

INTERACTIVE MAP LESSON: THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE

RECOMMENDED TIME

90 minutes

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- List plants, animals, and ideas that were brought to the Americas from Europe, Africa, and Asia.
- Identify contributions that the Americas made to the rest of the world.
- Analyze the effect that the Columbian Exchange has had on people around the world since 1492.

LEARNING CONNECTIONS

- **Learning Styles:** linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial
- **Skills Mastery:** drawing conclusions, understanding cause and effect

RESOURCE

- **Interactive Map:** [The Columbian Exchange](#)

CONTEXT

Beginning in the 1400s, European traders began exploring the oceans in search of new routes to far-away markets. In addition to faster, cheaper trade routes, this exploration brought some unexpected benefits—the discovery of new lands and resources. In 1492 Christopher Columbus landed in the Americas, where he discovered many plants, animals, and natural resources unknown in Europe, Asia, and Africa. He carried some of these items back to Europe with him, and he left behind some European goods previously unknown to the peoples of the Americas. This exchange of goods and ideas continued long after Columbus, and it became known as the Columbian Exchange.

Developing Cultural, Economic, and Geographic Literacy. In this lesson, students will learn about the plants, animals, and ideas that were brought to the Americas from Europe, Africa, and Asia; the contributions that the Americas made to the rest of the world; and some of the effects that the Columbian Exchange has had on people around the world since 1492.

OPEN

1. Present the information from the Context section to students in the form of a brief lecture. Tell students that they will be learning more about the goods and ideas that were exchanged between the Americas and the rest of the world. They will also learn about the impact of the Columbian Exchange on people around the world since 1492.

TEACH

2. Have students explore The Columbian Exchange Interactive Map on a computer. Students may work individually or in small groups, depending on the number of computers available.
3. Have students complete the online review at the end of the interactive map. Check their scores to confirm their overall understanding of the material presented in the interactive map activity. If time permits, allow students who received low scores on the review to explore the interactive map further. Encourage them to take notes on the electronic notepad that is available to them throughout the activity.

If many students in the class experience difficulty with the interactive map activity and review, you may wish to have them complete one or more of the optional activities below to ensure mastery of the learning objectives.

CLOSE

4. **Drawing Conclusions and Understanding Cause and Effect.** Ask the class to consider the impact of the Columbian Exchange on people around the world since 1492. Call on students to list modern evidence of the impact of the Columbian Exchange, and list their answers on the chalkboard or an overhead projector. Then ask volunteers to state which items affect their lives directly or indirectly and have them explain how their lives might have been different if the Columbian Exchange had never taken place.

OPTIONS

- **Synthesizing Information.** Have students write two or three paragraphs answering the following question: “What if _____ had never been introduced to the Americas (or Europe, Africa, and Asia)?” Students should fill in the blank with one of the items mentioned in The Columbian Exchange Interactive Map. To assess students’ work or to guide students, use the [Understanding Cause and Effect](#) and the [Writing Assignments Rubrics](#).
- **Reviewing Facts.** Organize the class into four groups. Have each group make a set of flash cards for the items mentioned in The Columbian Exchange Interactive Map. On one side of each flash card, students should write the name of an item exchanged (e.g., corn). On the other side of each flash card, students should summarize the story of that item, stating where it came from and traveled to. Have the students in each group quiz each other using these flash cards. Then play a question game with the class in which the four groups take turns answering questions about the Columbian Exchange for points. Reward the highest-scoring group appropriately. To assess students’ work or to guide students, use the [Group Activity Rubric](#).