

When you have completed this activity, go to Status Check.

*American
History 1A
Unit 2*

Internet Research Project:
Results of the Columbian
Exchange



Name _____ Date _____

Objective

- Learners will be able to identify the practices and materials Europeans in Europe adopted from the New World, the practices and materials Native Americans adopted from the Old World, and what amalgamation of both that was used by colonists.

Background

When he returned to Spain after his first voyage to America, Christopher Columbus brought back some gold and tales of enormous reserves of gold and silver in America. When news of this wealth reached Europe, it provided a powerful reason for nations to colonize, not merely explore, the newly found land. Most nations of that day believed in the economic policy of mercantilism, in which the wealth and power of a country was determined by how much money in gold and silver coins a country possessed. Thus, some nations founded American colonies in the hopes that the colonies would supply the goods and raw materials that they were currently buying from other nations. In that way, currency would stay in the country, instead of flowing into a rival nation's treasury.

As a consequence, a process of exchange very quickly began between America and Europe. Some of it was unintentional – such as the importation of European diseases (such as measles and smallpox) that killed many Native Americans. More intentionally, the Spanish colonies in Central and South America exported sugar, silver, and gold to Spain. French traders in North America traded with the Native Americans, exchanging European goods for the pelts of beavers and otters. The furs were exported to France, where they were made into hats and other fine goods that were sold throughout Europe.

European colonists naturally brought many things from Europe that they felt were essential – for instance, horses to enable them to quickly and easily move around the country. In addition, they wanted to feel comfortable in a new place that had many strange (to them) aspects. Thus, they brought many elements of their culture and lifestyle to America. Europeans introduced cattle, cotton, some fruit trees, goats, grapes, onions, pigs, rice, sugar, and wheat to America. Some of these imports took fertile root in America, and could be exported back to Europe, ensuring an increased supply – for example, cattle, cotton, sugar (along with its molasses and rum derivatives), and wheat. Europeans also experimented with and adopted many of the new things that they found in America. They introduced such American plants as beans, chile peppers, corn (maize), peanuts, tomatoes, squash, sweet potatoes, and potatoes to Europe. In addition, although they could not be grown in Europe, chocolate (from Mexico) and tobacco (from North America) were exported to Europe.

This massive movement of plants and animals between the continents, also called the Columbian Exchange (the phrase was coined by historian Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., in 1972), permanently altered the American and European environments. For example, potatoes would grow well in Northern Europe and did not interfere with the production of other crops already being grown. In addition, an acre of potatoes produces about four times the calories as an acre of grain. The potato therefore became an important part of the cuisine of Ireland and central Europe. A Northern European surge in population and industrialization has been credited to the additional nutrition provided by the potato alone. The Columbian Exchange also had effects beyond America and Europe – the explosion of new foods were introduced into Africa and Asia (chile peppers and corn, for instance).

Internet Research Primer

Basic Internet Searching

The Internet contains a vast amount of information, but there is no index or table of contents like a book. In order to find information on your topic, you must use what is called a search engine. There are many different search engines available, including AltaVista, Ask.com, Google, Live Search, Yahoo, and many others. Google is currently the most popular, but many of the techniques described here can be used with most search engines.

The first step in using a search engine is to collect a list of terms and phrases for your topic that can be used by the search engine to find Web pages that you are interested in. One technique that helps is to use words or phrases that are unique to the topic. When entering multiple words or phrases in a search engine's search box, it is helpful if you connect them with what are called "Boolean operators." Boolean operators are named after the English mathematician, George Boole (1815-1864). They are words that help the search engine determine if a Web page is likely to have what you are interested in. The most commonly used Boolean operators are "and" and "or."

With Google, the Boolean operator "and" is the default – if you enter multiple words with nothing but a space between them, it is assumed that the word "and" is between them. So, for example, if you entered "**Christopher Columbus**" in the search box, Google would search for both "*Christopher*" and "*Columbus*" and would list Web pages in its search results that contain both the word "*Christopher*" and also the word "*Columbus*." If you entered "Christopher or Columbus," Google would list Web pages in the search results that contain either the word "Christopher" or the word "Columbus," but some Web pages would have one word but not the other.

Note that if you entered either "Christopher Columbus" or "Christopher and Columbus," the Web pages in the search results would contain both the word "*Christopher*" and also the word "*Columbus*." However, these Web pages would not necessarily include the specific phrase "*Christopher Columbus*" with the words next to each other and in that order. In order to search for the phrase "*Christopher Columbus*" you should enter "**Christopher Columbus**" with the quotation marks around the phrase. This would cause the search engine to return only pages that contain the phrase "*Christopher Columbus*."

You can include Boolean operators and phrases together in one search. For example, if you entered “**Christopher Columbus**” **Spain** in the search box, Google would return pages with the phrase “*Christopher Columbus*” and the word “*Spain*.” You can also use more than one Boolean operator in a search, but you should include parentheses when you do this, so that the search engine knows exactly what you want to search for. The search (**Spain OR Italy**) “**Christopher Columbus**” will return a list of Web pages that includes the phrase *Christopher Columbus* and also includes either the word “*Spain*” or the word “*Italy*.”

Activities

1. Go to the Web site “The Columbian Exchange: Plants, Animals, and Disease between the Old and New Worlds,” by Alfred W. Crosby, located at [The Columbian Exchange](#). What does Crosby mean by the phrase “geographical biodiversification”?

2. Go to the Web site “The National Archives Learning Curves: Snapshots: Native North Americans,” located at [learning curve snapshot](#). Read source 2. What did the leader of the Native Americans give the English settlers?

3. Go to the Web site “Columbian Exchanges,” located at [Columbian Exchange](#). Click on the link “Horse.” What was the effect of the introduction of horses on Plains Indian

culture?

4. Go to the Web site [Plagues and People](#) which discusses Plagues and Peoples: the Columbian Exchange by Dr. Ian Carr. What was the effect of smallpox on Hispaniola? What was the effect in the rest of Mesoamerica?

Project

Prepare a feast featuring dishes from the Columbian Exchange, with dishes from Old and New Worlds, and dishes that were uniquely a product of the exchange. Students should pick recipes, preferably testing them first. Some useful sites to explore: “Recipes from A Newe Booke of Olde Cokery” located at [Neweboke](#). Click on “How to Cook Medieval” and then “Foods to Never Use.” See also “Mythology’s Mything Links: Lore & History of Chocolate in Latin America located at [Latin American Chocolate](#); as well as “Food Timeline: Aztec, Maya, & Inca foods and recipes” located at [Food Maya](#), and its related site “Food Timeline—history notes: Mexican & Tex Mex foods,” located at [Mexican Food](#).