Chapter 2: Beginnings of English America, 1607-1660
Potential Essay Questions

1. Explain as thoroughly as you can what John Smith meant when he remarked that “No man will go from [England] to have less freedom.”

2. Once England decided to create an overseas empire, it did so with impressive speed. Explain the motives behind English expansion, as well as the Great Migration to the North American continent.

3. Many degrees of freedom coexisted in seventeenth-century North America. Discuss the various definitions of freedom. Be sure to include slaves, indentured servants, women, Indians, property owners, and Puritans in your discussion. Identify any similarities and differences among these different versions of freedom.

4. Explain the reasons behind the various conflicts between the English and the Indians. How does perception of land and liberty fit into the story? How does trade play a part? Why and when did the Indians attack first? Why and when did the settlers attack?

5. John Winthrop distinguished between natural and moral liberty. What was the difference? How did moral liberty work and how did Puritans define liberty and freedom? Discuss the restrictions of moral liberty and the consequences as illustrated by Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson. Be sure to address Winthrop’s speech in the Voices of Freedom box.

6. Compare the Chesapeake and New England colonies. Explore the various reasons for the colonists’ emigrating to the New World, their economies, gender roles, demographics, religion, and relations with the Indians. Which pattern of settlement is more representative of American development after the seventeenth century?

7. Both religious freedom and the separation of church and state are taken for granted today. In seventeenth-century British America, freedom and religion did not necessarily go hand in hand, for many believed that the church ought to influence the state. Describe the varying degrees of religious freedom practiced in the colonies. Why were some colonies seemingly devoid of religion? Why were the Puritans intent on religious persecution? What were the religious limitations placed in Maryland? Describe how the colonies viewed church and state? What were the reasons to unite the two? Why did some argue that they be separated?

8. Henry Care argued that the constitution of the English government was the best in the world. He described the English government and the value of English law. Explain his arguments, whether you find them convincing, and why or why not.

9. How had the concept of the English freemen developed through the centuries? What had defined freedom and to whom were liberties granted? How and why had those definitions changed over the centuries? Did the English Civil War help to change those definitions?