

Name _____

Date _____



Colonial America Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Directions: Read the passage and answer the questions below.

In the Southern Colonies, there were many large farms called plantations. Farmers who owned plantations were called planters. Crops grown on plantations included rice and tobacco.

As planters became wealthy, they became dissatisfied with their old houses. They started building two-story houses. Some of them were even made of brick. Rough, hand-made furniture was replaced with nicely made tables and chairs, some of them ordered from England. Wooden plates, bowls, and spoons were replaced by ones made of pewter, a silvery metal made from tin and lead. Silver was expensive in those days, and a family might have bought silverware piece by piece.

After a new house was built, the old house might be used as a kitchen. Servants carried food in covered dishes to the dining room in the new house.

Southern colonists could not expect help from their neighbors, because they were spread far apart. They had to be able to produce almost everything they needed on their plantations. Of the few things they could not produce themselves, most came directly from England to their plantations. Plantations often had their own ships and piers on the river.

Rich planters might have owned hundreds of slaves. All these slaves had to work hard from early morning to evening and slept in crowded slave quarters. Unskilled slaves worked in the fields. Trusted slaves worked in the house. Trained slaves worked as carpenters, weavers, blacksmiths, shoemakers, furniture makers, and cooks. In those days, plantations were like small towns.

1. In your own words, what is a plantation?

2. What particular building material was very expensive during this time period?

3. Why was it necessary for successful plantations to be near the Ocean?

4. Which particular type of slave (unskilled, trusted, or trained slave) you feel had most difficult job? Explain your answer.

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