



Sir Walter Raleigh Printable Reading Comprehension

Grade Level: 5 | Word Count: 324 | Lexile 1000

Early Life

Sir Walter Raleigh was born around 1554 in Devon, England. He grew up during a time of great change in England, as Queen Elizabeth I ruled and England began to explore the world. Raleigh came from a well-off family and attended Oxford University for a short time. He later became a soldier, fighting in Ireland for the English government.

Adventurer and Explorer

Raleigh became famous for his adventures during the Age of Exploration. He dreamed of creating English colonies in the New World. He helped plan and support expeditions to North America, including the Roanoke Colony, which became known as the "Lost Colony" because it disappeared without explanation. Although Raleigh never went to Roanoke himself, he played an important role in trying to establish England's first colonies.

Life at Court

Raleigh was close to Queen Elizabeth I and became one of her favorites. She rewarded him with land, titles, and influence. He was known for his charm and ambition. Raleigh also introduced new goods to England, such as tobacco and potatoes, which came from the Americas. These items became very popular in England and changed people's daily lives.

Downfall and Death

After Queen Elizabeth died, Raleigh's fortunes changed. The new king, James I, did not trust him. Raleigh was accused of plotting against the king and was sent to prison in the Tower of London. He was later released to lead an expedition to South America in search of gold, but the trip failed. When he returned to England, Raleigh was executed in 1618.

1. Which statement best summarizes Sir Walter Raleigh's contributions during the Age of Exploration?
 - A. He founded the first English colony in North America.
 - B. He supported colonization efforts and introduced goods from the Americas.
 - C. He traveled to Roanoke and helped it succeed.
 - D. He fought against the Spanish Armada.
 2. Why was the Roanoke Colony called the "Lost Colony"?
 - A. It was destroyed in a war.
 - B. It disappeared without explanation.
 - C. Raleigh abandoned it to explore South America.
 - D. Queen Elizabeth ordered it to be closed.
 3. Based on the passage, what does Raleigh's downfall suggest about life at the royal court?
 - A. Success depended mainly on wealth and education.
 - B. Being a favorite of one ruler did not guarantee long-term security.
 - C. Soldiers were more respected than explorers.
 - D. Colonization efforts often led to execution.
 4. How did Raleigh's actions change daily life in England?
 - A. He made potatoes and tobacco common products.
 - B. He required everyone to grow crops from the New World.
 - C. He banned imports from other countries.
 - D. He invented farming tools to increase food production.
 5. What is the main idea of the section "Downfall and Death"?
 - A. Raleigh succeeded in finding gold for England.
 - B. Raleigh's loyalty to Queen Elizabeth saved his life.
 - C. Raleigh's power declined after Elizabeth's death, leading to his execution.
 - D. Raleigh was rewarded by King James I for his bravery.
 6. Which two roles best describe Raleigh based on the passage?
 - A. Explorer and Scientist
 - B. Soldier and Courtier
 - C. Artist and Merchant
 - D. Inventor and Philosopher
 7. Which inference can you make about England during Raleigh's lifetime?
 - A. It was uninterested in overseas trade.
 - B. It relied on one person to control exploration.
 - C. It was eager to expand its influence beyond Europe.
 - D. It avoided contact with the Americas.
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Answer Key

1. **B** – He supported colonization efforts and introduced goods from the Americas.
2. **B** – It disappeared without explanation.
3. **B** – Being a favorite of one ruler did not guarantee long-term security.
4. **A** – He made potatoes and tobacco common products.
5. **C** – Raleigh's power declined after Elizabeth's death, leading to his execution.
6. **B** – Soldier and Courtier.
7. **C** – It was eager to expand its influence beyond Europe.