THE TRUE STORY OF POCAHONTAS

The True Story of Pocahontas
Book, Music and Lyrics by
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TEACHER RESOURCES
The True Story of Pocahontas and
this study guide are produced
in support of the teaching of
Language Arts, Multicultural,
History, Biography, and
Women’s Studies.

ON THE WEB

Pocahontas: Her Life
and Legend
Historic Jamestowne, National
Park Service nps.gov/jame/
learn/historyculture/pocahontas-
her-life-and-legend.htm

Pocahontas
Historic Jamestowne,
Jamestowne Rediscovery
historicjamestowne.org/history/
pocahontas/

Pocahontas (1595-1617)
National Women’s History
Museum
womenshistory.org/education-
resources/biographies/
pocahontas

Pocahontas and the
Powhatans of Virginia
Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation
historyisfun.org/jamestown-
settlement/powhatan-village/
pocahontas-and-the-powhatans-
of-virginia/

PLAY SYNOPSIS
Pocahontas is a name known to every school-age child, and yet her true story is shrouded in myth. Join Virginia Repertory Theatre on this adventure into Pocahontas’ life. With an emphasis on historical fact, Pocahontas is revealed as a playful, strong-minded young girl who changes her world before she will change her beliefs or herself. Follow Pocahontas as she grows from a girl who helps the Jamestown colonists survive, to the young woman, wife, and mother who carries her message of peace and mutual cooperation across the Atlantic to the mighty King of England. Join Pocahontas on her amazing journey and see how courage and determination can change the world.
Activities

STUDY GUIDE

DAILY LIVES OF THE POWHATAN PEOPLE

In the play, Pocahontas said,

“I had many responsibilities as a child. From early on, I was taught the jobs of women in our culture. I learned to plant seeds and harvest food, gather firewood and cook. I was also taught the art of making pottery and baskets. By the time I was your age, I was making clothes from animal skins. Oh, and I imagine I made enough cordage to go all the way around the world and back.”

Below, draw a scene from a Powhatan village. Use some of the items Pocahontas describes in your picture. In addition, include three of the following in your picture:

- longhouse
- “the three sisters”
- fishing
- hunting
- English settlers
- basket-making
- Powhatan
- “toys”
HISTORY AND TRUTH VS. LEGEND

Read the following quote from the play and discuss it. Do you agree? How do you think writers are influenced by their own experiences? Do you think we can ever know a “historical truth”?

“History is never totally, absolutely true. Letters, essays, articles and other historical documents are always written from the perspective of the writer. And that perspective, or way of seeing things, is influenced by the writer’s own experiences. So there is no way to know the exact historical truth of any event, no matter how many facts or documents we have.”

Use the Venn diagram below to record “truths” and “legends” about Pocahontas. Are there events that fall into both categories?

TERMS TO KNOW

perspective (noun): A particular point of view.

Synonyms: outlook, view, viewpoint, standpoint, attitude, frame of reference
VIRGINIA’S 11 TRIBES

Until 2015, the federal government did not recognize any Virginia Indian tribes. The Pamunkey are the first Virginia tribe to be recognized by the federal government. The tribe counts Pocahontas among its members; it is part of the Powhatan Confederacy. Chief Powhatan is buried on the tribe’s reservation.

Virginia recognizes the following eleven tribes:

1. Mattaponi - Banks of the Mattaponi River, King William County
2. Pamunkey - Banks of the Pamunkey River, King William County
3. Chickahominy - Charles City County
4. Eastern Chickahominy - New Kent County
5. Rappahannock - Indian Neck, King and Queen County
6. Upper Mattaponi - King and Queen County
7. Nansemond - Cities of Suffolk and Chesapeake
8. Monacan Indian Nation - Bear Mountain, Amherst County
9. Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) - Courtland, Southampton County
10. Nottoway of Virginia - Capron, Southampton and Surry Counties
11. Patawomeck - Stafford County

Cues at the Theatre

When you are in an audience at *The True Story of Pocahontas* or any play, pay attention to the following:

**Cue**
1) Command given by stage management to the technical departments.
2) Any signal (spoken line, action or count) that indicates another action should follow.

**House Lights**
The auditorium lighting, which is commonly faded out when the performance starts.

**Blackout**
The act of turning off (or fading out) stage lighting.

**Curtain Call**
At the end of a performance, the acknowledgment of applause by actors — the bows.

**Build / Check**
Build is a smooth increase in sound or light level; check is the opposite — a smooth diminishment of light or sound.

**Fade**
An increase, decrease, or change in lighting or sound.

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