



“What do you mean?”

How language changes over time

Grades 3 through 5

SOLs

develop skills for historical and geographical analysis including the ability to identify and interpret artifacts and primary and secondary source documents to understand events in history; draw conclusions and make generalizations; make connections between past and present; sequence events in Virginia history; interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives; evaluate and discuss issues orally and in writing	Virginia Studies VS.1 United States USI.1
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These are some words used in the early writing on Jamestown. What do you think they mean?

Words used at Jamestown in 1607	What do <u>YOU</u> think These words mean?
Adventurer	
Bought	
Card	
In fine	
Vent	
Undertaker	
Pretend	
Prevent	
Still	
Subtle	
Want	
Trial	
Wheat	
Misdoubt	

Champion	
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Choose three words and write a sentence for each one.

When you get the real definitions, see if the meaning of your sentences changed.

Teacher guide sheet

Words used at Jamestown in 1607	What do <u>YOU</u> think These words mean?
Adventurer	Investor
Bought	River bend
Card	Map, chart
In fine	In the end
Vent	Sell
Undertaker	Financial backer
Pretend	Intend to
Prevent	Anticipate
Still	always
Subtle	Sneaky
Want	Lack
Trial	Investigation
Wheat	Corn
Misdoubt	Not believe
Champion	Flat, open country

Background: *Historians read what people in the past have written. But how can we know if they used the same words we would have? Think of some words that have changed meaning over time. Ask people older than you or who come from other parts of the world to tell you about some words that can mean different things to different people.*

Have some of the students read the sentences that changed the most. Discuss how this affects the understanding of a historic document or other written primary source. How can archaeology help with this problem?