

FOR TEACHERS

JOHN HALFHEAD: LESSON PLANS



PHYSICAL ADDRESS

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Table of Contents

For Teachers

Background information for Teachers

John Halfhead	pg 2
Indentured Servants	pg 3
Adaptation	pg 3
Literacy in 17th-century Maryland	pg 5
Challenges for Historians	pg 6
Using Primary Sources with Students	pg 7
Original Documents	pg 7

Lesson Plan One: Meet John Halfhead, Indentured Servant	pg 8
Lesson Plan Two: Meet John Halfhead, Plantation Master	pg17
Lesson Plan Three: Meet John Halfhead, Citizen	pg 26

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Lesson Plan One Answer Key	pg 36
Appendix 2: Lesson Plan Two Answer Key	pg 37
Appendix 3: Lesson Plan Three Answer Key	pg 38

Background Information for Teachers

For Teachers

John Halfhead:

John Halfhead was an actual colonist who sailed on the Ark from England and arrived in Maryland in 1634. Although Halfhead left no written documents in his own hand - he was illiterate - his name appears many times in the public records documenting Maryland's early history. It is known that he was born in England and was Protestant. He was indentured to the first Governor of Maryland, Leonard Calvert (he was the younger brother of Cecil Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore and founder of the colony). Halfhead was apparently skilled as a brick mason.

John Halfhead had the fortune of being present in the early days and years of Maryland and witnessed some of the most significant events as the colony struggled to become established. Subsequent lessons will follow John Halfhead through the 17th century as he finishes his indenture, becomes a member of the General Assembly, a successful plantation owner, a husband, and a father.

The student readings should be introduced by way of stating "if you could travel back in time to the 17th century and talk to John Halfhead, this is what he might say to you."

Student readings include:

- *John Halfhead, Indentured Servant*
- *John Halfhead, Plantation Master*
- *John Halfhead, Citizen of St. Mary's*

Background Information for Teachers

For Teachers

Indentured Servants:

Most of the people who came to Maryland in the 17th century came as indentured servants. An indenture was an agreement between a person who was willing to work for another for an agreed-upon amount of time in exchange for passage to America, a place to live, and food and clothing - during the length of the indenture. In Maryland, a person served as an indentured servant on average four to five years. Although some women did come, most indentured servants were men who were often poor and had little chance to improve their lives if they stayed in England. Even though Lord Baltimore suggested various skilled labor positions for the colony, in reality, most indentured servants ended up working in the tobacco fields.

A servant's life could be hard, especially if their master did not treat them fairly. At the end of their term, an indentured servant was to receive a suit of clothing, one axe, two hoes, three barrels of corn, and the rights to fifty acres of land. The newly-freed servant was responsible for paying for the land to be surveyed and registered with the court.

Adaptation:

Maryland's earliest colonists had many challenges to face in the New World. As a result, there were many adaptations made to conditions in Maryland. The following are among the most prominent:

Environment: Maryland colonists were coming to a place with an environment completely different from that of England. The land was, for the most part, covered with virgin forests. The first Englishmen arriving in Maryland were awestruck by the size of the trees, the width of the river and the sheer beauty of the place. Most of this land was also unclaimed (Native peoples had different concepts of land ownership than the English). Those bringing indentured servants to Maryland and the servants, themselves, were entitled to grants of land. Many of these colonists, especially the servants, could never have hoped to own land in England.

Background Information for Teachers

For Teachers

A notable challenge this new environment brought was battles with diseases for which these colonists had no immunity. Diseases like typhus, dysentery, influenza, and malaria were all serious problems for new immigrants. During the first year of life in Maryland, one was said to be going through the "seasoning," a sometimes-deadly combination of all of these ailments. As much as one third of new arrivals may not have survived through the seasoning. Ironically, it was probably Europeans who originally brought malaria, the most pervasive of all the diseases, to the New World.

Livestock: In 17th-century Maryland, pigs and cows were not kept in pens as they were in England. It was much more cost effective to let these animals forage in the woods for food, thereby leaving the planter to concentrate on growing tobacco rather than grains for animal feed. In the 17th century, most cows had horns and most pigs had tusks (many modern breeds have these bred out of them). These animals could easily defend themselves against predators in the woods and, therefore, did not require constant attention. To identify one's animals from one's neighbor, a colonist would mark the ears of their pigs and cows in a distinctive pattern. This mark was registered with the clerk of the court and ears were kept when an animal was butchered as proof of ownership.

Agriculture: Farmers in England were accustomed to using plows to cultivate land and prepare it for crops. In Maryland, farmers found largely virgin forests which could not be plowed. The large root systems of huge trees would break any plow that tried to get through them. Instead, colonists adopted the native method of field clearance in which trees were girdled (a strip of bark was removed around the trunk of the tree) and then lost their leaves and died. The low bush was cleared with a controlled fire. Once clear, the loose dirt was hoed into hills, and tobacco and/or corn were planted in the hills.

Foodways: The most noticeable change to the diet of Maryland colonists was the addition of Indian corn as a replacement for many European grains like wheat, barley, and oats. Corn was seen as a miracle crop that could deliver a return of hundreds of seeds (kernels) for each single seed planted. European grain could deliver as few as five

Background Information for Teachers

For Teachers

to ten seeds for each one planted. Maryland colonists probably had some form of bread made of corn with virtually every meal either in the form of baked corn bread or fried corn cakes.

Economy: The Maryland economy was based almost exclusively on the production of tobacco. There were few goods manufactured in the colony. Almost all finished goods were imported from England or Europe and purchased with tobacco. Colonists would have been accustomed to largely self-sufficient towns and villages in England. In Maryland, they might receive some supplies only once a year.

Laws: For the most part, Maryland law was based upon English law, but Lord Baltimore, proprietor of Maryland, did have some leeway when it came to legal matters. There were some laws such as those governing religion, livestock, orphans, and relationships between servant and master that were uniquely colonial. For instance, the theft of livestock was considered a felony in England, but livestock were easily mistaken in the colonies so accidental theft was probably a fairly common occurrence. The crime, therefore, was reduced to a misdemeanor and could be heard in county, rather than, provincial court (county court handled minor cases and dealt out punishments for less serious crimes, whereas the provincial court handled felonies).

Literacy in 17th-century Maryland:

On a day-to-day basis in 17th-century Maryland, most men, even those who owned land, spent their time cultivating tobacco, building and repairing their houses and barns, tending to animals, and occasionally traveling to town to take care of government and court business or to trade. In an agricultural society, there was little need to read or write. Gentlemen such as Leonardtown Calvert, first governor of Maryland, and John Lewger, secretary of the colony, would have been educated in Europe. However, only a few men in Maryland received a gentleman's education. Some colonists probably had basic reading, writing, and math skills.

Background Information for Teachers

For Teachers

Most, however, were not literate. In *Maryland . . . at the Beginning*, historians Lois Green Carr, Russell Menard, and Louis Peddicord state that nearly all the matters of daily life were conducted by word of mouth. Surviving election returns of 1639 show only 25 of 52 voters were able to sign their names. The others made marks on their ballots. From this, it appears that at least half of the colonists who were not gentlemen or priests lacked a basic literacy.

The difficult tasks of building a new colony and maintaining labor-intensive tobacco plantations left little time to establish formal schools. Parents may have passed along reading and writing skills to their children, but there were few options for formal education in 17th-century Maryland.

Some people have fallen through the cracks of history because there is no surviving written record of their life. John Halfhead used a signature mark in government documents instead of writing out his name. However, we still have many records about his life. His affairs were documented in court proceedings, inventories, and records of Assembly meetings. Provincial court records are very helpful, but St. Mary's County court records, which would have dealt with lesser, everyday matters, burned in the 19th century. Historians have only the remaining documents on which to base their interpretations. Other documents, such as letters, journals, and maps have also survived. Researchers have studied these primary source documents, culling every bit of information in order to learn more about life in Maryland in the 17th century. It is as a result of this painstaking research that we know what we know about John Halfhead today.

Challenges for Historians:

Studying primary sources is by no means an easy task. English in the 17th century was very different than English today. Vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and pronunciation have changed greatly since the 17th century. Then, there was no standardization of spelling or punctuation. The same word could, and often did, appear on the same page spelled a variety of ways.

Background Information for Teachers

For Teachers

Even proper names, including John Halfhead's, were spelled many different ways during one's lifetime. These inconsistencies can cause confusion when studying the records, as can the drastically different styles of handwriting. Using quill pens, writers in the 17th century often abbreviated to save time, ink, and paper. Decoding the penmanship and abbreviations, as well as different word usage, spelling inconsistencies, and grammatical quirks of the 17th century can be quite a challenge. Many documents have been transcribed several times over, which can lead to further discrepancies in information. Through careful study and analysis, historians are continuing to piece together the details of life in 17th-century Maryland.

Using Primary Sources with Students

It may seem counterintuitive that elementary school students should be able to study these same documents that are so problematic for historians. However, research has shown that students can gain an appreciation of the process of doing history by walking through the same processes historians use (see *In Search of America's Past: Learning to read history in elementary school* by Bruce VanSledright for more information on such research). This lesson is designed to help students begin to learn to read primary source documents from early Maryland, to gain an understanding of writing, literacy, and recordkeeping in 17th-century Maryland, and to make a connection between creation of these documents and what we know about our history today.

Original Documents:

The information for this lesson was taken from original documents such as Lord Baltimore's Suggestions for Skilled Labor in the Maryland Colony and The forme of binding a servant [indenture form]. Both documents contain original spellings, punctuation, and grammar for which there was little consistency of use in the 17th century.

Lesson One: Meet John Halfhead, Indentured Servant

For Teachers

1. Have students read *Meet John Halfhead: An Indentured Servant's Story* (see pages 10-12). Because the reading is done as if Halfhead is speaking, it may also be read aloud by the teacher or members of the class.
2. A discussion should take place after the reading. The suggested questions are designed to determine if students understand the reading and to give them an opportunity to express their feelings.
 - a. Why did John Halfhead decide to come to Maryland?
 - b. What things did he seem to be impressed with once he arrived?
 - c. What things were promised to John Halfhead if he came?
 - d. Do you think he received a fair arrangement?
 - e. What does John Halfhead think his future will hold?
 - f. If you had been living in England in 1633, do you think you would have decided to come to Maryland? Why or why not?
3. Have students define each of the positions listed in Lord Baltimore's *Suggestions for Skilled Labor in the Maryland Colony*, found on page 13 (use a dictionary or the *Definitions of Skilled Labor Positions from the 17th century*, found on pages 14-15).
4. After reading Lord Baltimore's *Suggestions for Skilled Labor in the Maryland Colony*, discuss the following questions:
 - a. Why do you think Lord Baltimore listed these particular skills?
 - b. Why do you think he felt a carpenter was "Almost necessary?"
 - c. What raw materials (i.e. clay, stone, lumber; definition: the basic material from which a product is made) would be necessary for each job to be carried out in the colony?
 - d. How many of these materials were available in the Maryland colony in the 1600s?
 - e. How many of the skilled positions listed by Lord Baltimore are still done today?
 - f. How many of the skills listed by Lord Baltimore have been replaced by machines and/or other technology?

Lesson One: Meet John Halfhead, Indentured Servant

For Teachers

5. Have part of the class assume the roles of skilled laborers based on *Lord Baltimore's Suggestions for Skilled Labor in the Maryland Colony*. Have other students assume the roles of gentlemen looking to secure the services of skilled indentured servants. Have them negotiate the terms of an indenture based on how well the servant can argue for their need in the new colony.
6. Once indentured contracts have been agreed upon, students may complete *The forme of binding a servant* for each position (found on pages 16-17).

Meet John Halfhead: An Indentured Servant's Story



Good Day! The name is John Halfhead and I can't tell you what a relief it is to finally see land again. So this is what we are to call Terra Maria—that's Maryland to you and me.

Why 'tis true, it's not much to behold just yet, but anything is better than the three months that we just spent afloat. My shipmates and I have just taken the long journey from England aboard a ship they call the Ark to try our hand at living in this New World.

In truth, there is a beauty to this place. There seems to be plenty of fresh water and huge trees as far as the eye can see. Cutting down some of those trees will be our first job here, I'll wager. For more than anything else, we are going to need proper homes in which to live. Of course, such decisions are not to be made by someone so simple as yours truly. We will leave such responsibility to our leader on this journey, Leonard Calvert.

Master Calvert was given the difficult task of leading the first settlers to this land by his brother, Lord Baltimore, Cecil Calvert, who anxiously awaits word back in England. 'Tis quite an interesting adventure, this voyage. I can't rightly say that I ever would have imagined Catholics like Master Calvert and Protestants like myself traveling and working together. But, our fair leader seems to have things well in hand. As it happens, Master Calvert is master to meself, as well. You see, I come to this land as a servant, an indentured servant to be exact.



Meet John Halfhead: An Indentured Servant's Story

You know what an indenture is, don't you? Most of us aboard are all too familiar with the word, for it is how we have come to this land. I, like many of my fellow passengers, am a man of little wealth and could not afford to pay for my passage aboard this ship. Thankfully, Master Calvert recognized the need for good strong workers here in Maryland and agreed to pay my way for me. His kindness only going so far, however, I still have to work off my debt. So, I will spend my first four years here in the colony as a servant to Master Calvert and he will provide for my well being during that time.



It is the end of my time, though, which I am living for, to be certain. After my four years, I will be given a new suit of clothes, an axe, two hoes, three barrels of corn, and the

rights to fifty acres of land. All I need do is have the land surveyed and patented. That is, to pay a surveyor to decide exactly where my land lies and then to pay a clerk to write down those boundaries in the record. I, unfortunately, am not qualified to do that job myself, having never learned my letters.

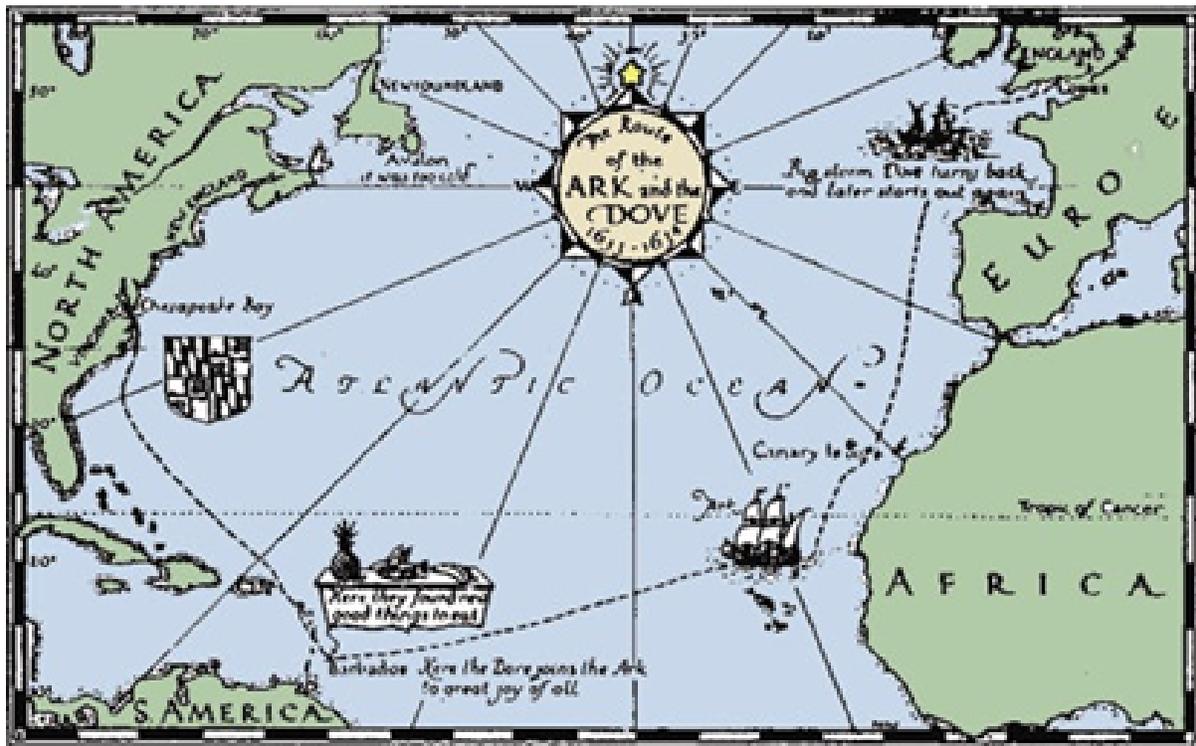
In fact, most folks I know have never learned to read or write, but have learned what is required for them to live a fine life. I am not unwise in the ways of the world and, in truth, have a learned skill. I am a brick mason. I know of very few men aboard this ship who are in possession of a skill of any sort. Being the only man with a particular skill can make for quite a demand on one's time. The Lord Baltimore seems to think that masons like myself will be of use here in Maryland and I am hanging my hopes on the idea that he is right.

You see, there is great opportunity here in Maryland, to my way of thinking. There is all that land to tame and not even two hundred men here to do the job. I have it in my mind to own a piece of that land someday and I hear tell that it is quite possible here. I would never have so much

Meet John Halfhead: An Indentured Servant's Story

as dreamed of owning land back in England. Here in Maryland, though, I can become the master of my own land. I hope I shall marry and have lots of children to help me in my work. Of course, indentured servants are not permitted to marry until after they finish their time. Not to mention, there are very few women with us on this voyage whom I could take as a wife, but all that shall come in due time.

And so it is, then, that we will begin our adventure here in the New World. I have high hopes for our time here in Maryland. And who knows what the future shall bring for our fair colony or for your most humble servant, John Halfhead.



Lord Baltimore's Suggestions for Skilled Labor in the Maryland Colony

Lord Baltimore hoped to attract people with experience in the kinds of work which could help build the new colony. He made a list of the various skills he thought would be important for the colony and stated that a carpenter would be the most necessary. However, he said that any person who was willing to work hard would be welcome. In the end, most of the indentured servants who came to Maryland had no special skills.

Lord Baltimore's suggestions included:

- boate-wright
- brick layer
- brick-maker
- carpenter
- cooper
- cutler
- fisherman
- joyner [joiner]
- leatherdresser
- mason
- miller
- mill-wright
- potter
- sawyer
- ship-wright
- smith
- turner
- wheel-wright
- woodworker

Definitions of Skilled Labor Positions from the 17th Century

boate-wright	a person who builds or repairs small boats
brick layer	a person skilled in constructing brick buildings
brick-maker	a person who makes bricks
carpenter	a person who was skilled in building with wood
cooper	a person skilled in making buckets, casks, and barrels
cutler	a person skilled in making and repairing knives
fisherman	a person who makes their living fishing
joyner [joiner]	a person skilled in fine carpentry (like cabinets or furniture)
leatherdresser	a person who turns animal hides into leather
mason	a person who works with stone and brick
miller	a person who works in a mill (like a grain mill)
mill-wright	a person who builds and repairs mills
potter	a person who makes pottery out of clay
sawyer	a person who saws wood planks from logs
ship-wright	a master craftsman who builds and repairs ships

Definitions of Skilled Labor Positions from the 17th Century

smith	a person who works with and repairs things made of metal such as a blacksmith who works with iron or a tinsmith who works with tin
turner	a person who operates a woodworking tool which can shape pieces of wood
wheel-wright	a person who makes and repairs wagon wheels, carts, etc.
woodworker	a person who makes things out of wood

The Forme of Binding a Servant

Indenture Form Activity

Example: Let's say that Thomas Moore made an agreement with Robert Milton to be his indentured servant on March 2, 1663 in St. Mary's City, in the 3rd year of King Charles II (who came to the throne in 1660). Robert Milton paid 1500 pounds of tobacco for Thomas Moore to be his indentured servant for a term of 5 years. They made this agreement with John Braddox as their witness.

The forme of binding a servant

This indenture made the 2nd day of March in the 3rd yeere of our Sovereigne Lord King Charles, etc. betweene Thomas Moore of the one party, and Robert Milton on the other party, Witnesseth, that the said Thomas Moore doth hereby covenant promise, and grant, to and with the said Robert Milton his Executors and Assignes, to serve him from the day of the date hereof, untill his first and next arrivall in Maryland; and after for and during the tearme of 5 yeeres, in such service and employment, as the said Robert Milton or his assignes shall there imploy him, according to the custome of the Countrey in the like kind. In consideration whereof, the said Robert Milton doth promise and grant, to and with the said Thomas Moore to pay for his passing, and to find him with Meat, Drinke, Apparell and Lodging, with other necessaries during the said terme; and at the end of the said terme, to give him one whole yeeres provision of Corne, and fifty acres of Land, according to the order of the countrey. In wittnesse whereof, the said John Braddox hath hereunto put his hand and seale, the day and yeere above written.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of John Braddox

The Forme of Binding a Servant

Indenture Form Activity

Now it's your turn! Who is the indentured servant? Who is paying for an indentured servant to come work for them? How long is the contract for? Who is your witness? What is the day, month, and year?

The forme of binding a servant

This indenture made the day of in the yeere of our
Soveraigne Lord King Charles, etc. betweene of the
one party, and on the other party, Witnesseth,
that the said doth hereby covenant promise, and grant, to
and with the said his Executors and Assignes, to serve him
from the day of the date hereof, untill his first and next arrivall in Maryland;
and after for and during the tearme of yeeres, in such service and
impoyment, as the said or his assignes shall there
impoy him, according to the custome of the Countrey in the like kind. In
consideration whereof, the said doth promise and grant, to and
with the said to pay for his passing, and to find him with
Meat, Drinke, Apparell and Lodging, with other necessaries during the said
terme; and at the end of the said terme, to give him one whole yeeres provision
of Corne, and fifty acres of Land, according to the order of the countrey. In
witness whereof, the said hath hereunto put his hand and seale,
the day and yeere above written.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of

Lesson Two: Meet John Halfhead, Plantation Master

1. Have students read John Halfhead, Plantation Master. Because the selection is written as if Halfhead is speaking, it may also be read aloud by the teacher or members of the class.
2. Discuss the following questions after the reading. The suggested questions are designed to make certain that the students understand the reading and to give them an opportunity to make some personal connections to the character, John Halfhead.
 - a. How long has John Halfhead been living in Maryland?
 - b. What does he do for a living?
 - c. What kinds of things does Halfhead have to do as part of his job?
 - d. What do you think John Halfhead would say is the best part about living in Maryland? The worst?
 - e. What do you think is the best and worst part about living in 17th-century Maryland?
3. One of the adaptations, or changes, that Halfhead mentions is in the different way that pigs and cows are cared for in Maryland.
 - a. What three things must be done in Maryland so that colonists can tell to whom a pig belongs?
 - b. Why does this have to be done? What special circumstance in Maryland causes confusion about the ownership of livestock?
4. Find the description of Halfhead's earmark in the document, John Halfhead, Plantation Master. Ask students to draw what they think this earmark might look like. Drawings can be done using pig ear samples or on board, etc.
5. Hand out the sheet Pig Ears or put copy on overhead projector. Can you imagine what some of these earmarks might look like? Try to draw these marks.
6. Hand out Pig Ear Blanks, one set per student. Ask students to design their own pig earmark. Designs can either be drawn onto or cut into pig ear blanks. How would they describe what their mark looks like if they were to register it with the court? Have students record a written description of their earmarks, and then share them verbally with the class.

Lesson Two: Meet John Halfhead, Plantation Master

7. Discuss, as a class, the following:
 - a. What problems has Halfhead faced since he came to Maryland?
 - b. What changes has he had to get used to here?
 - c. What adaptations has he had to make since coming to Maryland?
 - d. Do you think that you could get used to a life very different from the one you are living now? Why?
 - e. Would you have come to Maryland in the 17th century knowing that your life would change in so many ways? Why?

8. After discussing all of the changes necessary to live in a new place, hand out Writing Prompt: *Your New Life*, and ask students to respond to it. The prompt is a "writing to inform" piece that asks students to imagine that they have moved to a new country (of their choice) and to write a letter describing how different life is there. Students will need to research their country of choice for environment, food, clothing, jobs, language, etc.

9. Follow up: Discuss what adaptations the students have determined would be needed to live in their new setting. How are they the same or different from those changes necessary to move to Maryland in the 17th century?

Meet John Halfhead: A Plantation Master's Story

Good day! 'Tis me, your old friend, John Halfhead. I hope that you have been pleased with your time in the new colony of Maryland. I, myself, see great potential in this place. I learned a great deal in my four years indentured to Master Calvert. Now with my time complete and my debt repaid, I can truly reap the benefits of my new home. I am now owner and master of my own land. I could never have dreamed of it, but 'tis true.

I will not tell you that it was an easy path, mind you. I, as many others like me, took great pains to accustom myself to this new land. I was stricken with what some call now the seasoning dreadful mix of those illnesses that one who never ventures beyond England might never face. They call them malaria, dysentery, influenza. I call them the near death of Halfhead. I thought I might never recover and, in truth, I still fight the symptoms now and again. No matter that, I am certain I will make a full recovery, hopefully sooner rather than later.

The work required to start my plantation will surely distract me from my pains.

I could not imagine the amount of work that would be required of me here. As you surely remember, I was trained as a brick mason, not as a planter, but despite the fact that I am one of the few here with such a skill, it is not the manner to make a living in Maryland.

There is so much more land here than in England and demand for tobacco across the ocean is so great that only a fool would not begin to grow it. I learned about the *sotweed*,



Meet John Halfhead: A Plantation Master's Story

that is tobacco, in my time with Master Calvert, as others did, from the Indians here. They were very helpful in instructing us about the ways of this place. They taught a manner to clear land with the least amount of our effort that is, to remove a strip of bark from the trees and let the leaves die above.

The underbrush is then cleared by a low fire. The loose dirt remaining is hoed into hills and the tobacco planted therein.

All must be done by the hand, for plows as we have used at home are of little good with trees so large that one can scarce put their arms about them. In truth, that is only the beginning of the long season of growing tobacco as one must work upon his fields, all by the hand, for almost the whole year together. The tiny seeds of the plant must be put to seedbeds in the early spring and watched carefully lest the frost destroy that which is planted.

Upon their growing to a hand high, the plants are moved to hills hoed in the fields, prepared for their arrival.

The remainder of the summer long is spent tending to the growing leaves weeding about the plants, cutting the flowers before they bloom, and picking tobacco worms from the leaves the last, a most despicable occupation, to be certain, but all for the good of the crop.

Not that the *sotweed* is the only thing that requires attention on my new land there is much to do beside. I grow, along side my tobacco, a new grain that which is called Indian corn. It is the most miraculous of plants, as it will return hundreds of seeds for just one put to the ground. I am growing accustomed to eating some manner of bread made of corn with almost every meal. It has been a great long time since I have had wheat or barley in my bread.

I am acquiring cattle, pigs, and other such livestock to be used to feed my family, as well. The manner in which they are cared for is another thing to become accustomed to here in

Meet John Halfhead: A Plantation Master's Story



Maryland. At home, animals were kept in pens to be tended and fed by their masters. Here, the land is plentiful, but people to work it, scarce. No man wants to take time away from his tobacco fields to grow feed for his animals. The beasts are left to their own, then, foraging in the woods for what food they happen to find. There is but one difficulty with this arrangement all manner of beasts in the wood look alike. That is, my pigs differ little from yours, and yours, likewise, from your neighbor's. A clever solution is at and the beasts are to be

marked by cuts and notches upon their ears. My mark is the left ear swallow forked and the right ear whole. This mark has been duly registered with the clerk of the court and no other may have a similar mark. When I wish to butcher a hog, I must find one marked thus and keep the ears as proof of ownership, at least until the pig is eaten.

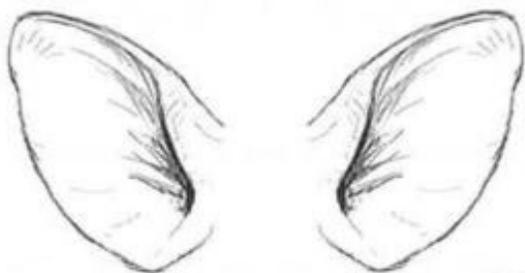
Aye, there is much to become accustomed to here in this fair colony, but I trust that all will be for the best. Until such time as we should chance to meet again, I remain your humble servant, John Halfhead.

Pig Ears Activity

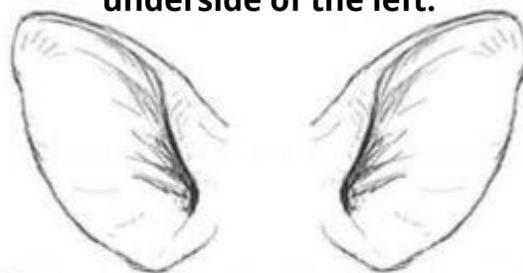
The following descriptions are found in the St. Mary's County court and testamentary business records for 1649. The descriptions apply to both hogs and cattle.

Can you imagine what some of these marks might look like? Try to draw these marks based on the descriptions below:

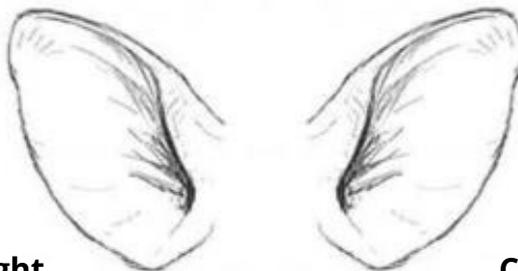
The left ear slit and the right ear, a piece cut out over and under.



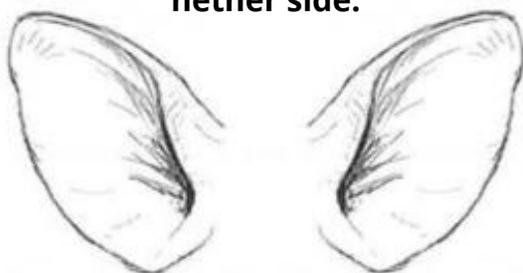
A figure of three on the upper side of the right ear and on the underside of the left.



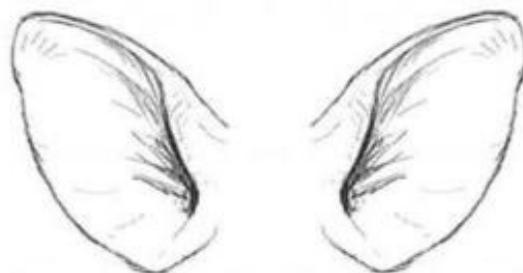
The left ear swallow forked and the right ear whole.



The left ear cropped, and the right ear a hole in it and two slits on the nether side.



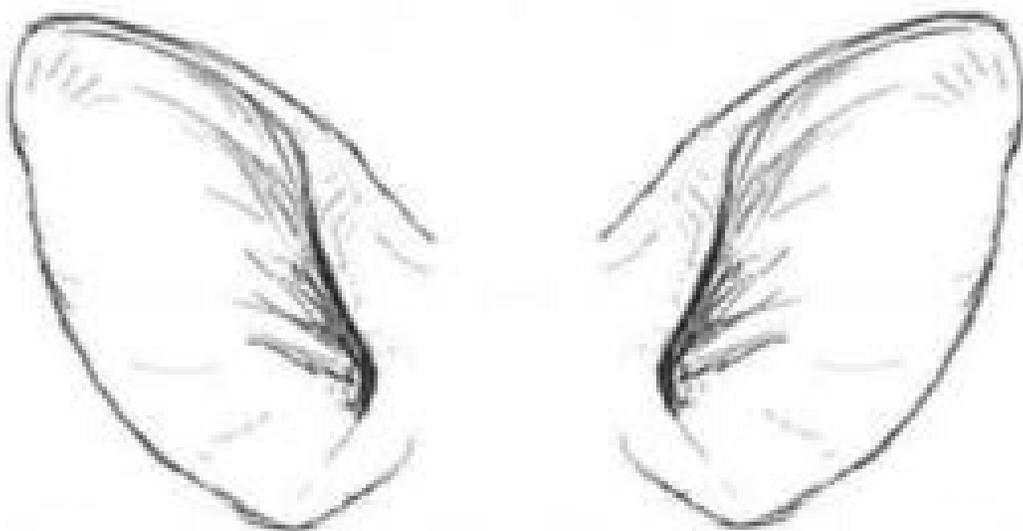
Cropped and holed on both ears and a nick under the right ear.



Pig Ears Blanks: Design Your Own Earmark

Design your own pig earmark.

Earmarks would be registered with the clerk of the court, and a description would be written to help identify each mark in case someone was accused of pig theft. How would you describe what your mark looks like? _____



Writing Prompt:

Your New Life

Imagine that you are moving to a new country. Where would you go? Choose a country anywhere in the world and pretend that it is your new home. Imagine that you have lived there for almost a year and are adapting to your surroundings. Write a letter to someone you know to tell him or her about your new life. Let them know all of the things that they would have to get used to if they, too, were to move to this country.

You will have to start by researching your country. Find out everything you can about your new home. You will need to know things about the climate and environment there, the kinds of people you will find, the languages spoken there, and all the things that you will need for survival like food, clothing, and shelter.

Next, think about all of the adjustments that you would have to make moving to a new place. What would be different? You may want to include in your letter things like what food you eat, what you wear, what kind of jobs people have, how you communicate with the people around you, what kind of house you live in, and what the environment around you is like. What is the best and worst part about living in this new place? Is there anything that is the same? How have you changed your life to adapt to your new surroundings?

Lesson Three: Meet John Halfhead, Citizen

1. Have students read *John Halfhead, Citizen of St. Mary's*. Because this selection is written as if Halfhead is speaking, it may also be read aloud by the teacher or student.
2. A discussion should take place after the reading. The suggested questions are designed to determine if students understood the reading and to give them the opportunity to express their opinions.
 - a. Do you think it was easy or difficult to go through life in 1600s Maryland without knowing how to read and write? Explain your answer.
 - b. Do you think it would be easy or difficult to go through life today without knowing how to read or write? What is different about life today that might make it more difficult?
 - c. Why was it so important to keep track of one's debts in Maryland in the 1600s?

As Halfhead mentions, tobacco was used instead of money in early Maryland. Debts were settled about once a year. If a man died suddenly, he might owe tobacco or goods to several other people. Those men would want to make sure they received what they were owed.

3. Although many words were spelled differently in the 1600s, it is possible to read them today. Have students complete the worksheet titled *17th-Century spelling*. Students should come away with an understanding of how English has changed over the past 350 years. Historians today must read documents from the 1600s even though the language can be very different from what we are used to today.

Lesson Three: Meet John Halfhead, Citizen

4. Display excerpt #1 from *Lord Baltimore's Instructions to the Colonists* and read aloud as a class. Discuss the differences in spelling and grammar in the 17th century and the difficulties historians might encounter when reading these documents.

- a. What spellings are different from the ones we use today?
- b. What else is different about this selection?
- c. Why do you think many words were abbreviated? Think about how these documents were created. Were they typed or handwritten? How might using abbreviations help?

These documents were written out by hand, using quills and ink. Writing was a labor-intensive process. Abbreviations were used to save time and paper.

- d. What is Lord Baltimore telling the colonists to do? Why is drawing "an exact map" so important?

Lord Baltimore was in England. He was never able to see Maryland for himself. He wanted to know exactly what his land in the New World looked like. The waterways were especially important, as they were the main travel routes.

5. Display excerpt #2 from *Lord Baltimore's Instructions to the Colonists* and read aloud as a class. Have students "translate" Lord Baltimore's instructions into modern-day English.

- a. What words and phrases have the students written differently?
- b. Was it easy or difficult to translate? Is there anything that would take more research?
- c. What was Lord Baltimore trying to accomplish by making sure there were planned streets and orderly houses?

Lesson Three: Meet John Halfhead, Citizen

Lord Baltimore wanted the new settlement to look like an established, important city like those in Europe. With houses in a "decent and uniform manner," St. Mary's would look like a prominent center of government, business, and trade rather than a scattered settlement of planters.

d. Would Lord Baltimore's instructions to build an orderly town be helpful information for archaeologists or historians today? Why or why not?
Today, archaeologists can use this primary document as a clue to what the town might have looked like. This is especially helpful since there are no surviving maps or drawings of the early settlement. When archaeologists are planning excavations, they might look for the remains of houses in an orderly manner. Remember, though, that this document involves instructions to the colonists, it would take more research to find out if these instructions were carried out.

6. Discuss the fact that colonists often could not read or write, but they were expected to sign government documents. In these cases, they would "make their mark," which could be their initials or part of their name, or a special design they used just for this purpose. Share the signature marks with students. These marks were taken from primary source documents that are kept in the Maryland State Archives. Have students design their own signature mark using this worksheet.

Lesson Three: Meet John Halfhead, Citizen

7. Make quill pens and ink as a class project. Practice using them and discuss how difficult writing would have been in the 17th century. Use parchment paper for added effect.

- a. Turkey feathers can be bought at craft stores. Cut the tip of the feather at an angle and make sure the inside of the feather's tip is cleaned out. (See instructions on cutting quills and using them properly.)
- b. To make ink, crush and strain dark berries (blackberries work well) and mix the juice with a pinch of salt and a small amount of vinegar. Be careful - this ink will stain clothing, and anything else it touches!
- c. Dip the quill into the ink and blot the tip on a piece of newspaper or paper towel. Have students practice writing. It will be difficult!
- d. Would it take a long time to write documents in the 1600s?
- e. Would you have wanted to be a clerk, keeping records for the courts, in St. Mary's City? Why or why not?
- f. Do you think tobacco planters had the time to sit down in the evenings and write long letters to their families back in England?
- g. If you lived in the 1600s, would you have wanted to be able to read and write? Why or why not?

Meet John Halfhead: Citizen of Maryland

Good day! 'Tis Master John Halfhead here. The last we chatted I had just started me own plantation. Tobacco remains a difficult crop to tend, but I have learned much over these past years. Not only have my crops and my profit grown, but me family as well! Me wife, young son John, and indentured servant help me in my duties as master of this plantation. Before long it will be young John's turn to take care of his own house and land.

'Tis not only tobacco that keeps me hard at work these days. The small town of St. Mary's has grown quite a bit since first we arrived at the shores of this river. Each week, it seems, a new building is being framed, or a new proprietor opens an ordinary or an inn. The fine large house in the center of town that was once Master Calvert's is now where the Assembly meets. Me own house is not quite so grand, but it serves me well. The business of tobacco, the government meetings, and the dealings in court keep St. Mary's an interesting town, indeed. Very often I

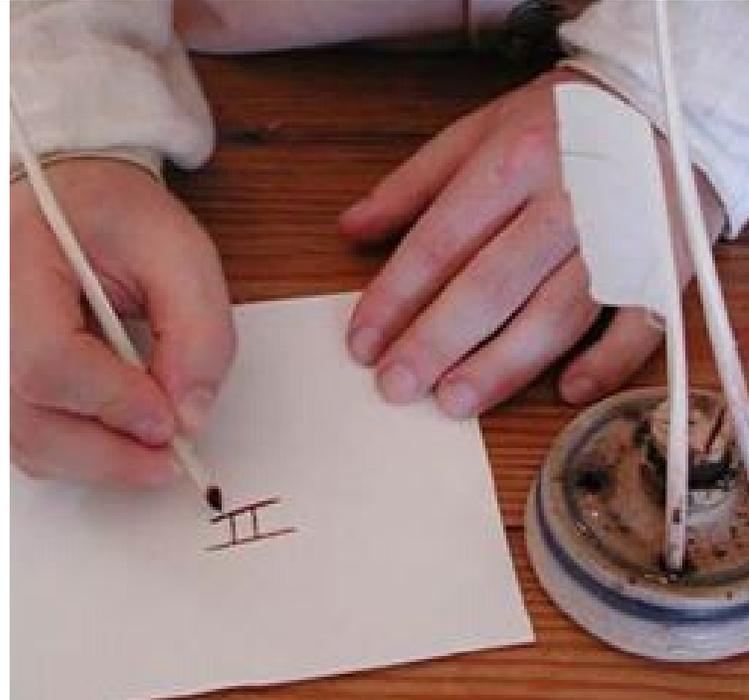
Very often I must travel to the court to settle debts, register papers, or appraise an estate. Appraisal, you see, is when the worth of goods is determined. For instance, if a man dies, which is all too common what with the seasoning, other men must write down all that he owns and how much it is worth. Then his debts can be settled. Trading with tobacco is no easy task. We cannot hand hogsheds of tobacco back



Meet John Halfhead: Citizen of Maryland

and forth to each other each time something is bought or sold. Nay, instead we exchange papers, or bills, that state how much we owe. Once a year or so, we settle all those debts and the tobacco changes hands. Most of the time, it is a fine system, but there are disputes—some of them are ugly, indeed. I have been called upon to give my testimony in more than a few instances.

When these disputes come about, a court case is almost always the way they are settled. The parties involved will come together and tell the judge their side of the story, and the judge will decide if tobacco is owed. The clerk writes down all that is said in the record. The clerk has to know his letters in order to dot his, of course. Most people in Maryland simply sign a mark on documents. When we spend so much time in the fields, who has the time to spend learning letters? I learned a trade in England, so only need to sign my mark on occasion. Me wife, also, signs her mark when need be. Those



few men who run an ordinary or an inn or a storehouse also write and read, but they are few.

'Tis quite pleasing to see so many businesses here, though. It seems as though we have carved quite a nice little settlement out of the wilderness. Why, when I arrived there were trees, rivers, and but a few Indian dwellings. Now, a true town has begun. It fills me with pride to know that I have risen from humble beginnings to owning me own land, having a family, and taking part in

Meet John Halfhead: Citizen of Maryland

the goings-on of government business — all opportunities I could never have dreamed of in England. This small town has become so busy that I am thinking of purchasing land farther out, along a nearby river called the Patuxent. It is a magnificent river, leading into the bay called Chesapeake.

Ah yes, even though near twenty years have passed, this land is still bursting with opportunity. It is my great hope that I will continue to prosper here in Maryland, and when my time has passed, that my son will do just as well. Being born here in Maryland, he never had to endure the horrors of the seasoning. And he has grown to a healthy young fellow, eating Indian corn rather than English grains. He will never spend even an hour as an indentured servant. Nay, he will work hard to be sure, but his youth will be a good deal better than mine. And one day, he will inherit my land, my house, my goods, and my servant. These twenty years in this new colony have been quite good to me—and that is more years than

most live to see here. But only time will tell how the rest of my days will play out.

17th Century Spelling

Many words in the 1600s were spelled differently than we spell them now. Some of them were even spelled differently by the same person! There were not as many rules for spelling like there are today.

Also, when the colonists learned words from the Native Americans, new spellings had to be invented because the Native Americans did not use a written language. If you heard an unfamiliar word and had to figure out how to spell it, you might change your mind about it over time.

These are some 1600s spellings of words taken from *The Calvert Papers*, a collection of primary documents from the early days of Maryland colony. Imagine that you are a historian studying documents from the 1600s. You have come across some unfamiliar words. Can you translate the following words into modern English?

1600s Spelling:

- vawew
- Chesapeacke
- Pattawomeck
- friendshipp
- Baltamor
- glorie
- Journy
- howse

Modern Spelling:

Lord Baltimore's Instructions to the Colonists (1633)

Remember, sometimes that "s" was written stretched out and can look like an "f."

Some words were abbreviated:

- *Loppf* = Lordships
- *wth* = with

Excerpt #1:

"That they cause hif Loppf survayor likewise to drawe an exact mapp of as much of the countrey as they shall discover together wth the soundingf of the riuerf and Baye, and to send it to his Lopps."

Excerpt #2:

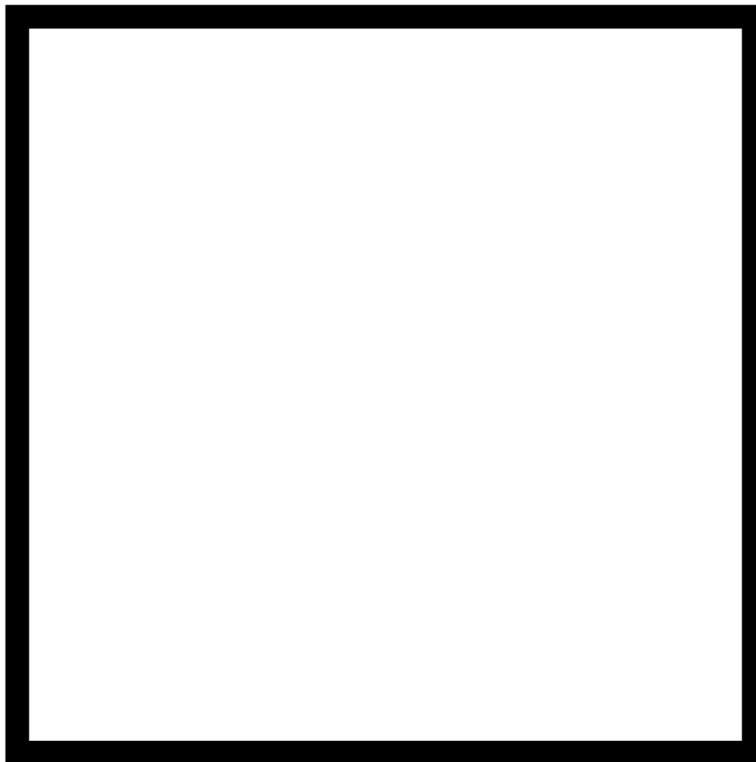
"That they cause all the Planterf to build their housef in af decent and vniforme a manner as their abilitief and the place will afford, & neere adioyning one to an other, and for that purpose to cause streetef to be marked out where they intend to place the towne."

Excerpt taken from The Calvert papers. Baltimore: J. Murphy & Co. 1889-99.

Make Your Mark Activity

If you were to make your own signature mark, what would it look like? Design it below.

- Your signature mark should be something that would be easy to write with a quill pen and handmade ink.
- It should be easy for you to remember. Colonists may have had to sign their mark on many occasions.
- It can be based on your initials, but it does not have to be.



Appendix 1:

Lesson Plan 1 Answer Key

2. Discussion after reading: *Meet John Halfhead, Indentured Servant*:

- a. *Why did John Halfhead decide to come to Maryland?* **Answer:** He came for the opportunity of a better life and a chance to own his own land.
- b. *What things did he seem to be impressed with once he arrived?* **Answer:** He is impressed with the landscape, specifically the size and abundance of the trees.
- c. *What things were promised to John Halfhead if he came?* **Answer:** After his indenture, he would receive clothes, an axe, two hoes, three barrels of corn, and the rights to fifty acres of land.
- d. *Do you think he received a fair arrangement?* **Answer:** Student's opinion
- e. *What does John Halfhead think his future will hold?* **Answer:** His skill as a brick mason could help him to have a better life. He hopes to have his own land, a wife, and children to help him work his land.
- f. *If you had been living in England in 1633, do you think you would have decided to come to Maryland? Why or why not?* **Answer:** Student's opinion

4. Discussion after reading Lord Baltimore's *Suggestions for Skilled Labor in the Maryland Colony*:

- a. *Why do you think Lord Baltimore listed these particular skills?* **Answer:** student's opinion
- b. *Why do you think he felt a carpenter was "Almost necessary?"* **Answer:** student's opinion
- c. *What raw materials (i.e. clay, stone, lumber; definition: the basic material from which a product is made) would be necessary for each job to be carried out in the colony?* **Answer:** wood/lumber, clay, animal hides, stone
- d. *How many of these materials were available in the Maryland colony in the 1600s?* **Answer:** all raw materials can be found in Maryland.
- e. *How many of the skilled positions listed by Lord Baltimore are still done today?* **Answer:** boat-wright, brick layer, brick-maker, carpenter, fisherman, joyner, mason, potter, ship-wright.
- f. *How many of the skills listed by Lord Baltimore have been replaced by machines and/or other technology?* **Answer:** cooper, cutler, miller, mill-wright, sawyer, smith, turner, wheel-wright, wodworker.

Appendix 2:

Lesson Plan 2 Answer Key

2. Discuss the following questions after reading *John Halfhead, Plantation Master*:
- How long has John Halfhead been living in Maryland?* **Answer:** John has lived in Maryland now for four years; he is finishing up his indenture.
 - What does he do for a living?* **Answer:** Plantation owner
 - What kinds of things does Halfhead have to do as part of his job?* **Answer:**
 - What do you think John Halfhead would say is the best part about living in Maryland? The worst?* **Answer:** student's opinion
 - What do you think is the best and worst part about living in 17th-century Maryland?* **Answer:** student's opinion
3. One of the adaptations, or changes, that Halfhead mentions is in the different way that pigs and cows are cared for in Maryland.
- What three things must be done in Maryland so that colonists can tell to whom a pig belongs?* **Answer:** Colonists must mark their ears, record their mark with the clerk of the court, and when butchering a hog, they must keep the ears as proof until the pig is eaten.
 - Why does this have to be done? What special circumstance in Maryland causes confusion about the ownership of livestock?* **Answer:** Colonists do not pen their animals in, but rather let them roam so they can spend more time growing tobacco. This means that all of the animals roam the woods together, and can make it hard for a colonist to identify their animal.
7. Discuss, as a class, the following:
- What problems has Halfhead faced since he came to Maryland?* **Answer:** He had to face the seasoning, and the hard work of growing tobacco (he is not skilled in farming).
 - What changes has he had to get used to here?* **Answer:** He has had to get used to eating corn all of the time instead of wheat or barley bread that he used to eat in England. Animals in Maryland were left to roam, whereas in England they were kept in pens.
 - What adaptations has he had to make since coming to Maryland?* **Answer:** He had to get used to eating corn all of the time, and having to mark his animals to be able to identify them.
 - Do you think that you could get used to a life very different from the one you are living now? Why?* **Answer:** student opinion
 - Would you have come to Maryland in the 17th century knowing that your life would change in so many ways? Why?* **Answer:** student opinion

Appendix 3:

Lesson Plan 3 Answer Key

2. A discussion should take place after reading *John Halfhead, Citizen of St. Mary's*.
- a. Do you think it was easy or difficult to go through life in 1600s Maryland without knowing how to read and write? Explain your answer. **Answer:** student's opinion
 - b. Do you think it would be easy or difficult to go through life today without knowing how to read or write? What is different about life today that might make it more difficult? **Answer:** student's opinion
 - c. Why was it so important to keep track of one's debts in Maryland in the 1600s? **Answer:** It was important because tobacco was only exchanged about once a year for all of the debts that colonists owed one another. It is also important in case someone takes you to court and accuses you of being in their debt.
4. Read *Lord Baltimore's Instructions to the Colonists*.
- a. What spellings are different from the ones we use today? **Answer:** Correct spellings are: value, Chesapeake, Potomac, friendship, Baltimore, glory, journey, house
 - b. What else is different about this selection? **Answer:** student's opinion
 - c. Why do you think many words were abbreviated? Think about how these documents were created. Were they typed or handwritten? How might using abbreviations help? **Answer:** All court records were hand written, and could take a long time to write out. Colonists created abbreviations for common words to make writing faster, which is important when trying to record what is being said.
 - d. What is Lord Baltimore telling the colonists to do? Why is drawing "an exact map" so important? **Answer:** He is telling them to draw a detailed map of the colony - the land and waterways. It is important because he has never been to Maryland, so he needs to see what his colony looks like to make plans and handle governance.

Appendix 3:

Lesson Plan 3 Answer Key

5. Read excerpt #2 from *Lord Baltimore's Instructions to the Colonists*.
- a. *What words and phrases have the students written differently?* **Answer:** student's opinion
 - b. *Was it easy or difficult to translate? Is there anything that would take more research?* **Answer:** student's opinion
 - c. *What was Lord Baltimore trying to accomplish by making sure there were planned streets and orderly houses?* **Answer:** He was trying to establish a city like the ones in Europe (i.e. Italy and France), and have some organization.
 - d. *Would Lord Baltimore's instructions to build an orderly town be helpful information for archaeologists or historians today? Why or why not?* **Answer:** Yes, because it helps to give historians and archaeologists an idea of what the town could have looked like, and it can help with figuring out where is the best place to do archaeological excavations.