

## Walter Raleigh

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Sir Walter Raleigh (c. 1554–1618) was a famous English explorer and writer during the Elizabethan age. One of Queen Elizabeth I's favourite courtiers, he was knighted for his actions and became very wealthy. He also tried to set up one of the first English settlements in North America. But he fell out of favour with King James I and was later executed. Learn more about this charismatic courtier and his daring escapades, and use our collection of printable resources to test your knowledge.

Walter was a tall, attractive man with a love of expensive clothes and jewellery. He was also confident, chivalrous and charismatic – all qualities that Queen Elizabeth admired. The story goes that instead of allowing the queen to walk through a puddle, Walter spread his expensive cloak on the ground in her path. No wonder he was a favourite courtier!

*“For whosoever commands the sea commands the trade; whosoever commands the trade of the world commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself.”*

*Walter Raleigh*



Walter was born in around 1554 in Devon, England, the youngest of five sons. He grew up in a family of famous men. His half-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and his cousin, Sir Richard Grenville, also served Queen Elizabeth I.

When Walter was about 15, he went to France to fight with the Huguenots in the Wars of Religion. He later studied at Oxford University, where his love of writing poetry began, and studied law in London, too.

From 1579 to 1583, Walter served in the army in Ireland. When he helped to stop an Irish rebellion, he became a favourite of Queen Elizabeth I. She knighted him and gave him land and wealth. Within two years, Walter was appointed Captain of the Queen's Guard – a powerful position.

Walter strongly believed in the colonisation of North America. Although he stayed in England to serve Elizabeth, he sent expeditions to North America between 1584 and 1589. The aim was to set up a colony near Roanoke Island (on the coast of today's North Carolina), to be named Virginia after the virgin Queen Elizabeth. But the colonists were disorganised and faced regular attacks from Native Americans and many were forced to return home. They did, however, bring back potatoes and tobacco, which were unknown in Europe at the time! Later expeditions were more successful, and the colonists began to build houses to settle there. But when their commander sailed back to England for supplies, he returned to find the colony deserted. The fate of the 'Lost Colony of Roanoke Island' remains a mystery to this day.

In 1592, Walter fell from favour when he secretly married Queen Elizabeth's lady-in-waiting, Bessy Throckmorton, without the queen's permission. Walter and Bessy were briefly imprisoned in the Tower of London for their actions. On their release, the couple went to live at Sherborne Castle in Dorset.

In 1594, Walter set off on a number of expeditions to South America with the aim of finding El Dorado, the legendary city of gold. Although he failed to find this land of riches, he explored much of the Orinoco river valley in Venezuela. He also attacked Spanish ships and ports for treasure, much to the renewed admiration of the queen.

When James I came to the throne in 1603 he wanted peace in Europe and did not like Raleigh's attitude towards the Spanish. Raleigh's enemies also tried to tarnish his reputation. Walter was charged with treason for plotting to overthrow the king and imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he lived for 13 years with his wife and servants. Walter used this time to write a book called History of the World. His works of poetry are also treasured to this day. On his release in 1616, Walter was sent to search for gold once again in South America. But against the king's orders, he attacked Spanish territory. When Walter returned without any treasures, he was arrested and sentenced to death. He was beheaded on 29 October 1618.



## A Letter from Sir Walter Raleigh

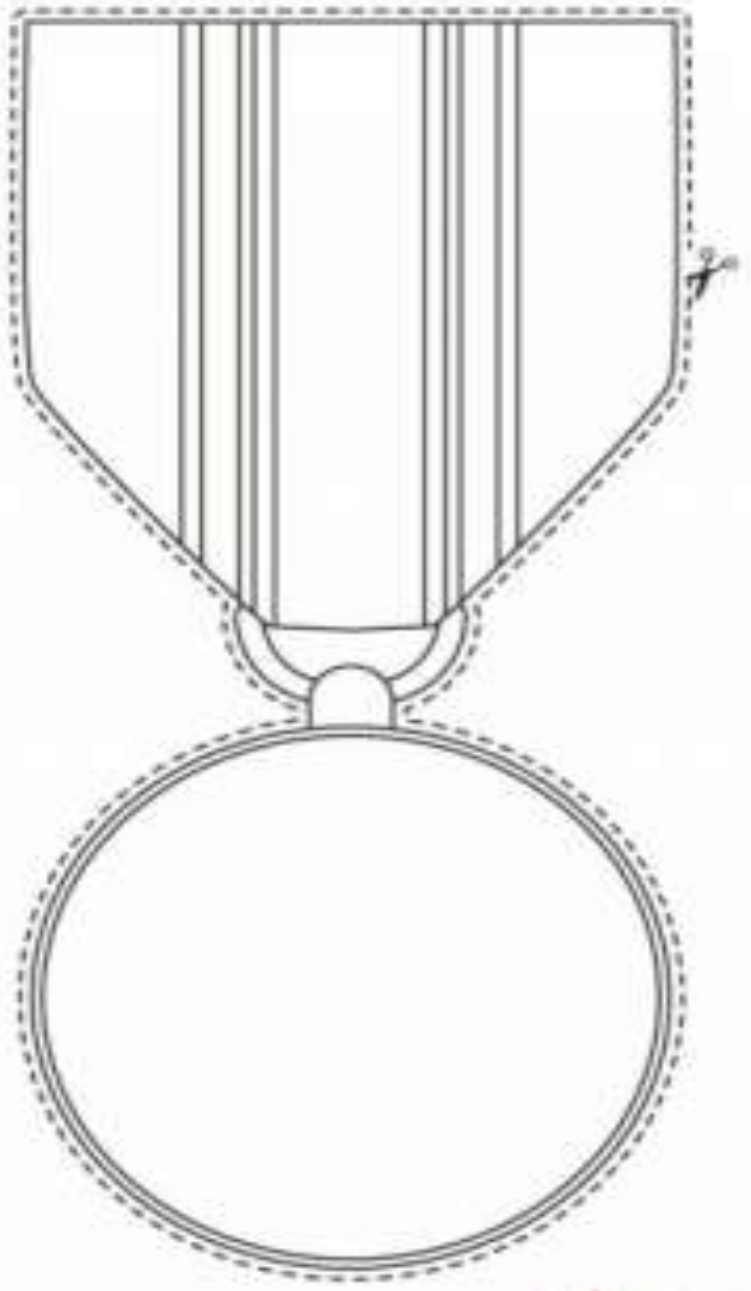
Imagine that you are Walter Raleigh, and you know your marriage has upset Queen Elizabeth I. Write a letter begging the queen's forgiveness.

A large, rounded rectangular box with a black border, containing 20 horizontal lines for writing a letter.

Sir Walter Raleigh was knighted by Queen Elizabeth I, but can you design your own award for him using this template?

## Walter Raleigh Award

Walter Raleigh was given many a knighthood by Queen Elizabeth. Can you design a special medal to celebrate his achievements?



## Learn to Draw Sir Walter Raleigh



# My Colony

In 1584 Walter Raleigh was granted a charter to found his own colonies in the New World.

Imagine you have been given a charter to found your own colony. Describe your colony below.



Where will you set up your colony?  
What sort of climate and landscape  
are you looking for?

What will you name your  
colony? Why?

Who will you take to settle your  
colony?

What rules will you have for living  
in your colony?

Here's a colouring page of the very debonair Sir Walter Raleigh, privateer and hero of the court of Elizabeth I.

## Sir Walter Raleigh

Writer, poet, soldier and explorer



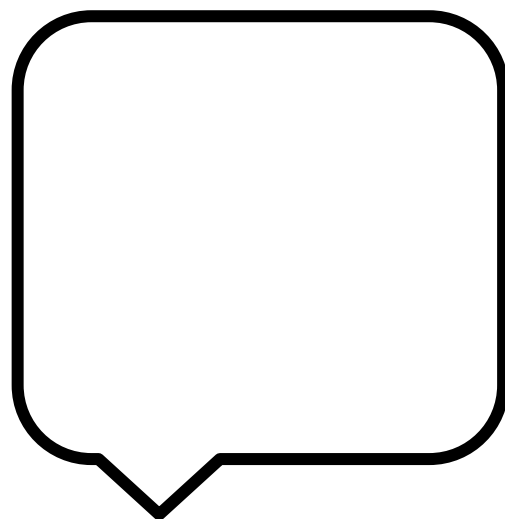
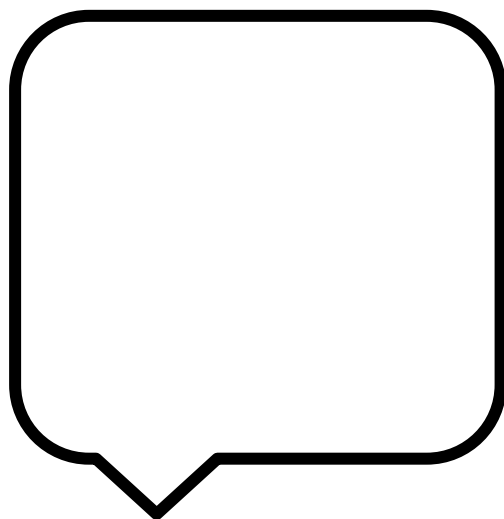
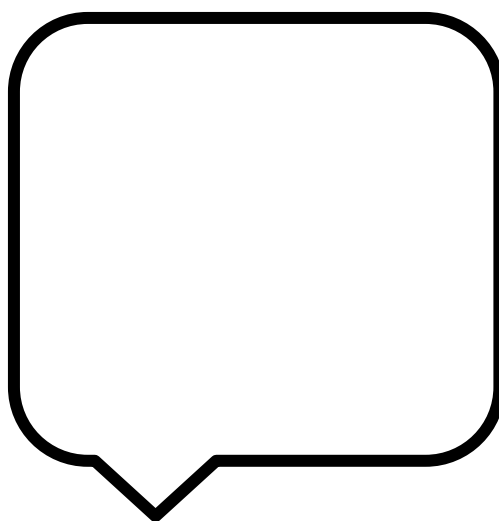
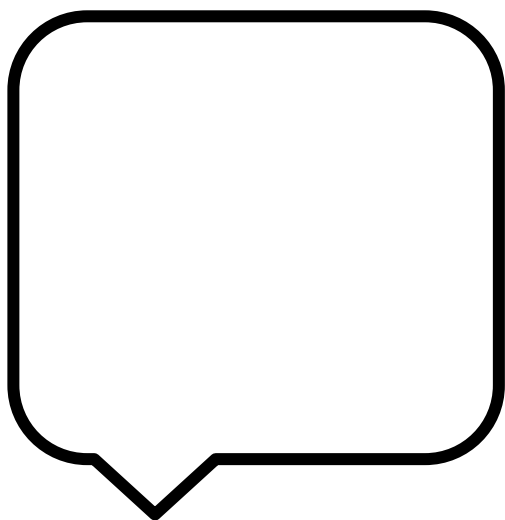


# Sir Walter Raleigh



Walter Raleigh Interview Worksheet

Wouldn't it be great if we could interview famous people from the past? This worksheet asks you to imagine that you can do just that - what if you could interview Sir Walter Raleigh? Can you think of some good open questions?



Sir Walter Raleigh



Write a newspaper report about one of Sir Walter Raleigh's adventures using this newspaper writing prompt.

# Village News

No. 12354



What would you have talked about if you met Sir Walter Raleigh?

## Sir Walter Raleigh

Born:

Nationality:

Occupation:

What was he famous for?

Would you have liked to meet him?

What would you have talked about?



