

Transatlantic Trade

Questions 1–3 refer to the following excerpt.

“Although these people have not the use of navigation, whereby they may traffic as other nations, that are civilized, use to do, yet do they barter for such commodities as they have, and have a kind of beads instead of money, to buy withal such things as they want, which they call Wampampeak; and it is of two sorts, the one is white, the other is of a violet color. These are made of the shells of fish. The white with them is as silver with us; the other as our gold; and for these beads they buy and sell, not only amongst themselves, but even with us. We have used to sell any of our commodities for this Wampampeak, because we know we can have beaver again of them for it: and these beads are current in all the parts of New England, from one end of the coast to the other.”

Thomas Morton, *Manners and Customs of the Indians of New England*, 1637

- Which of the following contributed most directly to the increased trade between European settlers and Native Americans described in the excerpt?
 - Conflicts between settlers and European stock companies over the forgiveness of debt
 - The introduction of chattel slavery in the Americas using enslaved people from Africa
 - Concerns among Native American communities that indigenous products could not fill their needs
 - The increasing attempts to acquire commodities in the Americas that could be sold in Europe
- The trade pattern described in the excerpt most immediately led to
 - European settlers strengthening their relationships with Native Americans through intermarriage
 - a widespread call to adopt a standardized currency for trade with Native Americans
 - significant and sometimes permanent changes to the economic networks used by Native Americans
 - colonial assemblies developing laws around usury to uphold Puritan values
- Increased contact between Native Americans and European settlers in the excerpt most directly contributed to which of the following later aspects of Native American communities?
 - The widespread demographic loss caused by epidemic diseases
 - The practice of regional trade bartering by Native American communities
 - The establishment of plantation agriculture and the use of forced labor
 - The enforcement of treaty rights to protect Native American land

WORKSHEET**1. Based on this description, how would you characterize the trade between Europeans and Native American communities?**

Based on the description, the trade between Europeans and Native Americans was unequal. In the passage, Thomas Morton notes various ways that the Europeans tried to take advantage of the Native Americans, such as by making counterfeit wampum beads. Morton also demonstrates a clear tendency to be both dismissive and judgmental of the lifestyle of Native Americans.

2. How is the description of trade influenced by the author's point of view?

The author's point of view clearly influences the way that he understands the trade relationship because he is approaching the experience from one that is rooted in the idea that he needs to "civilize" the Native Americans. Since he has adopted this approach, he is not approaching the Native Americans as equal trade partners.

3. How could this description serve as a piece of evidence supporting an argument about the causes and effects of transatlantic trade over time?

This description could be used as a piece of evidence about the causes and effects of transatlantic trade over time because it hints at how exploitative trade relationships could work out over time. Since the author is not approaching the relation as trade between equals, we can assume that this sense of European superiority would have continued in subsequent years.

Jigsaw Activity

	Causes of Trade	Effects of Trade
Algonquin leader	Trade was caused by the difficulty of producing some products using indigenous goods. Trade with the Europeans provided a way for the Algonquin to access new and novel materials, such as specific colors of cloth, many metal goods, and certain forms of weaponry.	The increase of trade goods came at a cost because it disrupted traditional economic trading networks, and it led to widespread demographic loss from epidemic diseases.
Settler at Wollaston	Settlers at Wollaston needed a way to make a profit. Many were originally fur traders, who relied on a deep knowledge of the nearby natural environment. Making alliances with Native American communities could lead to greater profits from the fur trade if they were willing to share their expertise with the settlers.	Increased trade would make the settlers at Wollaston wealthier because it would allow them to rely on the expertise of the Native Americans.
European joint stock company	European joint stocks were interested in recuperating the debts they incurred when they financed new colonies. The cause of trade from their perspective would be the need for colonists to repay their loans.	Increased trade would enable colonists to pay back their debts to European stock companies, making a profit for their shareholders.
Pilgrim authorities at Plymouth Colony	The Pilgrim authorities at Plymouth Colony did not approve of the kind of free interaction with the Native Americans that characterized the trade in the excerpt. From the Pilgrim perspective, the cause of trade like this would be a misunderstanding of the role of colonies in the Americas. For Pilgrims, the goal was to create a religious community, not an economic profit.	From the Pilgrim perspective, the effect of this kind of trade was a co-mingling of Native American and European communities that was unacceptable based on Pilgrim standards.

	Causes of Trade	Effects of Trade
Algonquin woman married to a fur trader at Wollaston	<i>The kind of trade described in the passage led to significant cultural interaction, even marriages, between the Algonquin and the traders at Wollaston. From the perspective of an interracial married couple, the cause of trade would have been shared cultural similarities.</i>	<i>The effect of trade would have been a cultural interchange and a sense of an emergent hybrid culture.</i>

HOMEWORK

1. The correct answer is D. Increased trade between Europeans and Native Americans, such as is described in the passage, was the result of increasing attempts to locate, acquire, and export commodities from the Americas that could be sold for a profit in Europe. Many traders, such as Thomas Morton, used whatever means available to establish profitable trade with the Native American communities near European colonial settlements.
2. The correct answer is C. The trade patterns described in the excerpt proved to be incredibly disruptive to Native American economic systems because they brought in new trade goods, new currencies, and new ways of understanding commerce. Even Morton’s description of wampum beads as a kind of currency demonstrates the way that European involvement in the trade network led to changes because these beads were not used as currency in the European sense prior to European trade.
3. The correct answer is A. Increased contact between Native Americans and European settlers led to widespread demographic loss caused by epidemic diseases. While smallpox was the most notorious European diseases to find a foothold in the Americas, it was not the only one. European settlers also brought measles, influenza, the bubonic plague, cholera, and scarlet fever.