

# Pocahontas

Pocahontas was a famous Native American. She was the daughter of the powerful Chief Powhatan. Many books, movies, and television shows have been made about her, but her life story often is not told accurately. Many things people think about her are actually untrue.

Pocahontas had several names. Pocahontas was a nickname meaning, 'mischievous one.' She was probably born around 1595. People say she was her father's favorite daughter. She would have grown up learning traditional women's jobs. Pocahontas would have learned to build houses, farm, cook, and gather firewood. She also would have made pots, mats, and baskets. She was trained to find edible plants for spices, food, and medicine. Girls were expected to do these jobs by the time they turned thirteen. Not much is known about Pocahontas's life because she could not write, so there are no primary sources.

Pocahontas is famous for saving John Smith's life. Smith was an English explorer who came to America in 1607 with the first English colonists to settle in Jamestown, Virginia. He was captured by Chief Powhatan's people while on an expedition.

It is claimed that Pocahontas hurried to protect him as he was about to be killed by her father's men. Saving John Smith's life began a short friendship between the two groups. Pocahontas is also well-known for helping the Jamestown Colony. She shared food and information

with the settlers to keep them healthy and safe. The tribe also traded corn and beads with the English.



Pocahontas and her father were very close. The chief loved Pocahontas so much that the English decided to kidnap Pocahontas. They wanted to make deals with the Powhatan's people and thought she could help. Chief Powhatan could not trade everything the English wanted so they did not let Pocahontas return home. The friendship between the chief and the settlers soon ended.

While living with the English, Pocahontas was taught Christian teachings. She was baptized and renamed 'Rebecca.' Pocahontas married a tobacco farmer named John Rolfe. When Pocahontas was about twenty-one, she became ill and died. No one knows what kind of sickness she had. Pocahontas had hoped for peace and goodwill between her people and the settlers. Unfortunately, after her death, this did not happen.



# Questions

1. Which of the following is not true?

- Pocahontas means “mischievous one.”
- Pocahontas and her father had a bad relationship.
- Pocahontas married John Rolfe.
- Pocahontas was kidnapped.

2. Which of the following is true?

- Pocahontas is a nickname.
- Pocahontas changed her name to Mary.
- Pocahontas did not want to help or support the settlers.
- Pocahontas married John Smith.

3. Which of the following is not true?

- Pocahontas was the daughter of a great chief.
- Pocahontas probably knew how to build houses and chop firewood.
- Pocahontas helped build positive relationships between her people and settlers.
- Pocahontas had a famous pet raccoon.

4. Pocahontas is famous for what action?

- Pocahontas helped the English settlers.
- Pocahontas helped her tribe capture settlers.
- Pocahontas was helpful at the first Thanksgiving.
- Pocahontas brought peace between her tribe and the settlers.

5. What kind of chores did Pocahontas have to do? How do they compare to the chores you have to do?

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6. Explain why the English thought it would be a good idea to kidnap Pocahontas.

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# Answers

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**Pocahontas had to build houses, chop wood, cook, make pots, mats, and baskets. Answers will vary for the comparison.**

6. Explain why the English thought it would be a good idea to kidnap Pocahontas.

**They knew she was the chief's favorite daughter. They thought they could trade her back for lots of supplies or information.**