

Primary Source Document

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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.

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And although some have endeavored by example to have the like made of the same kind of shells, yet none have ever, as yet, attained to any perfection in the composure of them, but that the savages have found a great difference to be in the one and the other; and have known the counterfeit beads from those of their own making; and have, and do slight them. The skins of beasts are sold and bartered, to such people as have none of the same kind in the parts where they live. Likewise they have earthen pots of divers sizes, from a quart to a gallon, two or three to boil their victuals in; very strong, though they be thin like our iron pots. They have dainty wooden bowls of maple, of high price amongst them; and these are dispersed by bartering one with the other, and are but in certain parts of the country made, where the several trades are appropriated to the inhabitants of those parts only. So, likewise (at the season of the year), the savages that live by the seaside for trade with the inlanders for fresh water, reles curious silver reles which are bought up of such as have them not frequent in other places: chestnuts, and such like useful things as one place affords, are sold to the inhabitants of another, where they are a novelty accounted amongst the natives of the land. And there is no such thing to barter withal, as is their Wampampeak...

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Commentary

① This lesson is designed to function as a “jigsaw” review exercise. Have the entire class read the primary source document, and then divide the class based on the perspectives listed below the document. Each person (or small group if you have a large class) is responsible for identifying causes and effects using the graphic organizer. Have each individual (or small group) present their findings to the class to complete the “jigsaw” puzzle.

If the “jigsaw” activity format will not work in your classroom, you can adapt this activity to a more traditional review format by assigning it as individual work.

② This is inaccurate. Native Americans along the eastern seaboard made extensive use of canoes and navigation techniques. Consider using the opportunity to discuss the role of perspective in historical sources. Thomas Morton did not personally see the American Indians use canoes or navigate using natural features and astronomy, so he recorded that they did not use these methods. What other aspects of American Indian life might not have been preserved in historical sources because the European settlers did not see them firsthand?

③ More commonly called “wampum,” Native Americans used wampum for ceremonial purposes, including storytelling and marking treaties. The European colonists treated it as a currency, even though it was not used as such by the Native Americans of the North Atlantic. In response, many Native Americans began to produce larger quantities of wampum, resulting in inflation and devaluation.

④ Morton describes how the European settlers had tried to create counterfeit beads to use as currency. What does that show about the trade relationships between Europeans and Native Americans at this time?

⑤ Thomas Morton had originally migrated to the Americas to make his fortune as a fur trader.

And I am persuaded, that if they knew the benefit of salt (as they may in time), and the means to make salt meat fresh again, they would endeavor to preserve fish for winter, as well as corn; and that if anything bring them to civility, it will be the use of salt, to have food in store, which is a chief benefit in a civilized commonwealth. These people have begun already to incline to the use of salt. Many of them would beg salt of me to carry home with them, that had frequented our homes and had been acquainted with our salt meats; and salt I willingly gave them, although I sold them all things else, only because they should be delighted with the use thereof, and think it a commodity of no value in itself, although the benefit was great that might be had by the use of it.

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

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- ⑥ Morton developed a program to supply the Native Americans with large quantities of salt. He argued that doing so would help the Native Americans by allowing them to transition away from a hunting and gathering lifestyle. Encourage your students to think about how salt represents a misunderstanding and unappreciation of Native American practices.
- ⑦ Salted meats, when they were cured using 17th-century methods, required multiple soakings in fresh water to make them palatable.

Discussion Questions

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

Write or type your response in this area.

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

Write or type your response in this area.

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

Write or type your response in this area.

Jigsaw Activity

Directions: Choose one of the perspectives listed in the left-hand column. Each perspective represents a type of person who would have had a vested interest in the continued trade between Europeans and Native Americans at Wollaston. Using the document above, discuss the causes and effects of transatlantic trade from the perspective you have chosen.

	Causes of Trade	Effects of Trade
Algonquin leader	<i>Write or type your response here:</i>	<i>Write or type your response here:</i>
Settler at Wollaston	<i>Write or type your response here:</i>	<i>Write or type your response here:</i>
European joint stock company	<i>Write or type your response here:</i>	<i>Write or type your response here:</i>
Puritan authorities at Plymouth Colony	<i>Write or type your response here:</i>	<i>Write or type your response here:</i>
Algonquin woman married to a fur trader at Wollaston	<i>Write or type your response here:</i>	<i>Write or type your response here:</i>