

## Sir Walter Raleigh

Sir Walter Raleigh was born in England around 1552, a wealthy nobleman and half-brother of Sir Humphrey Gilbert. It was Gilbert who had proved his colonizing ambitions in Ireland, but was lost at sea on his way home from trying to found the first English colony in North America.

After Gilbert's death, Raleigh planned to continue Gilbert's work. Raleigh was active at the court of Queen Elizabeth I, and tried to win the favour of the queen. In 1584, Raleigh had an idea for a way to increase the land held by the British Empire.

Queen Elizabeth I granted Raleigh a charter (permission) for the colonization of the area of North America known as Virginia (after Elizabeth I, who was sometimes called the Virgin Queen). This charter stated that Raleigh needed to establish a colony in North America, or lose his right to colonization.

Raleigh sent several expeditions to Virginia and chose Roanoke Island. The first Roanoke colony was abandoned in 1586 after trouble with the local peoples, the Croatoans, led to the beheading of the Croatoan chief.

Raleigh then arranged for John White, an artist and friend of Raleigh's, to return to Roanoke in 1587 to form a colony of 150 people. But it was a disaster. Within one month of landing, White was forced to return to England to ask Raleigh for reinforcements. When White returned to Roanoke three years later, the colonists had disappeared, never to be seen again.

Meanwhile, Raleigh helped the English to defeat Spanish naval forces, and then raided Spanish lands. However, he fell from Elizabeth's favour after he secretly married one of her maids, and he was imprisoned in the Tower of London. After that, Raleigh searched South America in vain for the mythical 'land of Gold' called El Dorado.

Then, when a new king, James I, came to power, Raleigh was no longer popular at the royal court. He was accused of plotting to kill the king, and was sentenced to death. Even though Raleigh escaped the death penalty for years by spending time in the Tower of London and trying another fruitless search for El Dorado, he was living on borrowed time. He was finally executed on October 29, 1618.

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### **Understanding words:**

- a) Write the sentence in which you found the word 'favour'.
- b) From that sentence, suggest what 'favour' means.
- c) Write a new sentence using the word 'favour'.
- d) Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'favour'.
- e) Draw a small picture showing what you think 'favour' means

### **Sequencing:**

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

- But Raleigh later fell from royal favour and was imprisoned in the Tower of London twice before being executed.
- Meanwhile, Raleigh helped the English to defeat the Spanish in a naval battle.
- Raleigh set up a colony at Roanoke Island, but it was a disaster.
- Sir Walter Raleigh was born in England in the sixteenth century.
- Raleigh wanted to follow in the footsteps of Humphrey Gilbert, who had tried to found the first English colony in North America.
- After only a short time, the colonists at Roanoke abandoned the colony.
- In 1584, Queen Elizabeth I granted Raleigh permission to colonize Virginia, an area of North America named for her.

### **Get to the facts:**

1. Who was Walter Raleigh's half-brother?
2. Who was Virginia named for?
3. Which colony was abandoned?
4. Where did Raleigh search for El Dorado?
5. When was Raleigh executed?

### **Make a story...**

#### **The lost colony**

Imagine you are living in a colony, when everything starts to go wrong, forcing you to abandon the colony. Write a letter to England explaining what is going wrong, and what will happen to you now.