

Exploration & Discovery of the Americas

Summer Packet

Overview

When the British staked their claim to the east coast of the modern United States, they could not have dreamed of the complexity of the people they were soon to encounter. There are between 140 and 160 different American Indian tribes and no single Native American language. It would be as difficult for a Mohawk of the East to converse with a Navajo of the West as it would be for an English woman to converse with someone from Japan.

Before Europeans arrived in North America, Indigenous people inhabited every region. Native Americans turned wild plants such as corn, potatoes, pumpkin, yams, and lima beans into farm crops for human consumption. More than half of modern American farm products were grown by American Indians before European colonization.

Norse sailors (often called Vikings) from Iceland first settled Greenland in the 980s. Leif Erikson established a settlement on the northern tip of Newfoundland in modern-day Canada. However, the Viking voyages did not become common knowledge in the Old World, and Europeans remained unaware of the existence of the Americas for almost 500 years.

It was Christopher Columbus' 1492 expedition to the "New World" that increased European exploration of the Americas. The Italian explorer John Cabot's 1497 voyage on behalf of English investors resulted in the first English claim to North America. However, it would be over 100 years before the first European permanent settlements were made in North America.

Essential Questions

- What were the characteristics and differences among American Indian groups such as the Eastern Woodland, Northwest, Plains, and Southwest?
- How did American Indians use the resources in their environment?
- How did European explorers respond to the language, clothing, customs, dwellings, and food of the Native American people they encountered?
- How did Native Americans respond to the language, clothing, and customs of the explorers?
- What are some of the difficulties in trying to understand someone from a different culture?
- Why was it difficult for European explorers of the 15th and 16th centuries to understand the diversity of the indigenous people of the Americas?
- How do historians and archaeologists know what the explorers experienced? How do they know what the Native American peoples experienced?



Concepts to Know:

- a. Characteristics and cultural differences among different American Indian groups (Eastern Woodlands, Plains, Northwest, Southwest)
- b. Who Christopher Columbus was, what was the significance of his journey, and how it affected both Europe and the Americas
- c. Major European explorers, where they came from, and their contributions to the discovery of the New World
- d. Positive and negative effects of the Columbian Exchange
- e. Be able to explain the Triangle Trade and what is traded between the different points
- f. Be able to describe the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the horrors of the Middle Passage on captured Africans

Vocabulary

Directions: Write a definition in your own words for each vocabulary term.

Old World	
New World	
Iroquois Confederacy	
Conquistador	
Mercantilism	
Columbian Exchange	
Triangular Trade	
Middle Passage	

Geography of American Indian Groups

Directions: Use the map of American Indian groups below to answer each of the questions.

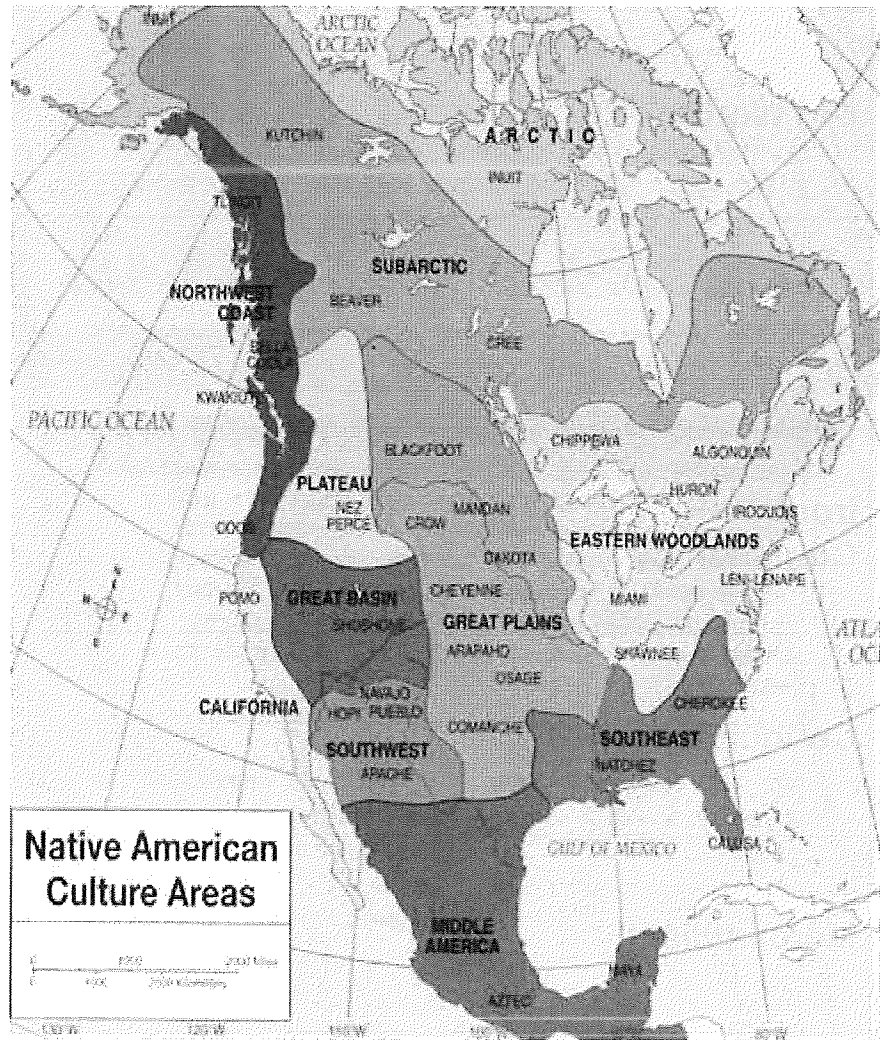
How many American Indian groups/cultures were there in North America prior to the arrival of Europeans?

Why did many of the first conflicts between Europeans and American Indian groups begin?

Identify 3 tribes that belong to the Eastern Woodlands.

Identify 3 tribes that belong to the Great Plains region.

Research one other American Indian group and describe its culture below:



People to Know

Directions: Use the internet to identify key information for each explorer. For each person, identify the significant contributions that person made to American History.

Vasco da Gama

Christopher Columbus

Ferdinand Magellan

Hernan Cortes

Jacques Cartier

Prince Henry the Navigator

Francisco Pizarro

John Cabot

Juan Ponce de Leon

European Explorers	Name: From: Sailed For: Contributions:	Name: From: Sailed For: Contributions:	Name: From: Sailed For: Contributions:
	Name: From: Sailed For: Contributions:	Name: From: Sailed For: Contributions:	Name: From: Sailed For: Contributions:
	Name: From: Sailed For: Contributions:	Name: From: Sailed For: Contributions:	Name: From: Sailed For: Contributions:

Key Concepts

Directions: For each section, answer the questions in complete sentences.

Bartolomé de Las Casas was a Spanish settler in the Americas and later a missionary. He was the first European to expose the mistreatment of and atrocities committed against the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

“One time the Indians came to meet us and receive us with food and good cheer! Instead, the devil, which had put himself in the Spaniards, put them all to the edge of the sword in my presence, without any cause whatsoever, more than three thousand souls. I saw there such great cruelties, that never any man living either have or shall see the like.”

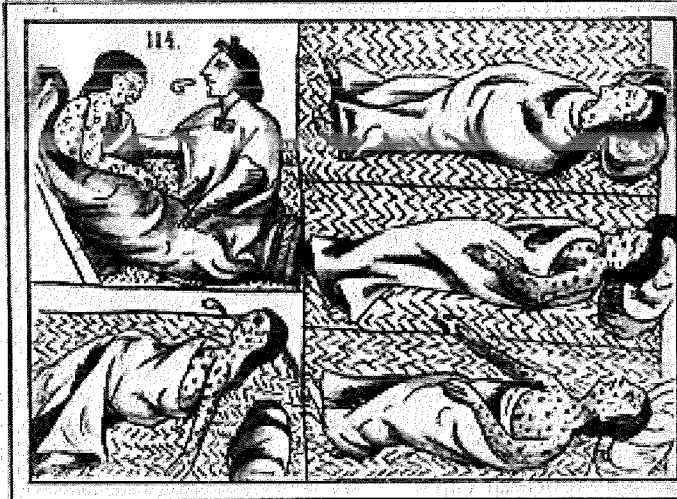
- Bartolomé de las Casas, 1542

How would you characterize the actions of the Spanish conquistadors?

Why do you think de Las Casas wrote about these experiences?

Visual Literacy

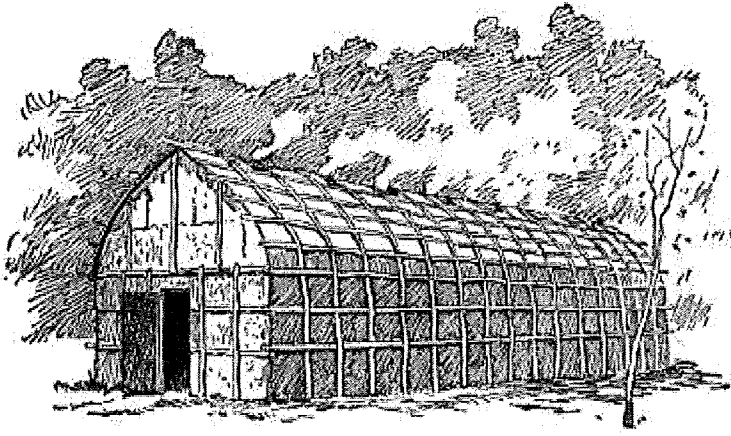
Directions: Use the included images and captions to answer each of the questions.



Sixteenth-century Aztec drawings of victims of smallpox.

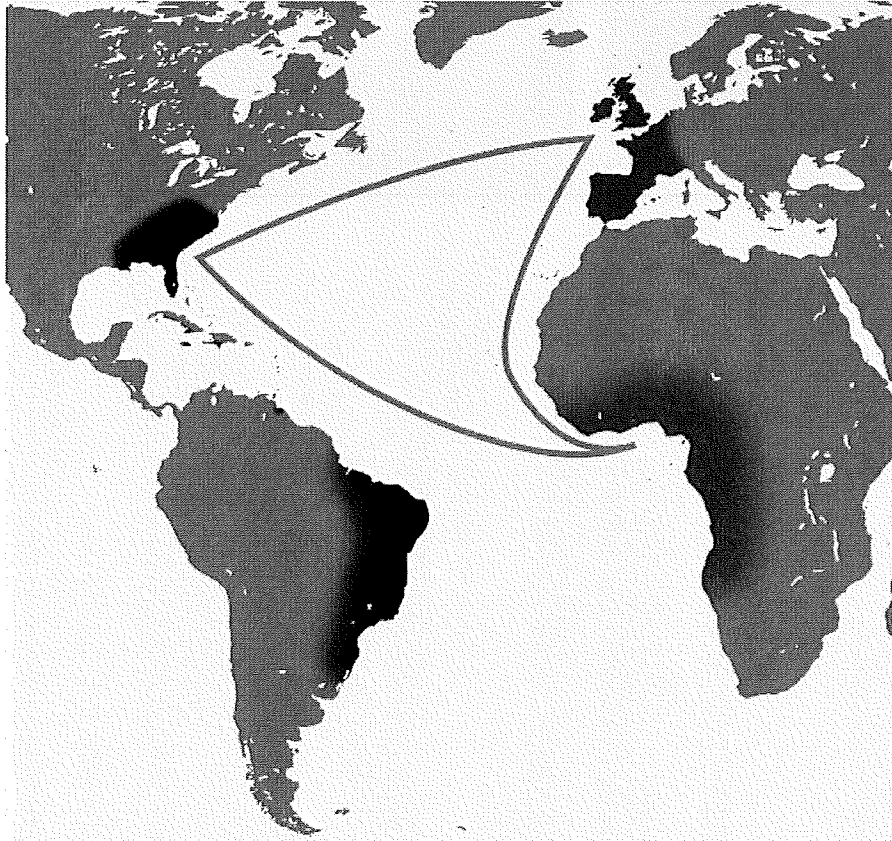
What effect did smallpox have on the indigenous people of the Americas?

Why do you think Europeans were not as affected as the indigenous population?



Most Iroquois lived in longhouses. These had doors on both ends and were covered with animal skins to keep the cold out. Each Iroquois longhouse was designed so as many as 20 families or could live in it.

What purpose did the longhouse serve?

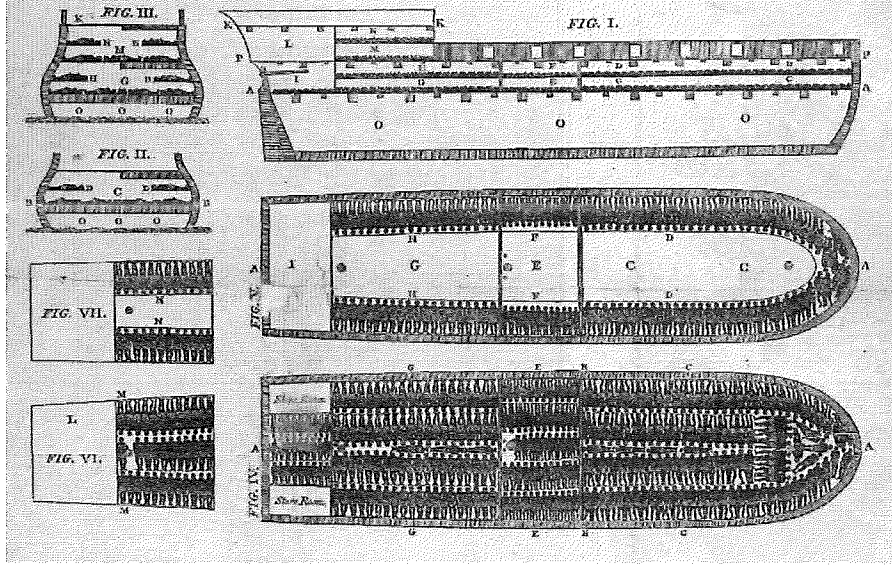


Map of the Triangle Trade

Describe each part of the Triangle Trade

1. What did the American colonies send to Europe?
2. What did Europe send to other European countries and Africa?
3. What did Africa send to the colonies?
4. Under mercantilism, what was the primary way to gain power?

DESCRIPTION OF A SLAVE SHIP.



This diagram of a slave ship known as Brookes shows how enslaved Africans were transported to the Caribbean. The ship carried over 600 enslaved men, women, and children for the months' long voyage.

In what way does this diagram show the inhumanity of the slave trade?

Primary Source Analysis

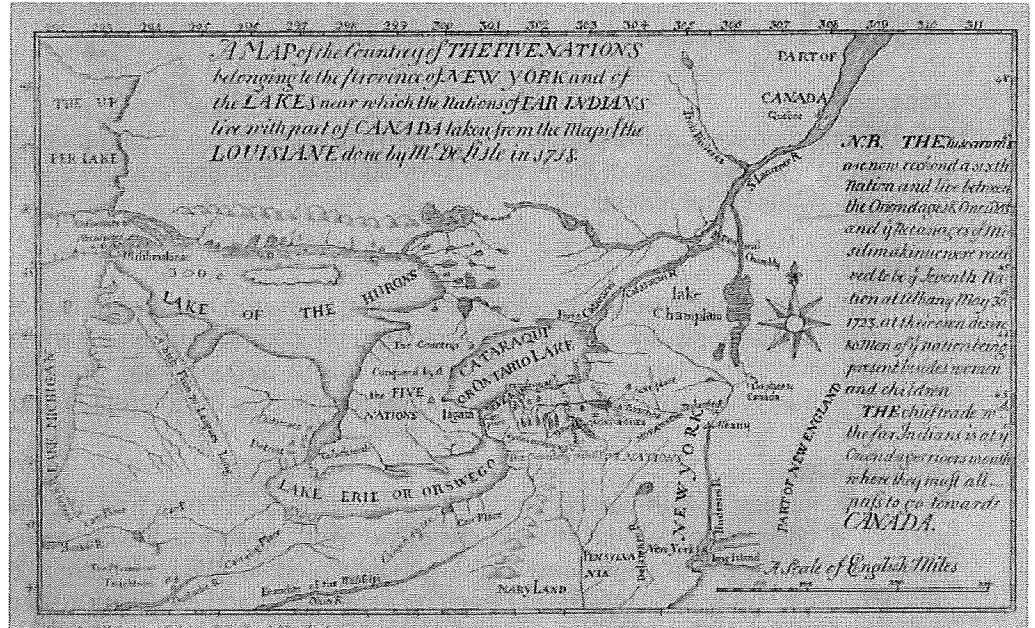
The Great Law of Peace

The Iroquois Confederacy was a union of the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk tribes. All were Iroquoian-speaking tribes in the Eastern Woodlands region of North America. They are also known as the Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse) or the 5 Nations, until the Tuscarora people joined in 1722. They then became known as the Six Nations.

According to Iroquois legend, around the year 1500, a Mohawk named Dekanawida convinced the nations to unite to establish peace and to protect "life, property, and liberty." Dekanawidah, (also known as the Great Peacemaker) and his spokesman Hiawatha created a constitution known as the Great Law of Peace.

Their Great Law of Peace was not written, however. It was only shared orally and through strings of wampum shell beads. Therefore, the exact date of its origination is unknown. Some scholars agree to a date of 1451. However, Seneca's oral history mentions that the constitution was adopted shortly after a total eclipse of the sun. Scholarship indicates that such an eclipse occurred on August 13, 1142.

Either date makes the Great Law of Peace the oldest living constitution. It still governs the Iroquois today and gives member peoples equal voice in the nations' affairs.



The Great Law of Peace includes 117 laws and customs governing all aspects of life. An excerpt from the constitution is included below.

Tree of Great Peace

1. I am Dekanawida and with the Five Nations' Confederate Lords I plant the Tree of the Great Peace. I plant it in your territory, Tadodaho*, and the Onondaga Nation, in the territory of you who are Firekeepers.

I name the tree the Tree of the Great Long Leaves. Under the shade of this Tree of the Great Peace we spread the soft white feathery down of the globe thistle as seats for you, Tadodaho, and your cousin Lords.

We place you upon those seats, spread soft with the feathery down of the globe thistle, there beneath the shade of the spreading branches of the Tree of Peace. There shall you sit and watch the Council Fire of the Confederacy of the Five Nations, and all the affairs of the Five Nations shall be transacted at this place before you, Tadodaho, and your cousin Lords, by the Confederate Lords of the Five Nations.

2. Roots have spread out from the Tree of the Great Peace, one to the north, one to the east, one to the south, and one to the west. The name of these roots is The Great White Roots and their nature is Peace and Strength.

If any man or any nation outside the Five Nations shall obey the laws of the Great Peace and make known their disposition to the Lords of the Confederacy, they may trace the Roots to the Tree and if their minds are clean and they are obedient and promise to obey the wishes of the Confederate Council, they shall be welcomed to take shelter beneath the Tree of the Long Leaves.

We place at the top of the Tree of the Long Leaves an Eagle who is able to see afar. If he sees in the distance any evil approaching or any danger threatening, he will at once warn the people of the Confederacy.

Leaders

26. The Lords of the Confederacy of the Five Nations shall be mentors of the people for all time. The thickness of their skin shall be seven spans—which is to say that they shall be proof against anger, offensive actions, and criticism. Their hearts shall be full of peace and goodwill and their minds filled with a yearning for the welfare of the people of the Confederacy. With endless patience they shall carry out their duty and their firmness shall be tempered with a tenderness for their people. Neither anger nor fury shall find lodgment in their minds and all their words and actions shall be marked by calm deliberation.

29. All Lords of the Five Nations Confederacy must be honest in all things. They must not idle or gossip, but be men possessing those honorable qualities that make true royaneh (noble). It shall be a serious wrong for anyone to lead a Lord into trivial affairs, for the people must ever hold their Lords high in estimation out of respect to their honorable positions.

Clans

46. The lineal descent of the people of the Five Nations shall run in the female line. Women shall be considered the progenitors of the Nation. They shall own the land and the soil. Men and women shall follow the status of the mother.

Symbols

59. Five arrows shall be bound together very strong and each arrow shall represent one nation. As the five arrows are strongly bound this shall symbolize the complete union of the nations. Thus, are the Five Nations united completely and enfolded together, united into one head, one body, and one mind. Therefore, they shall labor, legislate, and council together for the interest of future generations.

War and Peace

67. I, Dekanawida, and the Union Lords, now uproot the tallest pine tree and into the cavity thereby made we cast all weapons of war. Into the depths of the earth, down into the deep underearth currents of water flowing to unknown regions we cast all the weapons of strife. We bury them from sight, and we plant again the tree. Thus, shall the Great Peace be established and hostilities shall no longer be known between the Five Nations but peace to the United People.

Rights of the People

95. Whenever a specially important matter or a great emergency is presented before the Confederate Council and the nature of the matter affects the entire body of the Five Nations, threatening their utter ruin, then the Lords of the Confederacy must submit the matter to the decision of their people and the decision of the people shall affect the decision of the Confederate Council. This decision shall be a confirmation of the voice of the people.

The Great Law of Peace

Directions: After reading the excerpt, answer the questions in complete sentences.

1. What was the Great Tree of Peace and what did it symbolize?
2. What was the purpose of the Great Law of Peace?
3. What characteristics did the Iroquois look for in their leaders?
4. How would you describe the status of women in the Iroquois Confederacy?
5. What was the symbolism of the Five arrows?
6. Why did Dekanawida uproot the tallest pine tree?
7. In what way was the Great Law of Peace democratic?

