Pelts and Partnerships

Trade, alliances, and change in the Great Lakes region

SS24.6.3 "Describe the effects of European expeditions and colonization on the economic, geographic, and social conditions of Indigenous peoples during the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries in North America..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one example of cooperation and circle one example of conflict. Write E beside an economic effect, G beside a geographic effect, and S beside a social effect on Indigenous peoples.

Changes Along the Fur Trade Routes

1. In the 1600s, a Wendat trader might carry beaver pelts by canoe from the Great Lakes toward French settlements on the St. Lawrence River. French merchants wanted the pelts to make hats in Europe. Wendat traders exchanged them for metal tools, cloth, and other goods. Trade brought useful items, but it also changed work in some Wendat communities. More people spent time trapping beavers and moving goods between trading partners. The French depended on Wendat knowledge of rivers and travel routes, so trade required cooperation on both sides.

2. Trade also shaped military choices. The Wendat and French became allies, while the Haudenosaunee traded with the Dutch and later the English. European traders supplied goods, including firearms, to their Indigenous trading partners. Nations made their own decisions about alliances, but competition for access to the fur trade helped fuel fighting. In the 1640s, Haudenosaunee attacks damaged Wendat towns and trade networks. French forces sometimes fought beside their Indigenous allies. These partnerships could offer support, yet they also drew communities into dangerous conflicts over land and trade.

3. European contact also brought diseases such as smallpox, which spread through Wendat communities and killed many people who had no earlier exposure to them. Disease weakened communities before and during the fighting. After major attacks in 1649, many Wendat survivors left their homeland near Georgian Bay. Some joined other Indigenous communities; others moved toward French settlements. These moves separated families from familiar farms and travel routes. The fur trade, warfare, and disease did not affect every nation in the same way, but together they changed Indigenous economies, homelands, and community life.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did trade with French merchants change Wendat work, and what did French traders gain from Wendat cooperation?

2. How did European trade connections contribute to conflict between Indigenous nations?

3. What two events helped cause Wendat people to leave their homeland, and where did some survivors go?

4. What was one possible benefit and one danger of military alliances for Indigenous communities?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are a Wendat council member in the 1640s deciding how to protect your community while keeping trade. In four sentences, propose a plan that uses cooperation and reduces a risk, then explain how it could affect work and where families live; use at least two details from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Pelts and Partnerships

GRADE 6 · SS24.6.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one example of cooperation and circle one example of conflict. Write E beside an economic effect, G beside a geographic effect, and S beside a social effect on Indigenous peoples. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did trade with French merchants change Wendat work, and what did French traders gain from Wendat cooperation?	**More Wendat people spent time trapping and moving goods. French traders gained pelts and relied on Wendat knowledge of rivers and routes.**
2	How did European trade connections contribute to conflict between Indigenous nations?	**Nations formed different trading partnerships, and competition for access to the fur trade helped fuel fighting. European traders also supplied firearms.**
3	What two events helped cause Wendat people to leave their homeland, and where did some survivors go?	**Disease weakened Wendat communities, and major attacks damaged their towns. Some survivors joined other Indigenous communities or moved toward French settlements.**
4	What was one possible benefit and one danger of military alliances for Indigenous communities?	**Alliances could provide support in fighting, but they could also draw communities into dangerous conflicts.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would keep trading pelts with French merchants so our people could obtain metal tools. I would ask our French allies to help guard travel routes because attacks have damaged our trade network. I would set aside time to grow food so fewer families depend only on trapping. If fighting reaches our towns, we should plan safe places where families can move together.

Accept plans other than the sample if they use at least two accurate passage details and explain cooperation, risk, work, and a possible move. Students should not suggest that all Indigenous nations made the same choices.