



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Overcoming Problems: John Smith

*It was the early 1600s. A famous explorer journeyed through the Chesapeake Bay region. He mapped this water and the surrounding land. He learned from the Native Americans who called the Bay home. Then an accident forced him to seek medical help. He was hurt by a stingray! This area near the Rapahannock River still bears the name, Stingray Point. The explorer returned to the Jamestown settlement to recover.*

### **Predict Before You Read:**

What other problems might John Smith have had in the early 1600s?

---

---

As you read, see if the difficulties you predicted are a part of this short biography.

John Smith was only 16 when he left his home in Willoughby, England. His father had died, and he was ready for a new life. By 1596 he joined other volunteers in France as they fought for Dutch independence from Spain. He soon made his way to the Mediterranean Sea where he worked on merchant ships. Before long, the young John Smith was again part of a fighting force. He fought with Austrians against the Turks. Others noticed his skill as a soldier, and he was promoted to Captain. But soon he was wounded and ended up being sold as a slave. John Smith managed to escape and made his way back to England.

By this time, John Smith had grown accustomed to a life of adventure. He looked across the ocean and saw great opportunities in the "new world." He joined with the Virginia Company as they made plans to establish settlements in Virginia. John Smith boarded a ship in December 1606 and headed for America. The voyage of the three small ships was not an easy one. When the 105 settlers stepped off the ships in April of 1607, John Smith was in chains. He had managed to make many people angry during the voyage! Imagine their surprise when they opened their instructions and learned that he was to be one of the leaders of the new colony!

As the new settlers struggled to make a life in their new settlement, Jamestown, they experienced many problems. Lack of fresh water, many diseases, and a very harsh winter made life difficult for the new citizens of Jamestown. The Algonquian Indians were upset by the intruders to their land. They often stole supplies and gunpowder from the people of Jamestown. It wasn't long before John Smith was captured by the Algonquians. His deer hunting companions had been killed but John Smith was taken to the chief, Powhatan. The story is told that Powhatan was impressed with him. John Smith later wrote that the chief's young daughter, Pocahontas, had saved his life.

After about four weeks, John Smith returned to the colony. He found that the little settlement continued to be full of problems. People did not want to work. There were fights among the leaders. Supplies were growing short. John Smith decided to go north to the Chesapeake Bay region. His goal was to search for needed supplies and also to map the area.

When John Smith returned to Jamestown in 1608, he was elected president of the council. He saw that too many settlers were not doing their fair share. He made laws that required people to work. He even said, "He who does not work, will not eat." He also traded with the Algonquians to get needed food for the settlers. His strong leadership meant that Jamestown began to grow.

John Smith had to return to England in 1609. He had a severe gunpowder burn and needed medical help. His strong leadership, both within Jamestown and with the Algonquians, had helped the little settlement to succeed. But, the leaders of the Virginia Company did not like John Smith. They felt he was too boastful. They did not want his help anymore. He did not return to Virginia again.

In 1614, he again sailed to America to explore Maine and Massachusetts. Upon his final return to England, he spent the rest of his life writing books about his adventures. His maps were some of the earliest and accurate of the region.

### **Why Did It Happen?**

Think about these consequences. What was the reason these things happened?

1. He went to France when he was 16 years old.

This was because \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Life was difficult for the people of Jamestown.

This was because \_\_\_\_\_.

3. He returned to England in 1609.

This was because \_\_\_\_\_.

4. He became Captain in the army.

This was because \_\_\_\_\_.

5. He returned to Jamestown from the Chesapeake Bay area.

This was because \_\_\_\_\_.

6. He made laws that required people to work.

This was because \_\_\_\_\_.

7. Jamestown grew and began to succeed.

This was because \_\_\_\_\_.