Title: John Smith’s 1st Voyage Exploring the Chesapeake Bay

Developed by: Sari J. Bennett and Patricia King Robeson (Maryland Geographic Alliance)

Grade/s: 4/5

Class Period/Duration: 2 class periods

VSC Standards/Indicators:
Geography
VSC:
Geography Grade 4:
3.A.1 Use geographic tools to locate places and describe the human and physical characteristics of those places
   c. Use photographs, maps, charts, graphs and atlases to describe geographic characteristics of Maryland and the United States

Geography Grade 5:
3.A.1 Use geographic tools to locate places and describe human and physical characteristics in colonial America
   c. Use photographs, maps, and drawings to describe geographic characteristics

Social Studies Skills and Processes
6.D.1 Identify primary and secondary sources of information that relate to the topic/situation/problem being studied
   c. Locate and gather data and information from appropriate non-print sources, such as music, artifacts, charts, maps, graphs, photographs, video clips, illustrations, paintings, political cartoons, interviews, and oral histories

Objectives:
Students will be able to:
• interpret a primary source, John Smith’s map and excerpts from his journal.
• identify places on a map that show John Smith’s route.
• identify geographic characteristics seen by John Smith on his first voyage of the Chesapeake Bay

Vocabulary: Names on the left are taken from Smith’s map. Modern names are on the right.
flu - river
Bolus flu - Patapsco River
Keales Hill - Olney, VA
Limbo Strait - Hooper Strait
Patawomeck flu - Potomac River
Poynt Comfort - Point Comfort
Powhatan flu - James River
Rapahanock flu - Honga River (MD Eastern Shore)
Richards cliffs - Calvert Cliffs
Russells Isles - Tangier, Goose and Watts Islands
Winstons Isles - Kent & Tilghman Islands
Materials/Resources

Teacher:  
Transparency “John Smith and His Crew”
Transparency “Declination Chart”
Transparency “Journal Drawing”

Students:  
“Virginia” John Smith’s Map - 1 for each group of four students. Have students construct maps before lesson begins or use “Chesapeake Bay in John Smith’s Time” (National Geographic Society)
“John Smith’s First Voyage up the Chesapeake Bay Journal Excerpts” - 1set for each group of 4 students
“Geographic Characteristics Seen by Smith and His Crew on the First Voyage.” - 1 for each student
“Describing What Is Happening” - 1 for each student

Teacher Background:
In the summer of 1608, John Smith made two voyages from Jamestown to explore the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Smith documented the geographic characteristics of the region and his encounters with Native Peoples. He wrote The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England & the Summer Isles and made a map of the Chesapeake Bay region using this information.

Smith’s accounts of his first voyage describes the Chesapeake Bay shoreline, rivers, and creeks and provides names for physical features. He writes of his experiences with Native Peoples.

Students must understand “geographic characteristics” to complete the activities in this lesson. Each place has distinctive characteristics that distinguishes it from other places. This lesson contains information about the geographic characteristics of the Chesapeake Bay in 1608. Geographic characteristics are divided into two categories: physical characteristics and human characteristics.

Physical characteristics describe the natural environment of the place. They include:

• physical features - landforms and bodies of waters
• weather and climate - the short term conditions of the atmosphere determined by variables such as temperature, wind, moisture, and pressure. Climate is the average temperature and rainfall for a particular place over hundreds of years.
• soil - the thin layer of material on the Earth’s surface. Sand, silt, and clay are the basic types of soil.
• minerals - naturally occurring, nonliving solids with a characteristic crystal, structure and definite chemical makeup.
• vegetation- four types: forest, grassland, tundra and desert. Climate affects the vegetation of a place.
• animal life - all the large and small animals that live on Earth.

Human characteristics describe the people of the place (past and present), their languages, religions, economic activities, political systems, population distribution, and modifications of the environment. Human characteristics include:

• human-made features - modifications people have made to land (for example: buildings, bridges, tunnels, railroad tracks, dams, monuments, piers, cultivated land)
• language - a way of communication with words, symbols, signs, or gestures that are used and understood by a group of people.
• religion - a set of beliefs and practices relating to a god or gods and generally agreed upon by a number of people.
• political system - how people develop and change structures of power, authority and government.
• economic activities - how people make a living in a place
• population distribution - the pattern of the number of people who live in a place.

Lesson Development:
1. Show students the transparency “John Smith and His Crew.” Tell students to study it a minute. Ask students to identify the objects, peoples and activities they see in the picture. Next, ask “Based on what you see, what questions do you have about it?” Tell students that during the summer of 1608, John Smith made two voyages from Jamestown. The Virginia Company instructed Smith and his crew to find minerals, explore the region and look for a “Northwest Passage” to the Pacific Ocean. This drawing depicts Smith preparing for one of his voyages.

2. Divide students into groups of four and tell them to list on a sheet of paper what they think Smith and his crew saw as they explored the Chesapeake Bay. Have groups share their information. Ask them how one could find this information.

3. Give each group a copy of “Virginia” (John Smith’s Map). Ask them how they think Smith went about making a map in the early 1600s. Show students the transparency “Journal Drawing” and explain that during this voyages he made drawings of what he saw and wrote in his journal. Ask them how Smith determined his location. Latitude could be measured by noting the sun’s elevation. Calculating longitude was a problem because there was no such thing as an accurate timepiece on board a ship. The hourglasses that were used lost a great deal of time depending on moisture and temperature and had to be reset on the sun’s noon position every day. Declination charts were used to help them calculate their location. Show and discuss with students the transparency “Declination Chart.” Discuss information on the chart and the fact that one had use a great deal of math to be a sailor.

4. Explain that Smith wrote about his voyages in the Chesapeake Bay and used this information to make his map. In his account of his first voyage, Smith described many physical characteristics of the regions he explored. He also describes the Native Peoples living in the region. Have students look at the map and find a drawing that tells us how Smith and his crew explored the Chesapeake Bay. (Drawing of his shallop or “barge” as he refers to it in his journal is located at the north end of the Chesapeake Bay near the Susquehanna River.)

5. Tell students to look at the map again and identify some of the geographic characteristics of the Chesapeake Bay that Smith placed on his map. (physical characteristics: physical features - bay, rivers/flues, cape, point, hills, waterfalls/ffales, islands; vegetation - different types of trees; animals - deer, other animal) (human characteristics: human-made features - houses, crosses; political system - chiefs and ordinary houses; economic activities - hunting; population distribution - villages)

6. Give each group of students the handout “John Smith’s First Voyage up the Chesapeake Bay.” Tell them to read and discuss the information and to find the letter on the map that identifies the location
of places he visited. Letters for the first voyage are found in circles.

**Answer Key:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jamestowne</th>
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<th>Rapahannock flu</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cape Henry</td>
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<td>Momfords Poynt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accowmack village</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Rickards cliffs</td>
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<td>Keales Hill</td>
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<td>Bolus flu</td>
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<td>Russels Iles</td>
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<td>Kus flu</td>
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<td>Powhatan flu</td>
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**Assessment:**

1. Give each student the handout “Geographic Characteristics Seen by Smith and His Crew on the First Voyage.” Tell them to use information from John Smith’s first voyage journal excerpts and his map to identify the geographic characteristics of the Chesapeake Bay region in 1608. Place a line through the incorrect characteristics that are listed.

2. Discuss answers.

**Answer Key:**

- **Physical Characteristics**
  - physical features: bay, river, island, inlet, river mouth, stream, sound, point, cliffs, fall line, valley, waterfalls, creek, marsh, strait, hill, shore
  - weather and climate: thunderstorms, winds, sunny, rain, clouds
  - vegetation: marsh grasses, trees, forest
  - animal life: oysters, fish, deer, ray (furs)

- **Human Characteristics**
  - human-made features: houses, crosses
  - language: English, Algonquin
  - economic activities: fishing, ship building, trading, farming, hunting
  - population distribution: villages, towns

**Closure:**

1. Give each student the handout, “Describing What Is Happening.” Tell students to use their new knowledge of John Smith’s first voyage to describe what is happening in each of the pictures.
2. Discuss each picture and relate each to the journal dates.

**Answer Key:**

- **John Smith and crew in barge** - sailed up the bay and into many flues. Experienced storms and strong winds. June 4; June 6; June 13 - 14

- **Trading with Native Peoples** - Smith and his crew stopped at many villages and traded with the Native Peoples. They received beads, furs, bows, arrows, swords, and shields. June 10; July 18 - 20

- **Cooking fish** - Native People cooked fish that was so abundant. They used bone-head spears to catch them. Nanticoke men who had been fishing treated Smith and his men and traded with them. June 3
John Smith’s First Voyage up the Chesapeake Bay

Read and discuss the information and find the letter on the map that identifies the location of places Smith and his crew visited. Letters for his first voyage are found in circles.

John Smith kept a detailed journal of his voyages on the Chesapeake Bay. Below are excerpts taken from an interpretation of his writing by Edward Wright Haile, *Jamestown Narratives*. Some places listed are not found on Smith’s Map of the Chesapeake Bay. The places identified on his map are bolded and in italics. Look only for these places on Smith’s map.

*June 2, 1608*
Smith’s barge and the *Phoenix*, one of the first supply ships, departs *Jamestowne*. The *Phoenix* tows the barge down the *Powhatan flu*. Arriving that night at *Cape Henry*, the tow is dropped, and Smith and crew heads northward using the stars or compass to arrive at Fisherman Island.

*June 3, 1608*
Fish are so abundant that the Native People used bone-headed spears to catch them. Smith sails to *Accowmack village* where he meets friendly Native People.

*June 4, 1608*
Sails north to explore Cherrystone Inlet and passes mouths of the Gulf and Hungars Creeks. Experiences a violent thunderstorm with winds up to 60 miles an hour. Anchors for the night near *Keales Hill*.

*June 5, 1608*
Spends time at *Russels Iles*. Smith names this island for the expedition’s doctor. Ran out of drinking water. Sails past mouth of *Wighco flu*. Meets Wighcocomocs and explores upriver overland with a guide reaching present day Pocomoke City.

*June 6, 1608*
Leaves Wighco flu and heads west. Enters Tangier Sound which is low marshlands. Heads north and explores the wide part of the Annamessex River and Manokin River. Sails to Bloodsworth Island and names it “*Limbo*.” Storm destroys the mast and sail on the barge.

*June 7 - 8 - 9, 1608*
Stranded until John Powell, the tailor on board, mends the sail using the crew’s shirts. Forest on the island provides the tree used to make a mast. Underway again and follows the Eastern Shore to the *Kus flu*. Local people shooting arrows at them from behind trees. Anchors midstream for the night.
June 10, 1608
In the morning, Nanticoke men who had been fishing were treated kindly by Smith. Nanticoke left and return with 20 Nanticoke to trade. Word spreads and hundreds of others come down stream to meet with Smith. Nanticoke had the highest-quality furs that the crew had seen. Nanticoke had quality furs because they traded great quantities of shell beads for furs.

June 11, 1608
Sails through present-day Hooper Strait which Smith named the Rapahannock flu. Passes the Honga River and reaches Momfords Poynt. Crosses over the Chesapeake Bay to see high cliffs he names Rickards cliffs after his mother’s maiden name.

June 12, 1608
Heads north sailing past the mouths of the South and Severn Rivers. Explores the Magothy River and returns to the Bay and to the mouth of the Bolus flu.

June 13 - 14, 1608
Explores the Bolus flu to the fall line and places a brass cross claiming the valley for the English. Searches for minerals but finds none. Crew wants to return to Jamestowne. Smith convinces them to continue, but a nor’easter prevents the crew from leaving until the next day.

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June 15 - 16, 1608
Rest restores the men’s spirits and they sail into the Bay and head south for the Patawomeck flu.____

June 17, 1608
Sails across the 7 mile-wide Patawomeck flu to the southern banks. Encounters an ambush and replies with gunshots aimed low so not to injure anyone. Peace is made with all involved.

June 18 - July 16, 1608
Travels the Patawomeck flu by barge to Little Falls and overland to Great Falls searching for minerals. Explores creeks and flues and stops at many villages.

July 17, 1608
Sails south to Fleets Bay and to the mouth of the Toppahanock flu.____ Runs aground and goes fishing around Stingra Ile. ____ Smith stung by a cownose ray in his wrist and suffers great pain.

July 18 - 20, 1608
Decides to return to Jamestowne. The barge contains bows, arrows, swords, shields, and furs traded for along the voyage. Stops at Kecoughtan village. Kecoughtans were sure Smith and his crew had fought with their enemy, the Massawomecks. Smith lets them believe it, and a celebration takes place.

July 20 - 21, 1608
Sails up the Powhatan flu _____ for Jamestowne. Decides to play a joke on the village by decorating the barge with streamers painted with Spanish colors. English people feared the Spaniards and at first were frightened until they realized that it was Smith and his crew. Smith returns with all his men in good health.
# Declination Chart

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*Note: Values in the table represent declination values for each date.*
Directions: Use information from John Smith's journal excerpts and his map to identify the geographic characteristics of the Chesapeake Bay region in 1608. Draw a line through the incorrect characteristics that are listed.

**Geographic Characteristics Seen by Smith and His Crew on the First Voyage**

Name________________________________________

Date________________________________________

**Physical Characteristics**

*physical features*
- bay, river, ocean, island, forest
- wind, fish, inlet, river mouth
- stream, shells, point, cliffs, fall line
- valley, mountain, waterfalls, villages
- creek, marsh, strait, hill, shore

*weather and climate*
- thunderstorms, snow, winds, sunny, rain, clouds, sleet

*vegetation*
- marsh grasses, trees, forest, cacti, wheat

*animal life*
- oysters, lions, fish, deer, ray, lions, bears

**Human Characteristics**

*human-made features*
- houses, gardens, totem poles, crosses, trading posts

*language*
- English, Navajo, Algonquin

*economic activities*
- fishing, ship building, trading, farming, hunting

*population distribution*
- cities, villages, towns
Describing What Is Happening

On the lines below, describe each picture using complete sentences.

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