

PETER MINUIT



BIOGRAPHY

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Peter Minuit was born around 1580, and he worked for the Dutch West India Company. In 1626, Minuit sailed to New Netherland, a Dutch colony in North America.

There he became Director General of the colony at Manhattan. Minuit “purchased” Manhattan Island from Native American Indians for sixty guilders. As the Native Americans saw the island as a useless piece of rock, it probably suited both sides. This is where he built the colony up with its focus on the town of New Amsterdam. He also built a fort up the Hudson River, and called it Fort Orange (after the Dutch royal family).

As a result of the trade, furs near New Amsterdam became scarce after a while, and so the traders moved upriver towards Fort Orange. In this way the colony was really just a string of small trading posts. Minuit also opened up trade with the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts.

In 1638, Minuit helped Swedish colonists found New Sweden. Its first settlement was on the Delaware River. Minuit once again purchased land from the Native Americans so that the Swedes could build Fort Christina (where Wilmington is now).

Later that year, Minuit was on a trading voyage in the Caribbean when a hurricane destroyed the ship he was on.

Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'useless'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'useless' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'useless'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'useless'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'useless' means.

Try this for other words, too. 2

Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: scarce	rare

Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

Minuit also built a fort along the Hudson River, and set up trading posts.

In 1626, Minuit sailed to the Dutch colony of New Netherland.

Minuit bought Manhattan Island from the Native Americans.

In 1638, Minuit died at sea during a hurricane.

Peter Minuit was born around 1580, and he worked for a Dutch trading company.

On the island, Minuit built up the town on New Amsterdam.

Then Minuit became Director General of the colony at Manhattan.

Get to the facts

1 Which company did Minuit work for?

2 When did Minuit sail to New Netherland?

3 Which island did Minuit purchase?

4 Which town did Minuit build up on the island?

5 Which colony did Minuit open up trade with?

Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

Storm at sea

I was sailing in the Caribbean. The wind was picking up, and I could see storm clouds fast approaching. There was an island on the horizon, but I feared I might not reach it before the storm broke... (now complete the story)

Below is a plain text version for printing:

Understanding words:

- a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'useless'.
- b From that sentence, suggest what 'useless' means.
- c Write a new sentence using the word 'useless'.
- d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'useless'.
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Finding key words:

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – scarce

Synonym – rare

Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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