Changing Plains

Compare goals and consequences of early European contact

OKH.C.1.5 "Compare the goals and significance of early European interactions with Native cultures, such as the benefits of trade, the impact of disease, the transformation of Native life brought about by the arrival of the horse, and new technologies."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one goal Europeans had and circle one goal Native peoples had. Number three changes that contact brought to Native communities so you can compare their effects.

Trade, Illness, and Horses

1. In the 1500s, Spanish expeditions entered the southern Plains, including areas of present-day Oklahoma. Europeans sought wealth, routes to new markets, and opportunities to spread Christianity. Native peoples had goals of their own: protecting their communities, building alliances, and gaining useful goods through trade. A metal knife, for example, could last longer than a stone tool and make some tasks easier. Trade could benefit both sides, but the partners did not hold equal power in every encounter. Some Europeans tried to claim land or direct Native life, while Native leaders sought to make choices for their own peoples.

2. Contact also brought dangers that neither side understood at first. Europeans carried diseases such as smallpox, to which many Native communities had little previous exposure. Disease could spread through Native trade networks even before a community met Europeans face to face. Outbreaks killed many people and disrupted families, farming, and leadership. These losses could weaken a community's ability to defend its land or negotiate trade. The benefits of a new tool could not cancel the harm of an epidemic. Nor did every community experience contact in the same way or at the same time.

3. Horses, first brought to the Americas by the Spanish, spread across the Plains through trade, capture, and Native exchange. By the 1700s, some Native peoples used horses to travel farther, hunt bison more effectively, and carry goods. Horses also changed warfare and competition over grazing areas. Other European goods had different effects. Metal tools could speed up work, while firearms changed hunting and fighting but required a supply of ammunition. Native communities decided how to use these technologies, yet access was uneven. Europeans often sought trade and influence; Native peoples weighed new opportunities against new risks to their independence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did European goals differ from Native goals in early trade encounters?

2. Compare one benefit of trade with one effect of disease on Native communities.

3. How did horses change Native life differently from metal tools?

4. Why might a community value firearms but also see a risk in trading for them?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise a Native council considering a new trade relationship. Write one paragraph recommending what the council should seek or limit, comparing its goals with European goals and weighing at least two different effects of contact from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Changing Plains

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.1.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one goal Europeans had and circle one goal Native peoples had. Number three changes that contact brought to Native communities so you can compare their effects. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did European goals differ from Native goals in early trade encounters?	**Europeans sought wealth, markets, and influence, while Native peoples sought useful goods, alliances, and ways to protect their communities.**
2	Compare one benefit of trade with one effect of disease on Native communities.	**A traded metal knife could make work easier, while disease caused deaths and disrupted families, farming, and leadership.**
3	How did horses change Native life differently from metal tools?	**Horses expanded travel and changed bison hunting and warfare; metal tools made some work faster or easier.**
4	Why might a community value firearms but also see a risk in trading for them?	**Firearms changed hunting and fighting, but using them required an ongoing supply of ammunition.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would advise the council to trade for metal tools but limit how much it relies on goods that need a continuing supply, such as ammunition. Europeans may hope to gain wealth and influence, while our council's goal is to keep its power to make decisions. Metal tools could make daily work easier, and horses could help people travel and hunt. Those benefits matter, but trade cannot protect us from diseases carried through contact. The council should seek useful goods without giving up control of its land.

Accept comparisons that accurately distinguish European and Native goals and weigh benefits against risks. Students may recommend different trade choices if their reasoning uses at least two effects described in the passage.