Lesson title: The Columbian Exchange

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School: L.A. Ainger Middle School

Unit title: Latin America

Subject: Geography

Suggested Grade or Level: 7

Length of Lesson:

It is intended that this lesson will take one 45-minute class period.

Introduction/Abstract:

This lesson is intended to be part the Unit on Latin America. The goal is to look at the context of both the Old and New Worlds, and the positive and negative benefits that resulted from their interaction as a result of the Columbian Exchange. Students will accomplish this by reading an introductory story of the potato from the textbook, then breaking students into groups of 3 and reviewing primary source documents for clues to answer questions on the Answer Sheet. The last 5 minutes of class will be spent discussing what they had learned.

Background:

The Columbian Exchange, sometimes known as the Great Exchange, is a term used to denote the massive exchange of agricultural goods, slave labor, communicable diseases, and ideas between the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, which occurred after the year 1492CE. It started when Europeans discovered the Americas so they decided to trade their goods for the natural resources of the Native Americans. The Columbian Exchange began in 1492.

As a result of Columbus's voyages to the New World, a biological pipeline between America and Europe opened up that had been apart since before humans appeared on earth. The lands had drifted apart that had once been connected. Some species of plants and animals flourished in both areas, and some did not. There were many new animals and plants in the Americas that Europeans had never seen. And, Europeans brought plants and animals to the New World that America had never seen.
Objectives:

Students will examine and discuss primary source documents of the Columbian Exchange, as well as prior knowledge of the Columbian Exchange to demonstrate learning of key concepts.

Standards:

Time, Continuity, and Change [History]
Social Studies Standard 1: The student understands historical chronology and the historical perspective. (SS.A. 1.3)
Benchmark 2: knows the relative value of primary and secondary sources and uses this information to draw conclusions from historical sources such as data in charts, tables, graphs.

Time, Continuity, and Change [History]
Social Studies Standard 1: The student understands the world from its beginnings to the time of the Renaissance. (SS.A.2.3)
Benchmark 1: understands how language, ideas, and institutions of one culture can influence other cultures (e.g., through trade, exploration, and immigration).

Benchmark 4: understands the impact of geographical factors on the historical development of civilization.

In Class Student Activities:

Instructions:

1. Teacher will ask students as a class: “What was the Columbia Exchange?” (1-2 min)
2. Historical Context: Teacher will show Map 1, and then Map 2 transparencies on overhead. Teacher will ask students: “How did Europeans view the world before 1492?” (3 min)
3. Students will read pg. 228 of textbook* (5 min).
4. Teacher will hand out an Assessment Sheet to each student. Students will answer questions 1-4 as a class after the reading. (5 min)
5. Teacher will show transparencies of Exchange 1, then Exchange 2 on overhead. Teacher will ask students to individually answer, “Who and what was being traded?” (2 min)
6. Students will break into small groups of 3.
7. Teacher will give each group a copy of Packet 1 (see below for links). Students will use the documents to answer questions 5 and 6 on their Assessment Sheets. (10 min)
8. Teacher will collect Packet 1 from small groups, then give the student groups a copy of Packet 2 (see attachments). Students will review and answer question 7 on their Assessment Sheets. (15 min)

9. Students will come back together as a class and review the answers to the questions on their Assessment Sheets. (5 min)

**Extended Enrichment Activities:**

1. Students write a 2-paragraph diary entry as an Indian living in the New World in 1500CE.

**Materials List:**

Overhead Projector
(Pre-made) transparencies (see below)
Internet access
5 copies each of Packet Set 1 and Packet Set 2

**Preparation:**

Make 1 transparency each of Exchange 1
(Pre-made) transparencies (see below)
Internet access
5 copies each of Packet Set 1 and Packet Set 2

**Packet Set 1:**

Packet 1a: (http://mrthompson.org/text/2-3%20The%20Impact%20of%20Colonization_files/image019.jpg)

Packet 1b: (http://faculty.smu.edu/rKemper/cf_3333/columbian_exchange.JPG)

Packet 1c:
(http://www.lsc.edu/elmartin/courses/worldhistorysince1500/studyguides/world%20map%201.jpg)

**Packet Set 2** (Packets 2a-2c): See attachments.

Be prepared to break students up into groups of 3.
Evaluation /Assessment:

Number of correct responses on student Answer Sheet. (See attachments)
1. What was the Columbian Exchange?

2. When was the Columbian Exchange?

3. How did the Columbian Exchange start?

4. The Columbian Exchange was named after?

5. Who benefited from the Columbian Exchange? How?
6. What food and animals were traded in the Columbian Exchange?

7. What effect did the Columbian Exchange have on the Indians?
Huamán Poma, a Peruvian Native American, was angry about the abuse the Spanish heaped upon Native Americans. He wrote to King Philip III of Spain to complain about the bad treatment.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

It is their [the Spanish] practice to collect Indians into groups and send them to forced labor without wages, while they themselves receive the payment for the work. . . . The royal administrators and the other Spaniards lord it over the Indians with absolute power.

Huamán Poma, Letter to a King

A Spanish priest forces a Native American Woman to work at a loom.

In his letter, Poma asked the king to help the Native Americans and uphold the rule of law in Peru. Regardless, the Spanish colonists continued to mistreat Native Americans as the Spaniards expanded their empire in the Americas. In time, colonists from Spain and other European nations would import millions of Africans to the Americas and enslave them as well. For the members of these subjected groups, American colonization was devastating.
Bartolome de Las Casas, a Catholic priest, fought against the abuse of Native Americans, earning the title “Protector of the Indians.” Due largely to his efforts, Spanish authorities passed laws providing greater protection for Native Americans. Most colonists, however, ignored the laws.

Bartolome de las Casas

*A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*  
[1542]  
[PREFACE]

The Americas were discovered in 1492, and the first Christian settlements established by the Spanish the following year. It is accordingly forty-nine years now since Spaniards began arriving in numbers in this part of the world.

God made all the peoples of this area, many and varied as they are, as open and as innocent as can be imagined. They are utterly faithful and obedient both to their own native lords and to the Spaniards in whose service they now find themselves.

… the very first day they clapped eyes on them, the Spanish fell like ravening wolves upon the fold, or like tigers and savage lions that have not eaten meat for days.

When the Spanish first journeyed there, the indigenous population of the island of Hispaniola stood at some three million; today only two hundred survive.

The island of Cuba is now to all intents and purposes uninhabited;” Puerto Rico and Jamaica, have been similarly devastated. Not a living soul remains today on any of the islands of the Bahamas.

A further thirty or so islands in the region of Puerto Rico are also now uninhabited. All these islands… are now abandoned and desolate.
Although exact numbers are unknown, historians estimate that diseases brought by Europeans killed more than 20 million Native Americans in Mexico in the first century after conquest. Many scholars agree that the population of Native Americans in Central America decreased by 90 to 95 percent between the years 1519 and 1619. The result was similar in Peru and other parts of the Americas. A Spanish missionary in Mexico described the effects of smallpox on the Aztecs.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

There was a great havoc. Very many died of it. They could not walk. . . . They could not move; they could not stir; they could not change position, nor lie on one side; nor face down, nor on their backs. And if they stirred, much did they cry out. Great was its destruction.

Bernardino de Sahagún, quoted in Seeds of Change
Assessment Answers

1. **What was the Columbian Exchange?**

The Columbian Exchange, sometimes known as the Great Exchange, is a term used to denote the massive exchange of agricultural goods, slave labor, communicable diseases, and ideas between the Eastern and Western Hemispheres which occurred after the year 1492CE.

2. **When was the Columbian Exchange?**

The Columbian Exchange was in 1492.

3. **How did the Columbian Exchange start?**

It started when Europeans discovered the Americas so they decided to trade their goods for the natural resources of the Native Americans.

4. **The Columbian Exchange was named after?**

Christopher Columbus

5. **Who benefited from the Colombian Exchange?**

As a result of Columbus's voyages to the New World, a biological pipeline between America and Europe opened up that had been apart since before humans appeared on earth. The lands had drifted apart that had once been connected. Some species of plants and animals flourished in both areas, and some did not. There were many new animals and plants in the Americas that Europeans had never seen. And, Europeans brought plants and animals to the New World that America had never seen.

The Colombian Exchange was also a cultural exchange. New agricultural developments were traded; economic activity and opportunities opened up between the New and Old Worlds, and new ideas were exchanged.

6. **What food and animals were traded in the Columbian Exchange?**

In the New World, Europeans encountered indigenous plant foods, often cultivated by Native Americans, such as potatoes, beans, **squash**, and **maize** (corn), probably the world's most important **cereal** crop. These plants carried back to Europe so **enriched** nutrition in the Old World that they **stimulated** major population explosions. To America, Europeans introduced crops like wheat, rice, bananas, sugar, and wine grapes, many serving as cash crops for export by the colonists. Europeans also brought a number of domesticated animals to the New World, including horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, and **fowl**, producing mixed results for the Indians since the animals destroyed their croplands but also served as valuable sources of food, clothing, and energy.
7. What effect did the Columbian Exchange have on the Indians?

This includes viruses and other biological organisms. The new animals brought to America upset the ecology of the area. The people living in the Americas did not have resistance to many of the "germs" brought by the Europeans. Biologically, the Indians had not been exposed to measles, smallpox, whooping cough, chicken pox, and influenza. The effect of these diseases on the Americans was catastrophic. Bacteria and viruses killed more Native Americans than did Spanish swords.

Also at that time, many Europeans killed or enslaved Indians thinking they were beasts.