

Atlantic Labor Chain

Trace how labor demand, forced migration, and profit were connected.

9.10c "The decimation of indigenous populations in the Americas influenced the growth of the Atlantic slave trade. The trade of enslaved peoples resulted in exploitation, death, and the creation of wealth."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline a reason colonizers expanded slavery. Circle two details showing its human costs. Mark W beside a group that gained wealth.

Labor, Forced Migration, and Wealth

- ① After 1492, disease, warfare, and forced labor devastated Indigenous populations in the Americas. Population losses influenced colonizers' search for labor. Slavery was a choice imposed by people pursuing wealth, and expanding sugar production became a major driver of Atlantic slavery. Silver mining also exploited workers: at Potosí, many were Indigenous people compelled to work through the mita labor draft, alongside paid workers. Labor systems varied.
- ② European merchants financed ships and bought enslaved people at African ports. Some African rulers and traders captured or sold people, including war prisoners; other communities suffered attacks or resisted. European demand enlarged this commerce. Captives crossed the Atlantic in the forced Middle Passage. Crowded holds, disease, violence, hunger, and dehydration caused suffering and death. Survivors were sold and forced to work in the Americas. Sugar plantations received a large share of enslaved Africans.
- ③ Enslaved people resisted by preserving cultural practices, slowing work, escaping, and rebelling. Owners used violence and laws to enforce control. Forced labor produced sugar and other goods for sale. Owners, merchants, investors, and governments gained wealth while enslaved people were denied control over their labor and its rewards. The system separated families and caused deaths at sea and in the Americas. Commercial growth depended on exploitation.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 How did the decline of Indigenous populations influence the growth of the Atlantic slave trade?

2 What roles did European merchants and some African rulers and traders play in the slave trade?

3 Name two conditions enslaved Africans faced during the Middle Passage, and state one result of those conditions.

4 How did enslaved labor create wealth, and who received most of that wealth?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

In four or five sentences, connect Indigenous population loss, sugar demand, forced migration, and profit. Identify a human cost and a group that gained wealth.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline a reason colonizers expanded slavery. Circle two details showing its human costs. Mark W beside a group that gained wealth. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the decline of Indigenous populations influence the growth of the Atlantic slave trade?	Population losses influenced colonizers' search for additional labor. Their pursuit of profits, especially from expanding sugar plantations, drove decisions to enslave Africans and expand the trade.
2	What roles did European merchants and some African rulers and traders play in the slave trade?	European merchants financed ships and bought enslaved people. Some African rulers and traders captured or sold people, including war prisoners. Other African communities suffered attacks or resisted.
3	Name two conditions enslaved Africans faced during the Middle Passage, and state one result of those conditions.	Answers may name crowded holds, disease, violence, hunger, or dehydration. These conditions caused suffering and death.
4	How did enslaved labor create wealth, and who received most of that wealth?	Enslaved people produced sugar and other goods for sale. Plantation owners, merchants, investors, and governments gained wealth while denying workers control over their labor and its rewards.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Disease and colonial violence devastated Indigenous populations, influencing colonizers' search for labor. Seeking profits from expanding sugar production, owners and merchants chose to exploit enslaved Africans. European buyers and some African traders expanded commerce that forced captives across the Atlantic. Enslaved people suffered violence and family separation, while plantation owners gained wealth from their labor.

Accept equivalent cause-and-effect explanations supported by the passage. Students should distinguish the actions of particular African rulers or traders from claims about all African people, and should identify both exploitation and wealth creation.