

Name _____

Date _____

The Lost Colony of Roanoke - Answer Key

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Lost

Twenty years before British colonists landed at Jamestown, 115 settlers landed on an island off the coast of present-day North Carolina and founded the colony of Roanoke. The year was 1587, and the plan was to establish the first permanent English settlement in North America. During the grueling first year, it became clear the colony was running out of supplies. The colony's governor, John White, sailed back to England to gather what they needed. But as White arrived in England, war broke out between England and Spain. His plan to return to Roanoke immediately was derailed when every available ship was required to join the war. Three years later, when White and his crew finally returned, the settlement was gone. The people were gone; the buildings were gone. Everything had vanished without a trace, except for one thing: a wooden post with the word CROATOAN carved into it.

What is the main idea of this passage?



A.

A combination of bad conditions and bad timing contributed to the disappearance of the Roanoke colony.

Details like "During the grueling first year, it became clear the colony was running out of supplies" and "His plan to return to Roanoke immediately was derailed when every available ship was required to join the war" support the main idea.

B. John White is to blame for the disappearance of the Roanoke colony and its inhabitants.

C. Without the failure of the Roanoke colony, Jamestown would have never been established in North America.

D. The British government decided the Roanoke colony was less important than the Anglo-Spanish War.

2. Theories

To this day, no one knows exactly what happened to the colonists at Roanoke—but there are some theories. Croatoan was the name of a nearby island where an Indigenous tribe of the same name lived. Many historians speculate that the colonists couldn't survive on their own, so they abandoned Roanoke to live with the Croatoans. Another theory suggests settlers were attacked and killed by Spanish colonists from Florida. A third theory suggests they tried to sail back to England themselves and died at sea. Despite archaeological findings, no totally definitive explanation has been found.

What is the main idea of this passage?

- A. The story of the Roanoke colony is usually not included in school textbooks.
- B. It is unlikely that the colonists who remained at Roanoke would have had enough sailing skills to make it back to England.
- C. There are theories about what happened to the Roanoke settlers, but none have been definitively proven.
- D. Most people have stopped researching the Roanoke colony in the past few decades.



C.

There are theories about what happened to the Roanoke settlers, but none have been definitively proven.

Details like “But there are some theories” and “No totally definitive explanation has been found” support the main idea.

3. An Answer?

The Croatoan Archaeological Society is a group dedicated to researching Roanoke Island and Hatteras Island, once known as Croatoan. According to their research, the theory that the settlers were taken in by the Croatoans is by far the most likely explanation. Evidence they've found includes parts of English swords and guns in the same layer of dirt as Croatoan pottery and arrowheads. The group suggests that the Croatoans took the settlers in and integrated them into their society. According to the group's founder, the mystery isn't a mystery at all. Based on his research, he strongly believes the friendly Croatoans welcomed the settlers with open arms in their time of need.

What is the main idea of the passage?



- A.** According to the Croatoan Archaeological Society, evidence suggests the Croatoans most likely took in the Roanoke colonists.
Details like "According to the group's founder, the mystery isn't a mystery at all. Based on his research, he strongly believes the friendly Croatoans welcomed the settlers with open arms in their time of need" support the main idea.
- B.** According to the Croatoan Archaeological Society, there are still too many unanswered questions to suggest an explanation for Roanoke.
- C.** According to the Croatoan Archaeological Society, Croatoans unhappily let the settlers join their society.
- D.** According to the Croatoan Archaeological Society, it's possible Spanish colonists told the British settlers how to contact the Croatoans.