

# THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE— Who Got the Best Deal?

**Learning Objectives:** The students will:

1. Understand the meaning of the term, Columbian Exchange.
2. Analyze the products exchanged between the Eastern and Western hemispheres.
3. Explain the short-term and long-term effect of the Columbian Exchange on both the Eastern and Western hemispheres.

**TEKS/TAKS: (NEW) WH.7B&C**

**Materials Needed:** sets of cards for groups of students; copies of the charts for each student

**Teaching Strategy:**

1. Begin the lesson by asking the question, “When you trade an item such as a baseball card with another, how do you determine who got the best deal?” Record the criteria the students identify on the board. Explain that each criterion has both a short-term and sometimes long-term effect from the trade. Allow them time to consider and share examples of the short and long term effects of their trade.
2. Explain that they are now going to look at an era in history known as the “Columbian Exchange.” Discuss the definition of the Columbian Exchange:

**Columbian Exchange**—the global transfer of foods, plants, animals, etc. occurring after the age of exploration initiated by the voyages of Christopher Columbus in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century

3. Break the class into two groups—Eastern Hemisphere and Western Hemisphere. Move the students to the side of the room that represents their side of the world. Give each student a card representing something that was exchanged from the Old or New World or the New World to the Old. Give the students enough time to think or read about this product and its effect, keeping in mind that the other side of the world had never seen or experienced it before. **Note:** While slavery was not new to either hemisphere, most of the time the people enslaved had been those taken as prisoners of war. The slavery that developed after the Columbian Exchange was different in that people from one area of the world (Africa) were captured and taken and forced to work in another part of the world (the Americas).

4. When the students have analyzed their product and its effect, have them stand and meet a person from the other hemisphere. Each person should trade his/her card with the person from the other side. The pair should then discuss the two items exchanged as well as the effect/s they think it will have when introduced (to the opposite hemisphere). They should conclude their exchange by answering the question about their two products, "Who got the best deal?" This process of exchanging can continue for three or four rounds so that the students can be exposed to several items and differing points of view. If multiple exchanges are used, be sure that the students end up with a product card from the hemisphere opposite from the side they are assigned when the exercise began. (**Note:** there are 15 cards for each side to allow each student in a class of 30 to receive a card. If there are less than 30 in the class, remove some of the food cards, but try to have an even number of students and cards on each side.)
5. After this portion of the exercise, the students should return to their original side of the room. Once there, they should quickly group themselves together into categories. Example—all the food items, all the animals, diseases, etc. Within each group of items, they should discuss their conclusions about the impact of these on their world (hemisphere). Have volunteers from each group share their ideas.
6. Hand out the chart on the impact of the Columbian Exchange to each student to complete the short-term effect of the products, etc. Compare the grouping of items on the chart and how this differed from their categories. This can be done in small groups or led by the teacher. Next, lead the students in realizing that each of these categories had a significant long-term effect on both hemispheres. Students should try to predict these long-term effects as they complete their chart.
7. To evaluate the students' understanding of the impact of the Columbian Exchange, select one of the following writing prompts:
  - a. Imagine you were living in the time of the Columbian Exchange. Write a short narrative in which you describe the area of the world in which you live and the impact of some of the products that were introduced to your lives as a result of the exchange of products.
  - b. Write an evaluation in which you decide which hemisphere got the "BEST DEAL." Defend your choice with examples of products as well as the short range and long range effects on the lives of the people.

**New World Cards**

**Tobacco**

**Cotton**

**Pumpkin**

**Squash**

**Beans**

**Old World Cards**

**Small pox**

**Influenza**

**Iron-edged Tools**

**Whooping Cough**

**Malaria**

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**Tomatoes**

**Plow**

**Corn**

**Gunpowder**

**Potatoes**

**Slaves**

**Quinine**

**Horses**

**Gold**

**Pigs**

**Silver**

**Sheep**

**Peanut**

**Sugar Cane**

**Cacao Bean**

**Wheat**

**Indigo**

**Rice**

**Sunflower**

**Cattle**

## Impact of the Columbian Exchange on the Eastern Hemisphere

Product	Short-Term Effect	Long-Term Effect
Tobacco, Cotton, and Indigo		
Pumpkins, Squash, Beans, Tomatoes, Peanuts, Cacao Beans, Sunflowers		
Corn and Potatoes		
Gold and Silver		
Quinine		

## Impact of the Columbian Exchange on the Western Hemisphere (New World)

Product	Short-Term Effect	Long-Term Effect
Small pox, Influenza, Whooping Cough, and Malaria		
Iron-edged Tools and Plow, Wheat, and Rice		
Gunpowder		
Horses, Pigs, Sheep, and Cattle		
Slaves and Sugar Cane		

Suggested Answers:

## Impact of the Columbian Exchange on the Eastern Hemisphere (Old World)

Product	Short-Term Effect	Long-Term Effect
Tobacco, Cotton, and Indigo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smoking tobacco became very popular in European nations</li> <li>• Cotton joined wool in making textiles</li> <li>• Indigo was used in the dyeing of the new textiles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long range health effects of smoking</li> <li>• Demand for tobacco and cotton from the West grew making them important cash crops in the southern colonies of North America</li> <li>• Manufacture of textiles became the first to become industrialized</li> </ul>
Pumpkins, Squash, Beans, Tomatoes, Peanuts, Cacao Beans, Sunflower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At first, products, especially tomatoes, were thought to be poisonous by the East</li> <li>• The sunflower was used for its seeds and oil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved the diet of the people in the Eastern hemisphere</li> <li>• Chocolate industry developed</li> </ul>
Corn and Potatoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potatoes changed the diet of people living in the Eastern hemisphere because of the ease of growing in areas that previously had difficulty feeding its people</li> <li>• Corn also used to improve the diet of livestock</li> <li>• Both were inexpensive to grow and nutritious</li> </ul>	<p>Dependence on the potato as a staple of the diet led to a massive migration of Irish to America during the Great Potato Famine when a fungus hit the potato crop</p>
Gold and Silver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created great wealth in countries in the Eastern hemisphere (example Spain)</li> <li>• Wealth of Spain caused other European countries to try and find their own sources which increased exploration and competition for colonization in the West</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competition and rivalry between colonial empires led to mercantilism—an economic system where a nation's power was determined by its wealth</li> <li>• Wealth from increased trade changed business practices in what became known as the Commercial Revolution</li> <li>• Commercial Revolution led to the growth of capitalism—an economic system based on private ownership and investment of wealth for profit</li> <li>• Inflation in Europe &amp; Spain's decline when gold ran out</li> </ul>
Quinine	<p>First used to treat malaria which had become common and deadly in the swamps and marshes around Rome and other areas of Europe</p>	<p>Use of quinine was one of the reasons Europeans were later able to colonize Africa. They had a drug to combat the problem of malaria, which was so prevalent on the continent.</p>

## Impact of the Columbian Exchange on the Western Hemisphere (New World)

Product	Short-Term Effect	Long-Term Effect
Small pox, Influenza, Whooping Cough, and Malaria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led to epidemics of diseases severely reducing the Native American populations (up to 90%)</li> <li>• Reduction in population of Native Americans aided in the European conquest of the Western hemisphere</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of population of Native Americans, originally used as slave labor by the Europeans, led to the enslavement of the Africans from the Eastern hemisphere</li> <li>• Slaves from Africa were brought to labor in the West</li> </ul>
Iron-edged Tools, and the Plow, Wheat, and Rice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iron-edged tools and the plow improved the agricultural production of crops in the New World</li> <li>• Introduction of wheat and rice gave two new staples to the Western diet.</li> </ul>	Improved tools allowed the fertile agricultural regions of the West to produce a food supply able to feed large portions of the world (populations)
Gunpowder	Gunpowder, combined with the horse, tipped the scale between the invading Europeans and the Native Americans who were still using more primitive weapons such as a spear and bow and arrow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changed warfare forever</li> <li>• Led to the development of modern weaponry</li> </ul>
Horses, Cattle, Pigs, Sheep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soldiers on horses were thought to be gods by the Native Americans</li> <li>• Helped to tip the balance of power between the invaders and the natives</li> <li>• Other animals (cattle, pigs, sheep) domesticated for use by natives and colonists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changed transportation</li> <li>• Domesticated animals improved diet and economy</li> <li>• Plains Indian culture in North America changed with the introduction of the horse</li> </ul>
Slaves and Sugar Cane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needed to replace Native American labor force dying during epidemics of small pox and other diseases</li> <li>• Became a valuable part of the Triangular Trade route that consisted of slaves from Africa, sugar cane from the West Indies, and rum produced in New England</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led to fierce debate over the morality of slavery</li> <li>• Led to Abolition Movement</li> <li>• Factor in the American Civil War between the Northern and Southern states</li> <li>• Civil Rights movement in the U.S.</li> </ul>

