

COMPARE &
CONTRAST

MOVIE &
POPCORN

CONVERSATION
CARDS

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Materials:

- Disney's *Pocahontas* movie
- Popcorn (optional)

Directions:

Watch Disney's *Pocahontas* with some popcorn (if you'd like) and then read "The True Story of Pocahontas" (provided here).

Use these Conversation Cards to compare and contrast the two versions of the story with meaningful discussion.

The True Story of Pocahontas

The story of Pocahontas has been told again and again from the English colonial point of view; but it is not the true story. This is the true story of Pocahontas.

Pocahontas' dad was named Wahunsenaca and he was the chief or leader of their tribe, the Powhatan nation. Her mother died while giving birth to Pocahontas, whose birth name was Matoaka. Matoaka means "flower between two streams." Her dad called her Pocahontas, because it was her mother's name, who he loved greatly. The name, Pocahontas, means "laughing and joyous one." As a Native people, they spent their lives taking care of their land and teaching their children about the Powhatan culture, their people's way of life and special traditions.

One of the more famous English explorers to travel to North America was Captain John Smith. The Powhatan people wanted to become friends with him and the other colonists, believing that they could help one another.

Sadly, over time, the Native people became afraid of John Smith and unhappy with the colonist's treatment of their people. The Powhatan took John Smith captive for a short time to learn why he and the other colonists had arrived. John Smith lied and told them that the only reason they were living in Native territory, land today known as Virginia, was because they were running from the Spanish. The Powhatan people were also enemies with the Spanish. Keeping this in mind, they continued to trust John Smith and hope that the colonists would be a good friend and neighbor to them. Unfortunately, the colonists never planned on becoming friends with the Powhatan people.

The colonists built Jamestown on Powhatan hunting land, with the Powhatan nation's permission. Whenever the Powhatan would visit Jamestown, they would have Pocahontas lead the way. Bringing a young child on a visit to a neighboring tribe was a common way for Native people to show that they wanted to be friends with the people that they were visiting.

Over time, the colonists and John Smith became more and more mean and greedy. They would go into other villages and steal their corn. Wahunsenaca wanted things to be peaceful between them and so he had a meeting with John Smith. During this meeting, he tried to teach John Smith about being peaceful and kind.

The True Story of Pocahontas (continued)

Sadly, this did not help. The colonists and John Smith continued to take over Native lands and steal from them.

Pocahontas had a ceremony known as a “coming of age” ceremony to celebrate her becoming an adult. Soon after this, Pocahontas was married to a warrior named Kocoum. Wahunsenka wanted to hide Pocahontas from the English and keep her safe. He sent her away from her home village to live with her husband in another village far off. Unfortunately, the English, led by Captain Samuel Argall, found and captured Pocahontas anyway. Captain Samuel Argall told her father that they would return Pocahontas if the Powhatan gave the colonists corn and weapons. Even though the Native Americans gave the colonists what they asked for, they still would not let Pocahontas go back home.

After one year of her being kidnapped, she became married to John Rolfe. While in captivity, Pocahontas was taken to England to meet the queen and other important people. It was during this trip that Pocahontas learned that the colonists did not care to be friends with her people, the Powhatan, but that they just wanted to take over Native lands for growing tobacco and becoming rich. Pocahontas was determined to return home as soon as possible to warn her people.

On their return sail back to Virginia, the land of Pocahontas’ people, she became very ill and died. Many believe that she was poisoned while sailing home, because the colonists did not want her to warn the Powhatan of the colonist’s plans.

More and more colonists came to what they called “The New World” to grow tobacco and other crops. The Powhatan helped them to do this successfully. Despite the kindness and generosity of the Powhatan, the colonists continued to mistreat the Native people, steal their crops, and force them off of their generational lands, the lands that their families lived on for thousands of years.

This is the true story of Pocahontas, as told by her people, the Powhatan nation. This is the tale that was passed down from generation to generation.

How is the character of Pocahontas different in these two versions of the story?

How is the character of Pocahontas similar in these two versions of the story?

How is the setting different in these two versions of the story?

How is the setting similar in these two versions of the story?

What surprises you from "The True Story of Pocahontas"?

Which version of the story do you think is true? Why?

What characters other than Pocahontas are different in these two versions of the story?

What characters other than Pocahontas are similar in these two versions of the story?

How does knowing both versions change how your views on Pocahontas?

Do you think there should be a movie about "The True Story of Pocahontas"? Why or why not?

Why do you think it's important to learn about Pocahontas?

Describe Pocahontas using an adjective?