After First Contact

Trace how early encounters led to lasting changes

SS24.8.11c "Analyze the consequences of initial contact between Europeans and Indigenous peoples in the Americas."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two events from the early meetings, circle three later consequences, and number the circled consequences to show when they happened. Use your marks to trace how contact changed life for Taíno people.

From Meetings to Settlements

1. In 1492, Christopher Columbus's ships reached islands in the Caribbean where Taíno people lived. Taíno communities had farms, canoes, and trade networks long before the ships arrived. During early meetings, some Taíno people offered food and cotton, while the newcomers offered small objects such as bells. These exchanges helped the crews obtain supplies and learn about the islands. Yet contact was not simply a friendly trade. Columbus also took several Indigenous people aboard his ships against their will, hoping they would guide him and help him communicate.

2. When Columbus returned with more ships in 1493, the Spanish began building settlements on Hispaniola. Settlers wanted gold and labor, not just supplies for a voyage. Spanish leaders demanded tribute and forced many Taíno people to work. Some Taíno communities resisted, and Spanish forces used violence against them. Labor demands and fighting pulled people away from farming, making it harder for families to get enough food. What began as meetings between travelers and islanders became a system in which settlers controlled land and people's work.

3. Contact also brought diseases to which Taíno communities had little prior exposure. Smallpox struck Hispaniola in 1518, more than twenty years after Columbus's first voyage. It killed many people and added to the losses caused by forced labor, violence, and hunger. As communities lost members, families and leaders struggled to keep farms and traditions going. The outcomes of contact were linked: Spanish settlement increased demands for labor, while illness and food shortages made survival harder. Taíno people and their descendants endured, but their communities changed profoundly.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the early exchanges help Columbus's crews, and why does the passage say these meetings were not simply friendly?

2. How did Spanish demands for labor make it harder for Taíno families to get food?

3. Why would it be incorrect to say that smallpox struck during Columbus's first voyage? How did it affect Taíno communities later?

4. How did the relationship between the Spanish and Taíno people change from the early meetings to the years of settlement? Give a detail from each period.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label arguing which change after initial contact most reshaped Taíno life. Use two details from the passage to show a cause-and-effect chain, and acknowledge that Taíno people and their descendants endured.

ANSWER KEY

After First Contact

GRADE 8 · SS24.8.11c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two events from the early meetings, circle three later consequences, and number the circled consequences to show when they happened. Use your marks to trace how contact changed life for Taíno people. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the early exchanges help Columbus's crews, and why does the passage say these meetings were not simply friendly?	**The crews gained supplies and learned about the islands, but Columbus also took Indigenous people aboard against their will.**
2	How did Spanish demands for labor make it harder for Taíno families to get food?	**Forced work and fighting pulled people away from farming, so families had less food.**
3	Why would it be incorrect to say that smallpox struck during Columbus's first voyage? How did it affect Taíno communities later?	**Smallpox struck Hispaniola in 1518, more than twenty years after the first voyage. It killed many people and made it harder for communities to maintain farms and traditions.**
4	How did the relationship between the Spanish and Taíno people change from the early meetings to the years of settlement? Give a detail from each period.	**Early meetings included exchanges of food and cotton for small objects. During settlement, Spanish leaders demanded tribute and forced Taíno people to work.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Spanish settlement most reshaped Taíno life because it gave settlers control over people's work. Spanish leaders forced many Taíno people to labor and demanded tribute. Work and fighting took people away from farming, which made it harder for families to get food. Taíno people and their descendants endured despite these changes.

Accept other well-supported choices, including disease or violence, if the response explains a cause-and-effect chain using two accurate passage details. Do not accept a claim that Taíno people disappeared.