

Name _____



John Smith's Journal

Directions: Read the short primary source excerpts from John Smith's journal. Then answer the questions to investigate point of view, bias, and reliability.

John Smith's Journal: Excerpts for Analysis

Excerpt A: "We arrived in this place and found the land good and fertile. But many of our company did not wish to work. They refused to plant or fish, causing great hardship for those of us willing to labor."

Excerpt B: "The Powhatan people at first gave us corn and meat. Their leader treated me with respect and kindness. I believe my courage and leadership convinced them to help the English."

Excerpt C: "I was captured by the Powhatan but escaped because of my bravery and quick wit. Without my actions, the colony surely would have failed."

1. Which excerpt shows John Smith describing himself as a hero? Write one sentence explaining why.
2. According to the excerpts, how does John Smith describe his relations with the Powhatan people? Provide one example from the text.
3. Why might John Smith exaggerate his own role in Jamestown's success?
4. Which excerpt do you think is most reliable? Why?
5. Whose perspective is not included in these excerpts, and why does that matter for understanding history?

Reliability Check Chart: Place an X in the column that best fits each excerpt.

Excerpt	Seems Mostly Reliable	Might Be Exaggerated	Shows Possible Bias
A			
B			
C			