Ports of Change

Trace how contact, trade, and forced labor changed the Americas

6.C.3.6 "Describe the cultural interactions between American Indian cultures and European settlers which impacted the heritage and history of major regions of the Western Hemisphere. Identify examples of cultural diffusion (e.g...."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two examples of cultural diffusion, circle one example of unequal power, and number the three regions named as destinations for enslaved Africans. Use your marks to trace how contact changed different places.

What Arrived at the Port?

1. Imagine a ship arriving in a Caribbean port in the 1500s. Its cargo shows how contact changed the Western Hemisphere. American Indians taught Europeans to grow maize and cassava, crops that later spread across the Atlantic. Europeans brought horses, wheat, and iron tools to the Americas. Horses changed travel and hunting for some American Indian nations, while diseases brought by Europeans killed many Indigenous people. Exchange did not mean equal power: colonial authorities pressured some American Indians to adopt European languages and Christianity. Indigenous people also kept and shared foods and knowledge.

2. English settlements along North America's Atlantic coast spread English and elected colonial assemblies, where some male colonists practiced self-government. In French Canada, French spread, and trade with American Indian nations shaped the fur trade. In Spanish colonies across Latin America, Spanish and Catholicism spread, often under pressure, while Indigenous foods remained part of daily life. Spain used mercantilism, a system that sent colonial wealth toward the home country. Privateers, sailors authorized by governments to attack rival ships, threatened Spanish trade routes. These competing empires left different languages, customs, and forms of government.

3. At another Atlantic port, ships unloaded people who had been kidnapped and enslaved in Africa. European empires seized Indigenous land, and plantation owners demanded labor to grow sugar in the Caribbean and Brazil and tobacco and rice in mainland North America. Atlantic trade networks carried captives across the ocean to these regions; many died on the crossing. Forced labor made plantation owners and European merchants wealthy, but it denied enslaved people freedom and separated families. Africans and their descendants kept and reshaped traditions in music, food, and language, leaving a lasting cultural heritage.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did American Indian knowledge spread beyond the Americas, and how did a European arrival change life for some American Indian nations?

2. How did English and French settlements leave different cultural marks in North America? Include a form of self-government from the passage.

3. How did Spanish rule change culture and trade in Latin America? Include the effects of mercantilism and privateers.

4. Why did Atlantic trade networks carry enslaved Africans to the Caribbean, Brazil, and mainland North America? Explain one economic effect and one cultural effect.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence imagined museum scene set at a Caribbean port. Show an exchange between American Indian and European cultures, include an enslaved African person's contribution to local culture, and explain who held power and who was denied freedom.

ANSWER KEY

Ports of Change

GRADE 6 · 6.C.3.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two examples of cultural diffusion, circle one example of unequal power, and number the three regions named as destinations for enslaved Africans. Use your marks to trace how contact changed different places. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did American Indian knowledge spread beyond the Americas, and how did a European arrival change life for some American Indian nations?	**Maize and cassava spread across the Atlantic after American Indians taught Europeans to grow them. Horses brought by Europeans changed travel and hunting for some American Indian nations.**
2	How did English and French settlements leave different cultural marks in North America? Include a form of self-government from the passage.	**English settlements spread English and elected colonial assemblies, where some male colonists practiced self-government. French Canada kept French as a language, and trade with American Indian nations shaped its fur trade.**
3	How did Spanish rule change culture and trade in Latin America? Include the effects of mercantilism and privateers.	**Spanish and Catholicism spread, while Indigenous foods remained part of daily life. Mercantilism sent colonial wealth toward Spain, and privateers threatened Spanish trade routes.**
4	Why did Atlantic trade networks carry enslaved Africans to the Caribbean, Brazil, and mainland North America? Explain one economic effect and one cultural effect.	**Plantation owners demanded labor to grow sugar, tobacco, and rice. Forced labor enriched plantation owners and European merchants. Africans and their descendants kept and reshaped traditions in music, food, and language.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a Caribbean port, an American Indian farmer showed a European settler how to grow maize. The settler offered an iron tool, but colonial officials controlled the land. An enslaved African cook combined African cooking traditions with local maize. The cook helped shape local food while colonial officials held power and the cook was denied freedom.

Accept other passage-supported examples of exchange, regional cultural change, and plantation labor's effects. For the museum scene, accept plausible imagined details if the four sentences distinguish cultural contribution from unequal power.