

A True Relation [modified]
By Captain John Smith (1608)

Headnote: *Captain John Smith was an English soldier and explorer. In 1607, he traveled by ship to the Americas where he met Powhatan, chief of the Powhatan people, and Powhatan's daughter, Pocahontas. Below are John Smith's own words describing his first meeting with Powhatan, who he calls "emperor."*

Some of the language and phrasing in this document have been modified from the original.

Arriving at Werowocomoco, their **emperor** proudly lying upon a bedstead a foot high upon ten or twelve mats...with such **grave** and majestic **countenance**, as drove me into admiration...

He kindly welcomed me with good words and great platters of **sundry victuals**, assuring me his friendship, and my liberty within four days... He asked me the cause of our coming... demanded why we went further with our boat... He promised to give me what I wanted to feed us, hatchets and copper we should make him, and none should disturb us. This request I promised to perform. And thus having all the kindness he could **devise**, sought to content me, he sent me home.

Source: Excerpt from John Smith (1608). *A true relation of such occurrences and accidents of note as hath happened in Virginia since the first planting of that colony.*

Word Bank:

Countenance: face or facial expression

Devise: plan or demonstrate

Emperor: ruler of an empire

Grave: serious

Sundry: various or diverse

Victuals: food supplies

Focus Question:

What does this account tell you about the relationship between John Smith and Powhatan, the chief of the Powhatan people?

Source: <http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/23560>