

John Smith maps the coast

1614 | Grade 4 · Explain with evidence

Words to know

map — a drawing or display that represents places

coast — land next to the ocean

purpose — the reason something is done

Look closely



John Smith's New England map, in an edition cataloged around 1624 by the Leventhal Map & Education Center. First published in 1616 after his 1614 voyage.

Read the story

John Smith sailed along the coast and made a map. He called the region New England. Native people already lived there. The map helped English readers picture the coast, but left out many stories.

Smith's map was first published in 1616 and later reissued. A map's publication date can differ from its voyage date. English place names promoted colonization and expressed a viewpoint.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. State the main idea. Support it with two details from the reading.
2. Explain a change or challenge described in the text. Which words support your answer?
3. Use one vocabulary word in a new sentence about this event.
4. What can the image and caption help explain? What can they not tell you?

Follow-up reading: The Great Dying

1616–1619

A terrible sickness spread through many Native communities near the coast. Many people died. Families lost loved ones. Survivors kept caring for each other. Native nations continued, and their descendants live here today.

Epidemics preceded the Mayflower and devastated Patuxet and other communities. Losses varied by location; one percentage cannot describe every nation. Scholars disagree about the precise disease responsible.

Compare the two readings. Explain one similarity or difference using a detail from each. Their order does not prove that one caused the other.

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.4.1: refer to details; RI.4.2: main idea and summary; RI.4.3: explain events; RI.4.7: interpret visual information; W.4.2 and SL.4.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: John Smith sailed along the coast and made a map. He called the region New England. Native people already lived there. The map helped English readers picture the coast, but left out many stories. Smith's map was first published in 1616 and later reissued. A map's publication date can differ from its voyage date. English place names promoted colonization and expressed a viewpoint.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

Image: John Smith; Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library. Public domain historical map.

[Image source and rights record ↗](#)

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's HTML page. External sources may need adult guidance.