Goods That Changed History

Trace how trade shaped work and cities across Europe and the Americas.

6.E.1 "Give examples of how trade related to key developments in the history of Europe and the Americas."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB In each paragraph, underline a traded good, circle two places connected by its trade, and number one change that trade caused.

Across the Water

1. Picture a merchant in Venice around 1300 unloading pepper brought from Asia through many traders. Europeans paid high prices for spices, so merchants organized long trips to sell them. Trade helped ports such as Venice grow into busy cities. Merchants needed money before their ships returned, so lenders developed ways to offer loans and handle payments. This trade did not reach the Americas, but it changed European cities and business. Later, European rulers looked for ocean routes to Asian markets, hoping to buy goods more directly.

2. In the 1500s, Spanish colonizers took control of silver mines in the Americas, including rich mines at Potosí in present-day Bolivia. Indigenous people were forced to do dangerous mining work under colonial rule. Ships carried silver across the Atlantic to Spain. Spanish rulers used much of it to pay for wars and buy goods from other parts of Europe. The mines made the Spanish empire wealthier for a time, but they brought severe suffering to local communities. Trade in silver linked colonial labor in the Americas to spending in Europe.

3. By the early 1800s, cotton from plantations in the southern United States was crossing the Atlantic to British mills. Enslaved people grew and picked much of this cotton without pay. In Britain, machines turned cotton into cloth faster than hand spinning and weaving could. Demand for cloth encouraged mill owners to build more factories and hire workers. Demand for raw cotton also helped drive the expansion of slavery and cotton plantations in the United States. A piece of cloth sold in Europe could thus connect factory jobs to forced labor across the ocean.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the spice trade change both cities and business in Europe?

2. How did European trade with Asia help lead to a later change in where rulers looked for trade routes?

3. How did the silver trade connect work in the Americas to spending in Europe?

4. How did trade in cotton contribute to changes in both Britain and the United States?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Compare how trade shaped work in two different places from the passage. Write three sentences that name both places, describe one change to work in each, and explain an important difference between them.

ANSWER KEY

Goods That Changed History

GRADE 6 · 6.E.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

In each paragraph, underline a traded good, circle two places connected by its trade, and number one change that trade caused. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the spice trade change both cities and business in Europe?	**It helped ports such as Venice grow, and lenders developed ways to offer loans and handle payments.**
2	How did European trade with Asia help lead to a later change in where rulers looked for trade routes?	**European rulers looked for ocean routes to Asia because they hoped to buy goods more directly.**
3	How did the silver trade connect work in the Americas to spending in Europe?	**Indigenous people were forced to mine silver in the Americas, and Spanish rulers used silver shipped to Europe to pay for wars and goods.**
4	How did trade in cotton contribute to changes in both Britain and the United States?	**Demand for cloth encouraged more British factories and jobs, while demand for cotton helped drive the expansion of plantations and slavery in the United States.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In Venice, the spice trade led merchants to organize trading trips and use loans. At Potosí, silver trade led to Indigenous people being forced to work in dangerous mines. The merchants arranged trips to sell goods, but the miners were forced to do the work.

Accept other pairs of places if the response accurately describes a trade-related change to work in each and explains a supported difference.