Across the Atlantic

Weigh the benefits and harms of the Columbian Exchange

4.C.3.2.D "Evaluate the mutual benefits and consequences of the Columbian Exchange, including agriculture, trade, military alliances, technology, slavery, and disease resulting in the significant decline of Native peoples."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two benefits and circle three harms in the passage, then write N beside the harm that caused a large decline in Native populations.

More Than Goods Crossed the Ocean

1 Imagine a ship reaching a busy port after 1492. The Columbian Exchange moved plants, animals, people, and ideas between the Americas and lands across the Atlantic Ocean. Farmers in Europe grew corn and potatoes from the Americas, adding foods to their fields. In the Americas, some Native communities raised horses brought by Europeans, which helped them travel and hunt. European settlers also grew wheat there.

2 At trading places, Native people and Europeans swapped goods, such as animal furs for metal tools. Each side gained useful items, but trade could also bring conflict over land and resources. Some Native nations made military alliances with European groups to fight shared enemies. Such alliances could give a nation weapons or support, yet they could also pull communities into longer wars. Guns brought by Europeans changed how some groups fought.

3 The exchange brought far more than useful goods. Diseases such as smallpox came from across the Atlantic. Many Native people had no past exposure to these diseases, and millions died over time, causing a huge decline in Native populations. Europeans also enslaved Native people and brought enslaved Africans to the Americas to work. This forced labor caused deep suffering. Some people gained wealth from it, while enslaved people lost their freedom.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did moving crops and animals help people on both sides of the Atlantic?

2. How could trade give Native people a useful item but also lead to trouble?

3. Why might a Native nation choose a military alliance with a European group, and what could go wrong?

4. What were two serious harms to Native people from the exchange, and who gained from one of those harms?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label about the Columbian Exchange. Explain whether its results helped everyone equally, include one benefit and two different harms from the passage, and end by explaining why visitors should learn about all three.

ANSWER KEY

Across the Atlantic

GRADE 4 · 4.C.3.2.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two benefits and circle three harms in the passage, then write N beside the harm that caused a large decline in Native populations. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did moving crops and animals help people on both sides of the Atlantic?	**People in Europe gained crops such as corn and potatoes. Some Native communities used horses brought by Europeans to travel and hunt.**
2	How could trade give Native people a useful item but also lead to trouble?	**Native people could trade furs for metal tools, but trade could also bring conflict over land and resources.**
3	Why might a Native nation choose a military alliance with a European group, and what could go wrong?	**An alliance could provide weapons or support against shared enemies, but it could also pull communities into longer wars.**
4	What were two serious harms to Native people from the exchange, and who gained from one of those harms?	**Diseases killed millions of Native people, and Europeans enslaved Native people. Some people gained wealth from forced labor.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Columbian Exchange did not help everyone equally. Corn from the Americas gave people in Europe another food to grow. Diseases brought from across the Atlantic killed many Native people, and some Native people were forced into slavery. Visitors should learn about the new foods and the terrible losses to understand the whole story.

Accept other passage-supported benefits and harms. The museum label should make a clear judgment about unequal effects and include one benefit, two distinct harms, and a reason to present them together.