

Strategy Recommendations

Pre-, During, and Post Reading Strategies

Reading strategies are designed by the teacher for students as either pre-, during or post reading comprehension tools. The following three examples of reading strategies are used here to aid students in understanding a dense passage on the life of Pocahontas.



An Indian ally. Pocahontas, the favorite daughter of Wahunsonacock, gave invaluable help to the English colonists. Although she was young—10 or 12 years old—when the colonists arrived, Pocahontas became an important intermediary between the English and the Powhatan. She frequently visited Jamestown, bringing food and gifts and establishing trade between the two groups.

1

Pocahontas charmed and fascinated the colonists. In 1608 Captain Smith wrote that in personality Pocahontas “much exceedeth any of the rest” of the local Indians. Smith once described his capture by the Powhatan and subsequent rescue by Pocahontas when “hazarded the beating out of her own brains” by throwing herself over his body to prevent his execution.

2

Despite historians’ doubts about this romantic legend, Pocahontas did play a vital role in maintaining peace between the Powhatan and the English. As a mutually trusted intermediary, she negotiated the release of Powhatan prisoners and protected the colonists from her father’s anger during disputes.

3

Nevertheless, relations with the Powhatan were more strained after Smith returned to England, and Pocahontas no longer voluntarily visited the settlement. Desperate for food in the harsh winter of 1609-1610, the English raided local American Indian villages. They stole food, burned shelters, and killed many of the Indians.

4

Captured by colonists in 1613, Pocahontas spent the following year as a well-treated hostage in Jamestown. During this time, she converted to Christianity and was baptized as “The Lady Rebecca.” Her marriage in 1614 to colonist **John Rolfe** temporarily brought an end to the fighting between colonists and the Powhatan. In June 1616 the Indian princess traveled to England with her husband and infant son, Thomas. She died suddenly in England in March 1617.

5

Pre-Reading

Word of the Day –This strategy is especially helpful if students have a limited vocabulary, or if they need help comprehending a difficult passage of reading. As students arrive to class, a new vocabulary word will be written on the blackboard. Students are given time to interpret the word and try to come up with a meaning. After a few minutes, the teacher presents the definition and uses it in a meaningful sentence. Students can also be asked to use the word in their own sentence or either in writing or orally.

For this particular passage, there are several words which would aid in student comprehension.

Examples include:

Intermediary: Acting as a mediator or an agent between persons or things.

Subsequent: Occurring or coming later or after: *subsequent events*.

Raid: An entrance into another's territory for the purpose of seizing goods or valuables.

During Reading

Metacognitive Scripts – Students are more likely to understand the process of reading to comprehend if they have good modeling. Students will benefit if teachers demonstrate the thought processes they employ when coming across unfamiliar text. The following is a metacognitive script which displays my thoughts about the passage as I read through it. When I come across an idea or word I need to think through, I insert my thoughts in italics.

An Indian ally. Pocahontas, the favorite daughter of Wahunsonacock, gave invaluable help to the English colonists.

Pocahontas must have been very special to be her father's favorite. She was invaluable, that must mean the English colonists couldn't have survived without her help.

Although she was young—10 or 12 years old—when the colonists arrived, Pocahontas became an important intermediary between the English and the Powhatan.

Wow! Pocahontas was so young when the colonists arrived. When I was 12 I was only in 6th –grade. My biggest concern was if anyone noticed the pimple on my nose. Intermediary means, acting as a mediator or an agent between persons or things. She must have been very brave to be the intermediary between the colonists and her village.

She frequently visited Jamestown, bringing food and gifts and establishing trade between the two groups.

Pocahontas charmed and fascinated the colonists. In 1608 Captain Smith wrote that in personality Pocahontas “much exceedeth any of the rest” of the local Indians.

Pocahontas must have been very charming since she left such an impact on Captain Smith.

Smith once described his capture by the Powhatan and subsequent rescue by Pocahontas when “hazarded the beating out of her own brains” by throwing herself over his body to prevent his execution.

Hazarded means taking risks or for something to be dangerous, so Pocahontas must have truly been risking her life for Captain Smith. This sounds like true love, but is this part of the story really true?

Despite historians' doubts about this romantic legend, Pocahontas did play a vital role in maintaining peace between the Powhatan and the English.

It amazes me that as young as Pocahontas was, she played such an important role in history.

As a mutually trusted intermediary, she negotiated the release of Powhatan prisoners and protected the colonists from her father's anger during disputes.

Alright, I know what intermediary means, so this must mean that she was very important to both sides.

Nevertheless, relations with the Powhatan were more strained after Smith returned to England, and Pocahontas no longer voluntarily visited the settlement.

I guess after Pocahontas visited the colonist less often, the relationship between the Powhatan and the colonists wasn't as strong.

Desperate for food in the harsh winter of 1609-1610, the English raided local American Indian villages. They stole food, burned shelters, and killed many of the Indians.

Raided means: An entrance into another's territory for the purpose of seizing goods or valuables. That wasn't nice of the English, especially since Pocahontas helped them so much.

Captured by colonists in 1613, Pocahontas spent the following year as a well-treated hostage in Jamestown. During this time, she converted to Christianity and was baptized as "The Lady Rebecca."

This must have been very hard for Pocahontas. Even though she was treated well, she was away from her family and home. I wonder how she felt being surrounded by colonists? Did she convert to Christianity because she wanted to, or did the colonists make her convert?

Her marriage in 1614 to colonist **John Rolfe** temporarily brought an end to the fighting between colonists and the Powhatan. In June 1616 the Indian princess traveled to England with her husband and infant son, Thomas. She died suddenly in England in March 1617.

That is so interesting. Most stories I have heard about Pocahontas make it seem as though she came to England with Captain Smith? I wonder why more people don't know that she actually marries John Rolfe?

Post Reading

Cinquains as Summaries- Cinquains are five-line poems with explicit instructions for style. The following is the format of a Cinquain as well as a Cinquain for the passage on Pocahontas. This is a great post reading activity because it lets the students sum up what they have read in a unique way.

Line 1 One-word title
Line 2 Two-word description of topic
Line 3 Three words expressing action
Line 4 Four words showing feeling for a topic
Line 5 One-word synonym, restating the essence of the topic

Line 1 Pocahontas
Line 2 Indian Ally
Line 3 Juggling Two Worlds
Line 4 New Loves, New Dangers
Line 5 Heroine