

**How Do You Lose a *Colony*?**  
**Exploring What Became of John White’s “Lost Colony”**

**Overview**

Students will compliment their investigation of the foundations of America by participating in a group project in which they write a play based on John White’s colony. Plays must show student understanding of the colonial period in general, and illustrate an interpretation of what became of the “lost” John White colonists. Students will present their play to classmates by dressing in period costume and acting it out.

**Grade**

5

**North Carolina Essential Standards for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies**

- 5.G.1.1- Explain the impact of the physical environment on early settlements in the New World.
- 5.G.1.2- Explain the positive and negative effects of human activity on the physical environment of the United States, past and present.
- 5.G.1.3- Exemplify how technological advances (communication, transportation and agriculture) have allowed people to overcome geographic limitations.
- 5.G.1.4- Exemplify migration within or immigration to the United States in order to identify push and pull factors (why people left/why people came).
- 5.C.1.2- Exemplify how the interactions of various groups have resulted in borrowing and sharing of traditions and technology.

**Essential Questions**

- In what ways was Roanoke Island an appropriate location for a colony? In what ways was it unsuitable?
- Who were the members of the John White colony and what were their roles throughout the life of the colony?
- What difficulties did the John White colony face?
- What is your interpretation of what became of the John White colonists?
- Even though it failed, how did the John White colony impact future colonization?

**Materials**

- Lost Colony image, attached
- How Do You Lose a Colony, assignment sheet attached
- Access to the Internet and/or library

**Duration**

- 20 minutes of class time to explain the assignment, three to four 30+ minute class work sessions, and at least 1 week of homework time is recommended; teachers should amend the duration to meet their own needs.

**Preparation**

- Students should have a basic understanding of the facts surrounding the history of Roanoke Island, including the Amadas and Barlowe expedition, the Ralph Lane Colony, and John White’s mysterious “Lost Colony”. Information and readings are available in LEARN NC’s digital textbook at <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-twoworlds/4.0>

- Teachers should determine whether to allow students to choose their own groups, or whether they will be assigned.

### **Procedure**

1. As a warm up, project the attached image from the Lost Colony. Allow students to review the occurrences of the Lost Colony by prompting:
  - What do you see here?
  - What do you think is happening in this picture? What has transpired previous to this moment represented?
  - What are some of the theories that explain what became of the “Lost Colonists?” (Chart student answers on the board.)
2. Hand out the attached assignment sheet. Explain to students that they will be developing a theory on what became of the members of the “Lost Colony.” Considering the possibilities discussed in class (Spanish attack, Native attack, Lumbee amalgamation, attempted return to England, etc.), or based on inferred and compiled ideas, group members will write and perform a short play about John White’s colony that shows their interpretation of what became of the colonists.
3. Go through the project assignment sheet in detail. Teachers should determine an approximate required time length for the plays when performed (i.e., 8 minutes). If very short plays are desired, ensure students begin their play right around the time when John White leaves for supplies. Once students understand the assignment, allow time for students to get into their groups and brainstorm in class. Teachers should use their discretion regarding how much class time and homework time is provided for work on this project.

### **Culminating Activities**

- Hold an evening of short plays for the community, allowing students to present their work. Allow students to answer audience questions after the presentations and share their learned knowledge of John White’s colony.
- Take a field trip to see an actual reenactment of the Lost Colony: <http://www.thelostcolony.org/>

### **Differentiation**

#### **Students with special needs**

- Modify the project guidelines as needed, and ensure mixed-ability groups.
- Students who are unable to work with a group can be given the assignment of choosing one colonist from the John White colony and writing a monologue from their perspective, telling what became of the colony. (For example, “Imagine you are Virginia Dare and write what happened to you...”)
- Students who are unable to participate in the presenting of the plays can be assigned “back stage” roles, such as Stage Manager, and assist in the technical aspects of presentations.

#### **AIG Students**

- Allow students to compile the best parts of several short plays and create one, full length play. Students can work throughout the semester to write, cast, stage, and act out the play, culminating in an evening showing at the end of the semester. Students can also involve other school programs, such as the band (provide music via a live orchestra), dance class (include dance scenes), art class (assist with scenery and props), etc.

## The Lost Colony



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Project Assignment: How Do You Lose a Colony?

Due Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Assignment:** What do you think became of the members of John White's colony? Based on possibilities we discussed in class, or based on new ideas you and your group members infer, you will write and perform a short play about your perspective on the Lost Colony. Your play should have a beginning, middle, and an end. It should include actual characters and accurate events of the the colony. **Most importantly, the end of your play should show what your group believe happened to the colony.** Obviously, this part will be inferred, as no one really knows for sure what became of John White's colonists. You will culminate this project by presenting your play to class.

### Time Line and Process:

#### 1. Research, Review and Brainstorm:

Together as a group, review the events leading up to John White's colonization attempt (i.e., the **Amandas and Barlowe expedition** and the **Ralph Lane colony**), as well as the settling of the John White colony and the occurrences before John White returned to England. You may also want to do additional research in the library or on the Internet. As you review and further research all that is known about the events taking place on Roanoke Island, brainstorm possibilities of what may have actually happened to the John White Colony over the three years that White was gone. What do you think was happening back on Roanoke Island while White was retrieving supplies in England? How do you think the colonists were "lost"? After discussion, decide on an ending that you think is most likely. Then further brainstorm what characters you wish to have present in your play, and what parts of the actual events of the colony you will show in your play up until the point of your fictional ending. Schedule two times your group can meet outside of class to continue working (i.e. during lunch, study hall, after school, etc.)

**All additional research, review, and brainstorming should be completed by:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. First Draft Work Day:

Bring your brainstorming ideas to class, and begin to put your rough ideas onto paper. Decide what characters will be in the various scenes of your play and what they will say to one another. As you work on what characters will say to one another to move the story along, you may want to consider who will play which character and do some improvisation acting to help you write the dialogue down. Schedule time to work outside of class to revise your first draft into an improved Second Draft.

**A Second Draft is due in class on:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### 3. Second Draft Work Day:

Bring your second draft to class for final edits and revisions. Begin to practice your play in class, brainstorming how you will recreate costumes and props needed. Schedule time outside of class to complete your typed final draft and also time to practice acting the play out. Remember, you will be presenting this to class!

#### 4. Create a Final Costume List and Sketches:

Think about how each character should dress, and try to match the dress of the time period (1580's) as close as possible. You should do some research (books, library, Internet) to view outfits from colonial days, and figure out how to recreate them. Make sure you have a written description and sketch of a generic male colonist, a generic female colonist, and a Native American to turn in with your final draft.

**Complete your costume list and sketches by:** \_\_\_\_\_

*\*NOTE: While you are expected to make an attempt to represent costumes in your play as best you can, the sketches show what you would dress like if you had a "million dollar budget."*

**5. Final Draft Due and Play Practice:**

Bring the final draft of your play and your costume list/sketches to class. You may also wish to bring in props/costumes that you will use when you present your play. You will have time to practice in class to prepare for your performance. You should also plan to practice outside of class. (Make sure you practice your scene as much as possible. Read through your scene together so that you are sure there are no mistakes, and so that you are comfortable with it. You do not have to memorize your lines, but you should make sure to put some animation in your voice and move around to make the performance interesting.)

**The final draft (including the script, costume list and sketches is due on:** \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Dress Rehearsal:**

Bring all materials to class on this day that you will need for presenting your play (costumes, props, scenery pieces, final script, etc.) You will have time to practice your play as if it is the real performance (wearing your costumes, integrating the props and scenery, etc.)

**The dress rehearsal will take place on:** \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Performance:** Your group will perform your scene in the auditorium and participate in a class feedback session.

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**Grading:**

**Typed, Comprehensive Script: 40 points**

To receive full credit, your script should be typed in the format shown below, and include a comprehensive story of the facts of the settling of John White's Colony, and **most importantly it should show your groups inferred ending (do not leave the ending a mystery).** The script should have a clear beginning, middle, and end, containing at least three or more scenes.

**Costume list and sketches: 15 points**

Turn in a generic sketch for a female and male colonist, as well as a Native American. Also, write out a list of what each of these three characters would wear. (You are expected to try to represent costumes in your performance, but it is understood they will not be perfect!)

**Following group work expectations: 15 points**

Make sure you come to class prepared to work together when given time to do so. Also, make sure you are contributing to the group by doing work independently at home to make your play even better!

**Performance: 30 points**

Your group must perform in front of the class. The purpose of this performance is not to make your classmates laugh...it is to act out your idea of what happened to the Lost Colony. Performances should be serious and well rehearsed, with each member knowing ahead of time what they are doing. Be very careful with how you portray the Natives...do not be stereotypical!

**Total Possible Points 100 points**

## How to format your typed scenes:

Title

*Scene1: The curtain opens to an area of woods, with trees and bushes all around. From the left, 6 colonists enter. They seem tired and weary, but also excited about the new land they have arrived on. They carry supplies in leather bags, as well as weapons.*

**John White:** Well then, it looks like this is as good a place as any to rest a spell.

**George Howe:** *(sitting on a rock)* Yes, a rest would be very nice. It is hard moving through all of this shrubbery and brush.

**Ananias Dare:** Are you feeling poorly? *(turning to his wife, Eleanor)* Would you like a drink of water?

**Eleanor Dare:** Oh, yes please. That would be lovely. *(takes a canteen)* Thank you.

**John White:** *(yells offstage to other colonists not seen)* Everyone, we'll stop here for a bit. Rest yourselves!