

Sundial



**Captain John Smith
Chesapeake National
Historic Trail**



Sundial

How did people know what time it was before clocks were invented? One way was to use a sundial. A sundial is a device with a flat surface and a needle that casts a shadow when held up to the sun. The shadow lines up with markings that tell you what time it is. This works because the angle of the sun in the sky changes throughout the day as it moves from east to west. John Smith owned a "diptych sundial" which folded so it could be kept in your pocket. These sundials usually also had a small compass.

Learn more at nps.gov/cajo

Image courtesy
Jamestown-Yorktown
Foundation Collection