



Unit 4 E - The encounter between Europeans and the peoples of Africa, the Americas, and Asia.
Case study: The Columbian exchange

Other Worlds - The Voyage of Columbus

Social Studies Standards 1 and 3 - World History and Geography
Key Ideas and Performance Indicators 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.2.3, 2.4.4, 3.1.4

Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

Social Studies Standards 2, 3, 4, 5 - World History, Geography, Economics, and Civics, Citizenship and Government
Key Ideas and Performance Indicators 2.1.2, 3.2.2, 4.1.1, 5.1.1

Skills:

- Analyzing and synthesizing information
- Drawing inferences and making conclusions
- Analyzing information
- Understanding the concepts of time, continuity, and change
- Interpreting graphs and other images

Historical Context:

Spain's initial interest in the New World was based on its interest in gold, but Columbus argued to the rulers of Spain that the true value of the Caribbean Islands and the American mainland would, ultimately, come from the cultivation of sugar cane and other cash crops. Because no other commercial crop paid higher returns during the Age of European Colonization, the Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, French, and English planted sugar cane in Brazil, the Caribbean islands, and coastal North and South America. Initially, Europeans looked to native peoples to supply the labor needed, but native populations either died off or escaped into the interior. Given the physical conditions of plantation work, free white men were simply unwilling to work at the cheap wage level that planters could afford to pay and still make a profit. Indentured servants were then used to supply this rigorous fieldwork, but many of them reneged on their indentures. Europeans had to find other sources of cheap labor. The planters' solution to their dilemma was to import tens of thousands of African slaves.

Activities:

Using the Historic Map of Africa and the 1625 map of Guinea, have students discuss the physical and human geography of the West Africa.

Have student examine the Benin bronze images and discuss what each artifact tells us about:
the power of the Oba and other chief
the commercial ties Benin had with its northern neighbors and others
Benin's cultural contributions to world history

Have students analyze *The Life of Olaudah Equiano (c. 1745 – c. 1797)* and discuss what life was like in West Africa prior to the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Have students analyze and discuss [Slave Exports from Africa During the Atlantic Slave Trade Chart](#), the short term and long term impact of the trans-Atlantic slave trade on Africa. What was the demographic impact on Africa? How did the introduction of foods from the Americas and Asia raise the standard of living in Africa.

Have students develop graphic organizers that depict West African economic, political, and social life during the 1600s with a life in a West African nation today.