

Why did so many colonists die at jamestown

[Government](#), [Colonialism](#)



In a matter of four years, almost every colonist died in Jamestown. In 1607, English ships sailed into Chesapeake Bay and up the James River and later founded Jamestown in Virginia. By the summer of 1609, 524 colonists would have arrived in Jamestown. But by 1611, more than 80% would be dead! There are three main reasons why this could have happened. There wasn't enough food, the water was unusable, and they didn't have enough workers with the right skill set to help them survive.

One of the biggest problems for the colonists is that the droughts made it hard for them to grow crops, (Doc. B) and the food that they did have wouldn't have been enough to last through winter. (Doc. D) from about 1607 to 1612, Jamestown suffered a horrible drought. This would have a big effect on colonists because no water means that they can't grow crops. This would lead to starvation. Another reason they starved is because of Francis West's men took the grain loaded it onto the ships and didn't take it back to Jamestown. (Doc. D) this is a big reason why most of them starved to death.

Another big problem for the colonists is that their water was too brackish, which made it unusable. (Doc. A) This caused many to get sick and die. The thing that caused the waters to become too salty are the tides. An event that happened two times a day. Since human wastes wouldn't float away down the rivers because of the tides it would just stay in the water, this caused the water to be contaminated and a major cause for disease. Water was scarce in the first four years of living at Jamestown due to the drought. (Doc. B) This might have caused competition for water but the water that they did have would be contaminated.

The last major problem for the colonists, when they came in 1607, they didn't bring Many skillful workers. (Doc. C) More than half the people who came on the first boat Were gentlemen. They weren't used to working with their hands so they would have been Inexperienced in doing work that involved their hands. There weren't any apothecaries on the first boat and there was only one surgeon. Since there wasn't any apothecaries on the first ship anyone who needed medicine wouldn't receive it or the right kind which could lead to death or overdose.

There was only one tailor so in the winter they froze to death because he couldn't make enough clothes for everyone who needed it. Overall not having these skillful workers on the first trip over played somewhat a major role in the death of so many colonists at Jamestown.

Out of the many reasons for the deaths at Jamestown the three biggest reasons being they didn't have enough food, brackish water, and not having enough skillful workers played a Great role in the deaths of so many colonists at Jamestown.