of human behavior and the environmental needs humans have exhibited over the course of time. Places that have access to water, good drainage, as well as resources for food and / or the production of goods (like pottery) are good candidates for archaeological sites. Maps and aerial photographs can help the investigators establish areas that may have been suitable for people of the past.

Also, archaeologists often learn of sites and artifacts when construction companies clear land to build houses, shopping centers, and roads. Often, there are State and Federal laws that require artifact discoveries be reported to local archaeologists. Private land owners such as farmers may also report potential archeological sites. Werowocomoco is special because the landowner, archaeologists, the state of Virginia, and Powhatan tribes have formed a partnership to study the site.



Virginia Department of Historical Resources archaeologist E. Randolph Turner III and property owner Lynn Ripley (left); 'open house' with visiting Virginia Indians (center); land owner Bob Ripley, (right) archaeologist Martin Gallivan and Thane Harpole, with the 2003 College of William & Mary field crew.



All soil removed during the excavations is carefully sifted through screens to recover even the tiniest of artifacts (left). By looking at large areas of site, patterns in the soil begin to emerge (right).

### **What do archaeologists do at a site?**

Archaeologists usually work in an organized dig or an ‘**excavation**’. The excavation will provides three types of information:

- 1) **Ecofacts** - remains such as seeds, animal bones, and soil.
- 2) **Features** - evidence of things people made or did that can't be moved, such as house floors or hearths.
- 3) **Artifacts** - tools or other items that people made and that are removable from the site.

Examples include arrowheads, pottery, beads, and metal objects.

Once artifacts arrive at the lab they are bagged, washed, labeled, and catalogued. Detailed study of the material will shed new light on how people lived at different points in time from various cultures.

## Pronunciation Guide and Vocabulary\*

**Werowocomoco** – Whero-wo-ko-Mo-ko

**Powhatan** – Pow-wa-tan

**Wahunsenacawh** – Wah-hun-sena-kaw

**Mamanatowick** – Ma-mana-to-wick

**Tsenacommah** – Tsenako-Mah-kuh

**Werowance** – Whero-wans

**Opechancanough** – O-pee-chan-Ka-no

**Pocahontas** – Po-ka-hawn-tus

**Excavation** – When archaeologists work at an organized dig site, the project is referred to as an ‘excavation’.

**Grid** – A site is divided by the archaeologists into sections that are numbered. The plan for the division is called a ‘grid’; the grid helps archaeologists keep the site organized.

**Trowel** – A trowel is a triangular shaped tool with a handle (like a spatula) used to carefully remove layers of soil during an excavation.

**Screen** – All of the earth that is removed from the grid sections of an excavation must be ‘screened’. Screening is a process where soil is sifted through a metal mesh to see what artifacts are found within each square on the grid.

**Field Notes** – Archeologists take notes on all of the discoveries they uncover. They write down where artifacts are uncovered, the soil color and type within each grid section, draw pictures of artifacts and measure features. The written record becomes known as the ‘field notes’.



\* Below is an activity that is reproducible for home or classroom use. The worksheet should be used in conjunction with class discussions and vocabulary developed through the topical sections above. The exercise goal is to help foster understanding of key terms used when discussing Werowocomoco archaeology.

# Werowocomoco Archaeology Vocabulary

## Vocabulary Helper

Find all of the defined words listed below in this archaeology word search.

D	M	P	Y	E	H	N	K	O	T	Y
N	C	R	A	T	E	L	M	C	G	A
O	A	X	M	E	S	E	L	O	P	R
D	D	T	R	X	I	W	L	M	C	T
C	I	C	A	N	T	O	J	O	Y	I
F	S	G	U	H	E	R	V	C	M	F
Z	I	D	S	A	W	T	V	O	Q	A
G	C	E	H	Q	I	O	E	W	B	C
J	H	C	L	G	V	C	P	O	R	T
P	R	V	X	D	O	N	F	R	Y	S
A	Z	Z	W	F	N	D	G	E	X	B
Q	M	I	A	Y	A	O	M	W	Y	F
Y	X	C	S	E	R	U	T	A	E	F
I	T	G	R	I	D	N	E	E	C	Q
S	D	T	I	L	R	Q	G	A	S	F
M	P	L	P	O	E	S	A	Z	B	Z
E	X	C	A	V	A	T	I	O	N	X
K	W	L	X	P	V	Z	H	R	J	M

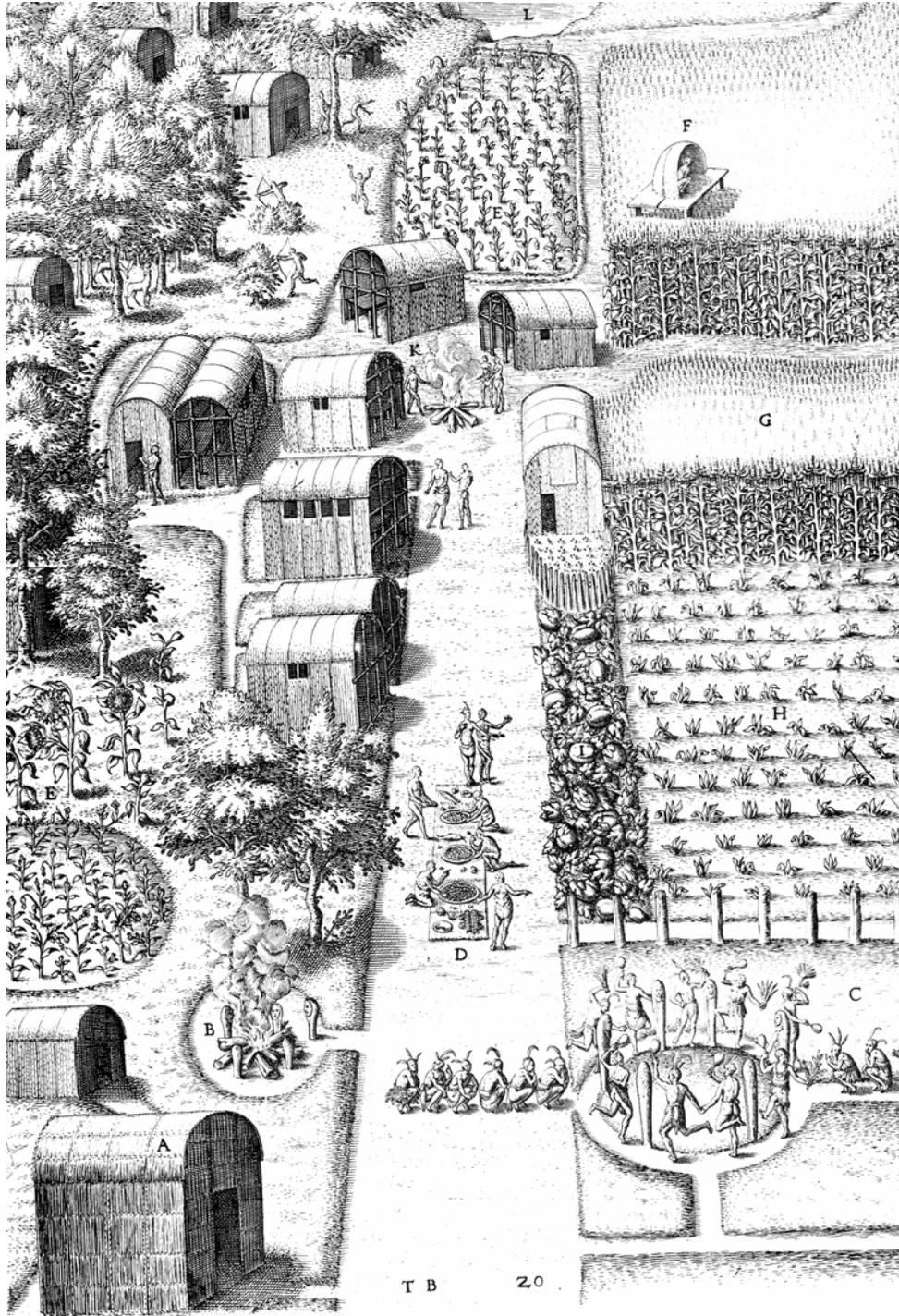
ARCHAEOLOGY    ARTIFACTS    DIGS    ECOFACTS

EXCAVATION    FEATURES    FIELDNOTES

GRID    POWHATAN

SCREEN    SITE    TROWEL    WEROWOCOMOCO

**Primary Document Inquiry:**  
Thinking About Werowocomoco



*The Indian Village of Secota.* Harriott, Thomas. *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia*, with engravings after John White. Published by Theodore de Bry. Frankfurt-am-Main, 1590.

*Primary documents are original sources like diaries, letters, government documents, historical maps, and paintings. When evaluating the past, researchers use primary documents to gather information about their inquiry. Early explorers of Virginia and North Carolina documented the Algonquian Indians living along the coast. Today, many primary documents still exist to help us learn about their culture. Using Theodore de Bry's engraving (1590) as a primary source, answer the questions below to begin considering the lifeways of Virginia Indians at Werowocomoco.*

1) Look carefully at the Indian village of Secota. In what ways does this village look like a contemporary town? In what ways is it different?

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2) Werowocomoco and Secotan both had specialized places within the village for various events and activities. What type of activities are taking place in and around the village? How might these happenings be important to the residents?

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3) Describe the areas of the engraving that relate to food. Are there similar places where we can see these scenes today? If so, where?

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4) The houses in this engraving were built from wooden poles, had rounded roofs, and were covered with reed mats. Most of them only had one room. How are these houses different from contemporary homes? In what ways are they similar?

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**Thinking Critically**

Based on the de Bry image, how might you describe a typical day at Werowocomoco? Consider your daily activities, places you go, and people you see – try to find similarities. On the back of this paper, write two paragraphs discussing your day at Werowocomoco.

## Correlation

Archaeologists use many different skills to complete a particular project. They utilize the core subjects of Math, Science, English, and History to complete tough detective work. Geometry must be used to create a grid pattern for each site, as well as detailed numeric measurement of artifacts, features, and soil. While archaeology is considered a science, more chemistry work is used in the lab to uncover the dates and chemical compositions of artifacts and ecofacts. The site reports and field notes require a firm understanding of English, and an ability to produce many written documents for future study and research. History teaches archaeologists about the areas they are studying and allows for a better understanding of the context of a potential dig site.

### ***SOL content relevant to Werowocomoco:***

***K.1 Pocahontas: She was an Indian girl (First American) who was a helper and friend to the settlers in Jamestown.***

***2.2 Students will compare the lives (lifeways) and contributions of American Indians with emphasis on the Powhatans of the Eastern Woodlands and other regions of the US.***

***2.4 Geography-locating the region of the Powhatan Indians on maps. The Powhatans farmed, fished, hunted, used trees for homes and canoes, and gathered plants for food.***

***2.5 Locate the James River on maps.***

***VS.2d Artifacts such as arrowheads, pottery, and other tools that have been found tell a lot about the people who lived in Virginia. Powhatans were Algonquian speakers.***

***VS.2e Virginia's Indians are referred to as Eastern Woodland Indians.***

***Adaptation to the environment: The kinds of food they ate, the clothing they wore and the shelters they had depended upon the seasons. Foods changed with the seasons. In winter, they hunted birds and animals. In spring they fished and picked berries. In summer they grew crops (beans, corn squash). In fall they harvested crops. Animal skins (deerskin) were used for clothing. Shelter was made from materials around them.***

***VS.3a Students will demonstrate knowledge of the first permanent English settlement in America by explaining the reasons for English colonization.***

**VS.3g** The student will demonstrate knowledge of the first permanent English settlement in America by describing the interactions between the English settlers and the Powhatan people, including the contributions of the Powhatans to the survival of the settlers.

- \* Captain John Smith initiated trading relationships with the Powhatans.
- \* The Powhatans traded food, furs and leather with the English in exchange for tools, pots, guns, and other goods.

The Powhatan people contributed to the survival of the Jamestown settlers in several ways:

- \* Pocahontas, daughter of Chief Powhatan, believed the English and American Indians (First Americans) could live in harmony.
- \* Pocahontas began a friendship with the colonists that helped them survive.
- \* The Powhatans introduced new crops to the English, including corn and tobacco.
- \* The Powhatan people realized the English settlement would continue to grow.
- \* The Powhatans saw the colonists as invaders that would take over their land.

**VS.4b** The student will demonstrate knowledge of the life in the Virginia colony by describing how European immigrants, Africans and American Indians influenced the cultural landscape and changed the relationship between the Virginia colony and England.

Place names reflect culture.

**US1.3a** The student will demonstrate knowledge of how early cultures developed in North America by locating where the American Indians settled (emphasis on several areas including Eastern Woodland-Iroquois).

**US1.3b** The student will demonstrate knowledge of how early cultures developed in North America by describing how the American Indians used their environment to obtain food, clothing and shelter.

**US1.4b** The student will demonstrate knowledge of European exploration in North America and West Africa by describing cultural interactions between European and American Indians that led to cooperation and conflict.

***US1.5a* The student will demonstrate knowledge of the factors that shaped colonial America by describing the religious and economic events and conditions that led to the colonization of America.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

**The Werowocomoco Research Project**

<http://powhatan.wm.edu/>