

ACTIVITY 20.1

Trading in the Old World–New World Market**INTRODUCTION**

Voluntary trade usually makes both buyers and sellers better off. But trade is based on the benefits buyers and sellers expect to receive. Occasionally, people regret trades that they have made because their expectations were not realized. For example, people use the word “lemon” to describe an automobile that needs frequent repairs and does not perform as well as the buyer thought it would. If a buyer knew an automobile was a “lemon” she or he would not buy it, but people sometimes make trades with incomplete information. This is why **voluntary exchange** is defined as trading goods and services with other people because both parties *expect* to benefit from the trade. This activity will teach students that some trades make people better off while other trades make people worse off because they have incomplete information.

In this activity, students trade New World food cards and Old World food cards. Each of the New World food cards has a number in the lower right-hand corner (1 through 16). The main ingredients of New World foods were available only in the New World, or Western Hemisphere, prior to the Columbian Exchange. Each of the Old World food cards has a letter (A through P) in the lower right-hand corner. The primary ingredients of Old World foods were available only in the Old World, or Eastern Hemisphere, prior to the Columbian Exchange. Recipes for some foods (for example, baby-back ribs and eggplant parmesan) have multiple ingredients, some of which may have originated in the New World or the Old World. The classification of foods is based on the primary ingredient; for example, baby-back ribs are considered an Old World food because the primary ingredient, pork, is an Old World food.

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1 — Half of the students will be New World consumers and the other half will be Old World consumers. Make enough copies of the cards so that each New World consumer receives two New World food cards and each Old World consumer receives two Old World food cards. You may choose to give some consumers two of the same card (for example, a New World consumer may be given two “Chocolate Syrup” cards).

Step 2 — On the backs of half of the Old World cards, write the letter X (big enough to be seen, but small enough not to attract attention). Leave the backs of the other Old World cards blank. Divide students into New World and Old World consumers and distribute the food cards.

Step 3 — Allow students five minutes to trade their food cards within their own groups, New World or Old World. Tell students that they may choose not to trade if they prefer the food cards they were given to the cards other students have. After trading ends, ask students to report orally or by a show of hands whether they considered themselves better off as a result of their trades. Record the results.

Step 4 — Conduct a second round of trading, allowing students to trade with all other students. After a second five-minute round, announce that some New World consumers have been exposed to diseases for which they have no immunity. To determine which consumers are affected, tell the students to look on the backs of their cards. Students who have an X on the back of one or more of their cards have been exposed to a disease. Old World consumers have been exposed to this disease previously and have developed immunity. New World consumers have no immunity; they become very ill and perish. Ask students whether they consider themselves better off as a result of their trades, including the New World consumers who have “perished.” Record these results and compare them to results from the first round.

ACTIVITY 20.1, CONTINUED

New World Food Card

<p>Pumpkin Pie</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Peanuts</p> <p>2</p>
<p>Nachos</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Potato Chips</p> <p>4</p>
<p>Pizza</p> <p>5</p>	<p>French Fries</p> <p>6</p>
<p>Pineapple</p> <p>7</p>	<p>Chocolate Syrup</p> <p>8</p>

ACTIVITY 20.1, CONTINUED

New World Food Cards

Strawberries 9	Beans 10
Corn Flakes 11	Potato Skins 12
Potato Pancakes 13	Tapioca Pudding 14
Lima Beans 15	Chocolate Bar 16

ACTIVITY 20.1, CONTINUED

Old World Food Cards

<p>Hamburger</p> <p>A</p>	<p>Pulled Pork Sandwich</p> <p>B</p>
<p>Milk Shake</p> <p>C</p>	<p>Baby-Back Ribs</p> <p>D</p>
<p>Cheese</p> <p>E</p>	<p>Eggplant Parmesan</p> <p>F</p>
<p>Rice</p> <p>G</p>	<p>Ice Cream</p> <p>H</p>

ACTIVITY 20.1, CONTINUED

Old World Food Cards

Sugar I	Chicken Quesadilla J
Roast Beef Sandwich K	Chicken Wings L
Banana Split M	Bacon N
Cream O	Eggs P

ACTIVITY 20.2

The Columbian Exchange: Positive and Negative Impacts

Before 1492 C.E., the New World was cut off from the rest of the world. The voyages of Christopher Columbus and other explorers introduced new animals, plants, and institutions to the New World. The Old World received other plants and animals from the New World. Many of these exchanges had positive impacts, but the impact of some exchanges was negative.

POSITIVE IMPACTS

From New World to Old World: **corn/maize**

Corn, or maize, is one of the most important foods the Old World received from the New World. Alfred Crosby wrote, “If maize were the only gift the American Indian ever presented to the world, he would deserve undying gratitude, for it has become one of the most important of all foods for men and their livestock.”¹ Corn can be grown on land that can’t easily grow rice or wheat. It has become an important food in Europe, Egypt, India, China, and other countries.



From Old World to New World: **cows, oxen, horses, donkeys, pigs, sheep**

Cattle were brought to Mexico in 1521. They became an important source of food and can pull and lift heavy loads. Horses allowed hunters to travel great distances and increased the area over which natives could search for food. Donkeys were important pack animals. Pigs and sheep were used for food and clothing.



From Old World to New World: **sugar cane**

The Spanish brought sugar to Mexico and Peru in the 16th century. It was soon grown in the Caribbean islands and other South American countries.



From Old World to New World: **bananas**

Bananas were first grown in Southeast Asia and brought to the Caribbean islands (Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, and other islands) in 1516. The climate of the islands allowed banana trees to grow rapidly.



From New World to Old World: **potatoes**

At first, “Europeans looked upon the potato with fear and contempt.”² But the climate and soil of northern Europe were well-suited to growing potatoes. Potatoes have become an important source of nutrition for many countries.



From New World to Old World: **other foods**, including beans (lima, butter, kidney, and many others), peanuts, sweet potatoes, manioc (cassava or tapioca), squashes, pumpkins, papaya, guava, avocado, pineapple, tomatoes, chili peppers, strawberries, and cocoa beans

¹ Crosby, Alfred W., Jr. 1972. *The Columbian Exchange. Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, p. 171.

² *The Columbian Exchange*, p. 182.

ACTIVITY 20.2, CONTINUED



From Old World to New World: **other foods**, including wheat, coffee, beans, rice, and lettuce

NEGATIVE IMPACTS

From Old World to New World: **diseases that devastate humans**

Because they were separated from the rest of the world, Native Americans had no prior contact with smallpox and other deadly diseases. This made the diseases more dangerous than they were for Europeans. Between 1500 and 1650, large numbers of Native Americans died from measles, smallpox, influenza, and other diseases.³



From Old World to New World: **diseases that devastate animals**

European animals brought diseases with them that attacked llamas and alpacas.



From Old World to New World: **rat infestation**

Rats hitched rides on ships carrying English settlers in the 17th century. The rats infested the Bermuda islands and “set off one of the most spectacular . . . disasters of the age. . . . The rats spread to all the islands . . . and nearly ate the colonists out of house and home.”⁴



From New World to Old World: **sand fleas**

Sand fleas, or chiggers, are insects that penetrate human skin. When they deposit eggs under the skin, they can cause dangerous infections.



From Old World to New World: **exploitation of workers and slavery**

Many explorers wanted to find gold and silver in the New World. They used any means available to them to bring these riches back to Europe. The loss of life from war and disease created a shortage of labor. Europeans turned to Africa to fill their needs for workers. Between 8 and 10.5 million slaves were forced to produce tobacco, rice, coffee, and sugar.⁵

Native Americans were employed through slavery and the Spanish system of “encomienda,” which granted a person responsibility for a certain number of natives. Those who received the grant had to protect the natives and provide instruction in the Spanish language and the Catholic faith. Natives were forced to provide tribute in the form labor, gold, or other products.⁶

³ For an example of how Native Americans in Florida may have been affected, see Mintz, S. 2007. “European Discovery of the New World.” *Digital History*. Retrieved July 29, 2011 from <http://www.digital-history.uh.edu> (<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/us1.cfm>).

⁴ *The Columbian Exchange*, p. 97.

⁵ *The Columbian Exchange*, p. 213.

⁶ Rodriguez, J.P. *Encyclopedia of Slave Resistance*, Vol. 1. 2007. Westport CT: Greenwood Press, p.184.

ACTIVITY 20.3

The Rise and Fall of Tenochtitlan¹**THE AZTEC EMPIRE AND THE RISE OF TENOCHTITLAN**

Mexico City was once called Tenochtitlan.² It was the capital of the empire of the Aztec people. In 1492, Tenochtitlan had a population of about 250,000. The city was on an island in Lake Texcoco. Canals and causeways³ moved goods and people. Dikes controlled flood waters and aqueducts carried water to the city. The waterways also provided protection from attackers.

The Aztecs did not have iron tools, wheels or work animals to help grow food and make clothing and other goods. They increased their standard of living through specialization and trade. A worker would grow one crop, make one type of good, or provide one service. He would then trade some of what he produced for goods that others produced. Spanish explorers found a central market located near Tenochtitlan that was visited by 60,000 people a day. The market had separate trading areas for building materials, clothing, jewelry, and other goods.

The Aztecs developed a legal system that protected property rights. People were allowed to own and sell property. There were rules against dishonest trade. It was illegal to trade stolen goods. Judges settled disputes between traders. A large population made large-scale trade possible. The legal institutions allowed trade to grow.

However, the Aztec government also imposed heavy taxes on its subjects. In addition to paying taxes, people were required to provide the government with goods and labor services. Governments of tribes conquered by the Aztecs were also required to pay steep taxes. When Hernán Cortés, a Spanish conquistador,⁴ led an expedition to conquer the Aztec empire in 1521, some of these tribes fought alongside Cortés. Exposure to diseases, such as smallpox, brought to the New World by the Spanish, caused sickness and death among the Aztecs. The Spanish had horses and steel weapons; the Aztecs did not. These factors helped Cortés to conquer the Aztecs.

¹ The information in this activity was taken from the following two sources: Daron Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. "Understanding Poverty: Geography, Institutions and the Reversal of Fortune," <http://team.univ-paris1.fr/teamperso/sponcet/SciencesPo/AJRreversal.pdf>. Grennes, Thomas. "The Columbian Exchange and the Reversal of Fortune." *Cato Journal*, Vol. 27 No. 1 (Winter 2007).

² Tenochtitlan is pronounced "Tay-nōch-teet'-lan."

³ A causeway is a road built above a body of water.

⁴ Conquistador means "conqueror" in the Spanish language. This word refers to Spanish soldiers and explorers who conquered large parts of the New World for Spain between the 15th and 19th centuries following the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus in 1492.

ACTIVITY 20.3, CONTINUED**THE FALL OF TENOCHTITLAN**

The Spanish conquistadores destroyed Tenochtitlan and filled in the lakes surrounding the city. Tenochtitlan was rebuilt and renamed Mexico City. Mexico City became a center of the Spanish colonial empire.

The conquistadores required all trade with Spanish settlements in the New World to pass through Seville. Seville is a city located in Spain, far from Mexico. The government gave control over foreign trade to the Mexico City merchant guild. The guild was a small number of people who benefited from their ties with the Spanish government. The guild favored workers born in Spain over workers born in Mexico. The Spanish allowed land to be owned by a small number of people. The landowners became wealthy by forcing workers to toil long hours for low wages. Limits were placed on the rights of Mexicans to own their own businesses.

In some colonies, Europeans created governments similar to the government of Mexico. They did not protect the property rights of citizens. These colonies were often located in areas where few Europeans settled. In these colonies, natives were forced to work for low wages. The natives had to pay taxes to the government of the home country.

In other colonies, different governments were established. There were many settlers from Europe, and their governments protected private property. These colonies included Canada and the United States. Over time, the standard of living of people in these colonies surpassed the standard of living of people in Mexico.

In addition to resources and goods, the Columbian Exchange led to an exchange of legal institutions between the Old World and New World. This exchange had an important impact on the future standard of living in the New World.