Name: ______________________________

A Tale of Two Colonies

Directions: The Jamestown colony almost failed in its earliest years. The Plymouth colony established itself strongly its first year (after the first, starving winter). Read these two descriptions of the founding of the first two permanent British settlements in North America, and then fill in the chart on the opposite side using the word bank to identify why the two colonies had such different experiences.

Jamestown

Most of the Jamestown colonists were gentlemen and gentlemen’s servants. English gentlemen and their servants never performed manual labor. They were no more prepared to do so in America than in their native land. The gentlemen came to Virginia expecting to find lots of gold and silver. They planned to spend their time gathering these precious metals, or perhaps overseeing as their servants did the gathering. When they found they had to work hard, they began quarreling among themselves.

Non-gentlemen settlers were hired workers. They were working for the colonizing company, not for themselves. They had no incentive to work hard, so they didn’t. The Jamestown leaders – appointed by the colonizing company – weren’t very skilled, so they couldn’t stop the conflict or get people to work harder.

The Jamestown colonists chose the site of their settlement because it was on the river. They thought they could defend it easily against Indian attack. In fact, the land was swampy, and the drinking water wasn’t good. In this climate, many settlers died of malaria and dysentery. Their relations with the Native Americans weren’t smooth. In fact, attacks were always a possibility.

During the summer, the colonists didn’t catch and salt extra fish to eat over the winter. They didn’t get enough crops grown and harvested either. During the winter of 1608-1609, the Jamestown settlers suffered through the “Starving Time.” Many died. One man even killed his wife, salted her body to preserve it, and began eating her! (He was caught at it and executed.) Finally, John Smith took control of the colony. He bought corn from the Native Americans. He got the colonists to be orderly and practical.

Plymouth

The Plymouth settlers came to America so they could practice their religion in the way they wanted. They were typically lower class. They knew they were coming to a wilderness without riches like gold or silver. They came to work hard to create a new, holy society that would follow God’s word in all things. Before landing in Massachusetts, the male settlers signed an agreement. They promised to live by a set of rules they themselves would draw up. And they did. They also chose their own leaders.

The Pilgrims landed in December, so they couldn’t grow food until the following summer. Many died that winter of starvation. But their site had plenty of fresh air and water. They made sure their relations with nearby Native Americans were friendly. One man in particular, Squanto, showed them how to grow corn. The Pilgrims had plenty of food on hand when their second winter began.
### A Tale of Two Colonies Chart

Numbers indicate how many answers should be listed in each box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jamestown</th>
<th>Plymouth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Colonists</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasons for Coming to the Colony</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How the Colony was Governed</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relations with the Native Americans</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Food Supply</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Word Bank

- Appointed by the Company: Massachusetts
- Bad Drinking Water: Near a Swampy River
- Bought Corn from Indians: Not Smooth
- Chose Leaders: Pilgrims
- Friendly: Poor in Winter
- Gentlemen: Possibility of Attack
- Gold: Religious Freedom
- Good after the First Winter: Servants
- Good Drinking Water: Silver
- Hard Workers: Traded with Later
- Helped by Squanto: Unskilled Leaders
- Hired Workers: Virginia
- John Smith: Wilderness
- Lower Class: Written Rules