

# Pocahontas and the Powhatan

History

Lesson 1 of an enquiry of 4 lessons

Enquiry: Who lived in British America?

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# Early History

15,000 years ago: strong evidence of humans

5,000 years ago: people begin to domesticate plants such as corn, squash and sunflowers

3,000 years ago: Farming communities begin to create villages

2,000 years ago: bow and arrow invented on the Plains

1,000 years ago: Vikings trade with coastal communities



# British America

Over time British control of the Americas grew and then shrank.

We will be looking at who lived in British America.



# The Powhatan Chiefdom

The Powhatan Chiefdom was a group of **indigenous** peoples.

They were **Algonquian** speakers and paid **tribute** to a lead chief.

It is estimated that there were about 14,000–21,000 **Powhatan** people in the area in 1607.



# The Powhatan Chiefdom

The Powhatans planted corn, squash and beans. They also hunted for meat.

The Powhatan lived in homes called yehakins.

They had a complex culture (arts, beliefs and political organisation).



# The chief's daughter: Matoaka

Matoaka was the daughter of Powhatan, the leading chief of the Powhatan peoples.

Matoaka was born around 1596.

We tend to know her as Pocahontas, which was a nickname.



# The arrival of the English

In the year 1607 over a hundred men and boys landed on the Powhatan's shores. They arrived on behalf of the **Virginia Company** in the hope of settling and establishing a **colony** in America.

They set-up a settlement called **Jamestown** and called the area Virginia.

The English relied heavily on the Powhatan for food and local knowledge.



# Pocahontas and Jamestown

From 1607 – 1609 Pocahontas was a regular visitor to Jamestown.

Accounts have her bringing gifts of furs and food and playing with the children there.

The English moved into Powhatan territory in 1613 and violence occurred.

In 1614, Pocahontas was kidnapped by the English to force her father to accept peace.





# Pocahontas is renamed

In English accounts Pocahontas decided during her captivity to **convert** to Christianity and English ways of dress and living.

In surviving Native American accounts Pocahontas is forced to convert.

Pocahontas was renamed Rebecca, married an English man called John Rolfe and travelled to England in 1616.



Pocahontas became a celebrity in London and at the **court** of King James I.

Pocahontas was used as evidence of the **superiority** of English culture and to **justify** forcing English ways of living and Christianity on the Powhatan people.



# After Pocahontas

While in England, Pocahontas became ill and died. Her brother continued to fight for the Powhatan land and culture against the English.

Today, despite much violence and discrimination, there are several thousand Powhatan people who live in Virginia.



# Questions

1. What was the Powhatan Chiefdom?
2. Who was the leading chief's daughter?
3. What was Jamestown?
4. At first, what was the relationship between the English and the Powhatan?
5. What happened to Pocahontas?



# Who lived in British America?

Copy the table below and add as much information as you can to both sides

<b>Powhatan Chiefdom</b>	<b>Jamestown</b>
Group of indigenous peoples	English colony

English speaking

Matoaka/Pocahontas

Virginia Company

Algonquian speaking

Men and boys

Houses called yehakins

