



Name _____

Date _____

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America was signed. Fifty-six men put their names on the document. This act showed that the Colonies would not follow the rules of the English any more. This act changed the course of history.

These men did not agree with the rules of England. The Declaration listed 18 ways that the British had done a bad job. These men wrote clearly that the English did not pay attention to the things they needed. The English did not care about their feelings. They did not care about their wishes.

As a result, they wrote this declaration to say that they were going to be free from England. They felt it was important to have full power to make contracts with whomever they wanted. They wanted power to trade with whomever they chose, whenever they wanted to trade.

Lastly, they wanted full power to decide their future. These men wanted to make the choices that were best for themselves and the people who lived in the Colonies.

On July 4, 1776, all 56 men signed the declaration. They promised to give their lives for each other. They promised to share what they had with each other. They promised to respect each other.

These men wanted to be free. Free to choose. Free to speak. Free to live in the way they thought was best.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. What is another word for *rules* in this passage?
 - a. freedom
 - b. a piece of paper
 - c. laws
 - d. choices
2. Which words best describe the Colonists?
 - a. had their minds made up to give their lives to make things better in the Colonies
 - b. happy with the way things were
 - c. sad because they did not have all the conveniences of the British
 - d. angry because they could not build cabins and cities fast enough
3. What is one thing listed in the passage the Colonists wanted to change?
 - a. They wanted to choose with whom they would play.
 - b. They wanted to choose with whom they would trade.
 - c. They wanted to choose what language to speak.
 - d. They wanted to choose what food to eat.
4. Which statement is **TRUE** from the passage above?
 - a. The Colonists agreed with British laws.
 - b. The Colonists wanted to move back to England.
 - c. The Colonists wanted to use laws from France.
 - d. The Colonists wanted to make their own laws.



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JAMESTOWN

Three ships left England in December of 1606. There were more than one hundred passengers on the ships. Most were upper class Englishmen. There were no women at all.

They came to the coast of Virginia in April of 1607. They wanted to find a good place to anchor the ship. They looked for a place that would be safe for them to live.

On May 14, 1607, they landed on Jamestown Island. The water was deep so they could get close to shore. They were sure the ship would be safe in the trees.

There were problems in Jamestown from the start. One group of Native Americans attacked the settlers shortly after they landed. There was disease. There was not enough food. Many settlers starved to death. There were more Native American attacks.

John Rolfe finally brought a few years of peace to Jamestown. He came to grow tobacco. He married Pocahontas, the daughter of a Native American Chief. The peace with the Native Americans did not last forever, but it was a start.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. According to the passage, what was the first problem the settlers faced in Jamestown?
 - a. bad weather
 - b. starvation
 - c. disease
 - d. Native American attacks
2. About long did it take to get to Jamestown Island?
 - a. 5 months
 - b. 11 months
 - c. 10 months
 - d. 3 months
3. A **synonym** for the word *disease* would be . . .
 - a. Christmas.
 - b. birthday.
 - c. sickness.
 - d. health.
4. What did John Rolfe grow when he came to Jamestown?
 - a. corn
 - b. tobacco
 - c. cigarettes
 - d. wheat



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COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

The town of Jamestown collapsed. It was swampy. It had insects. The settlers were starving. Many Native American tribes had attacked.

Settlers wanted to move to a better place. They looked for higher ground. They wanted to be closer to the James and York Rivers. They like the idea of being safer from attacks.

Middle Plantation was the answer. By 1609, the settlers built a small town. It was safer and on higher ground. It was close to both rivers. Some of the settlers planned out the town using patterns of squares. As the town grew, people built stores and mills. There were churches and homes, and even taverns.

The people wanted to give the town a new name. They wanted it to be in honor of William II, the King of England. They named it Williamsburg.

By the time of the Revolutionary War, the city had 2,000 people. There were tailors, carpenters, and bakers. There were gunsmiths and store clerks. The small town had turned into a bustling city.



STORY QUESTIONS

1. What was one of the reasons that settlers wanted to move away from Jamestown?
 - a. They wanted to be closer to England.
 - b. They wanted to be closer to New York.
 - c. They wanted to be closer to the York River.
 - d. They wanted to be closer to the Native Americans.
2. If you lived in Williamsburg, you might have a job as . . .
 - a. an airline pilot.
 - b. a tailor.
 - c. a TV repair person.
 - d. a taxi driver.
3. Which is **NOT** something you would find in Williamsburg?
 - a. a gunsmith
 - b. a bakery
 - c. a fast food restaurant
 - d. churches
4. Why did the settlers change the name from Middle Plantation to Williamsburg?
 - a. They liked how it sounded.
 - b. They named it after the king of England.
 - c. They were bored of the old name.
 - d. They did it to make people jealous.