

DBQ SOURCES: COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE

Purpose

Use a variety of primary and secondary sources to deepen your understanding of the impact of Columbian Exchange.

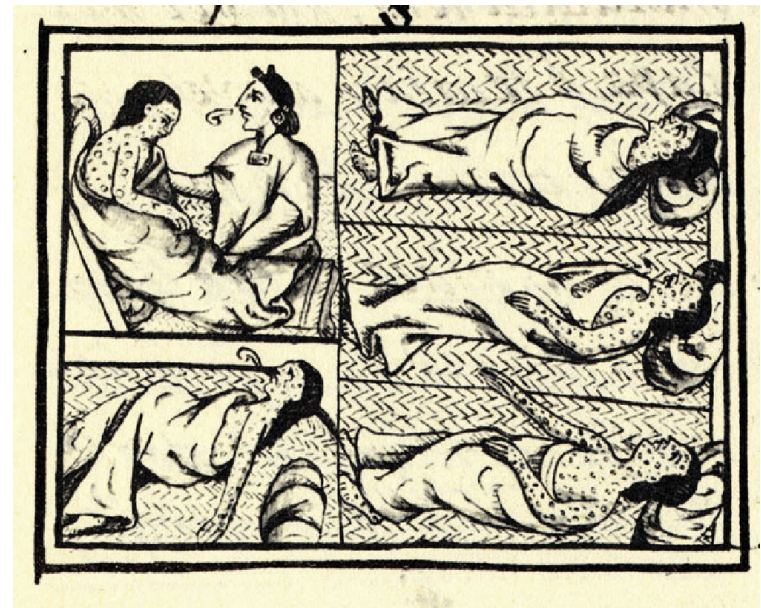
Process

Analyze the following sources. If you are using these sources to respond to an essay prompt, you should underline or **highlight** any evidence that will support your claim. You can also use the Quick Sourcing Tool.

Document 1

This is an illustration from the *Florentine Codex*, a collection of materials and information written by the Franciscan Friar Bernardino de Sahagún (1540–1585) in the 1500s and based on Aztec and Nahuatl history. The accompanying text reads in part:

The disease brought great desolation: a great many died of it. They could no longer walk about, but lay in their dwellings and sleeping places, no longer able to move or stir. . . . The pustules that covered people caused great desolation; very many people died of them, and many just starved to death On some people, the pustules appeared only far apart, and they did not suffer greatly, nor did many of them die of it. But many people's faces were spoiled by it. . . . Some lost an eye or were blinded.



Source: de Sahagún, Bernardino. *Florentine Codex* (Book XII folio 54). English quoted texts translation from Lockhart, James Lockhart. *We People Here: Nahuatl Accounts of the Conquest of Mexico*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FlorentineCodex_BK12_F54_smallpox.jpg.

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Document 2

Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1492–1584) was a soldier under Hernán Cortés (1485–1547) and later wrote in his memoirs about viewing Tenochtitlan (present-day Mexico City) and surrounding cities before they were conquered.

When we saw so many cities and villages built in the water and other great towns on dry land and that straight and level causeway going towards Mexico [Tenochtitlan], we were amazed and said that it was like the enchantments they tell of in the legends. . . . And then when we entered the city of Iztapalapa [to the southeast of Tenochtitlan], the appearance of the palaces in which they lodged us! How spacious and well built they were, of beautiful stone work and cedar wood, and the wood of other sweet scented trees, with great rooms and courts, wonderful to behold, covered with awnings of cotton cloth.

Source: del Castillo, Bernal Díaz. *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico*, 1517–1521. Translated by A.P. Maudslay. London: George Routledge, 1928. (This book is an abridged version of the author's memoir, *The True Story of the Conquest of New Spain*, first published in 1576.) <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.81431/page/n9>. This source has been edited.

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Document 3

This poem was written by an Aztec poet after the 1521 conquest of Tenochtitlan by Cortés.

Broken spears lie in the roads;

We have torn our hair in our grief.

The houses are roofless now; and their walls are red with blood.

Worms are swarming in the streets and plazas, And the walls are spattered with gore.

The water has turned red, as if it were dyed. And when we drink of it,

It has the taste of brine.

We have pounded our hands in despair against the adobe walls.

For our inheritance, our city, is lost and dead.

The shields of our warriors were its defense,

But they could not save it.

We have chewed dry twigs and salt grasses;

We have filled our mouths with dust and bits of adobe,

We have eaten lizards, rats and worms.

Source: León-Portilla, Miguel. *The Broken Spears*. Boston: Beacon, 1962.

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Document 4

The Americas provided soils that were very suitable for the cultivation of a variety of products, like sugar and coffee. The increased supply lowered the prices of these products significantly, making them affordable to the general population for the first time in history.

The production of these products also resulted in large inflows of profits back to Europe. . . . Potatoes were embraced by the Irish and the eastern European societies, chili peppers by the cultures of South and Southeast Asia, tomatoes by Italy and other Mediterranean societies, and tobacco by all nations of the world.

The exchange also had some extremely negative impacts. Native American populations were decimated by Old World diseases. This depopulation [of Native Americans] along with the production of valuable crops like sugar cane and coffee then fueled the demand for labor that gave rise to the transatlantic slave trade. The result was the forced movement of over twelve million slaves from Africa to the Americas and devastating political, social, and economic consequences for the African continent.

Source: Nunn, Nathan and Nancy Qian. "The Columbian Exchange: A History of Disease, Food, and Ideas." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 24, no. 2 (Spring 2010), 183–184. This source has been edited.

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Document 5

Ned Blackhawk, professor of history at Yale and a member of the Te-Moak tribe of the Western Shoshone, wrote this excerpt.

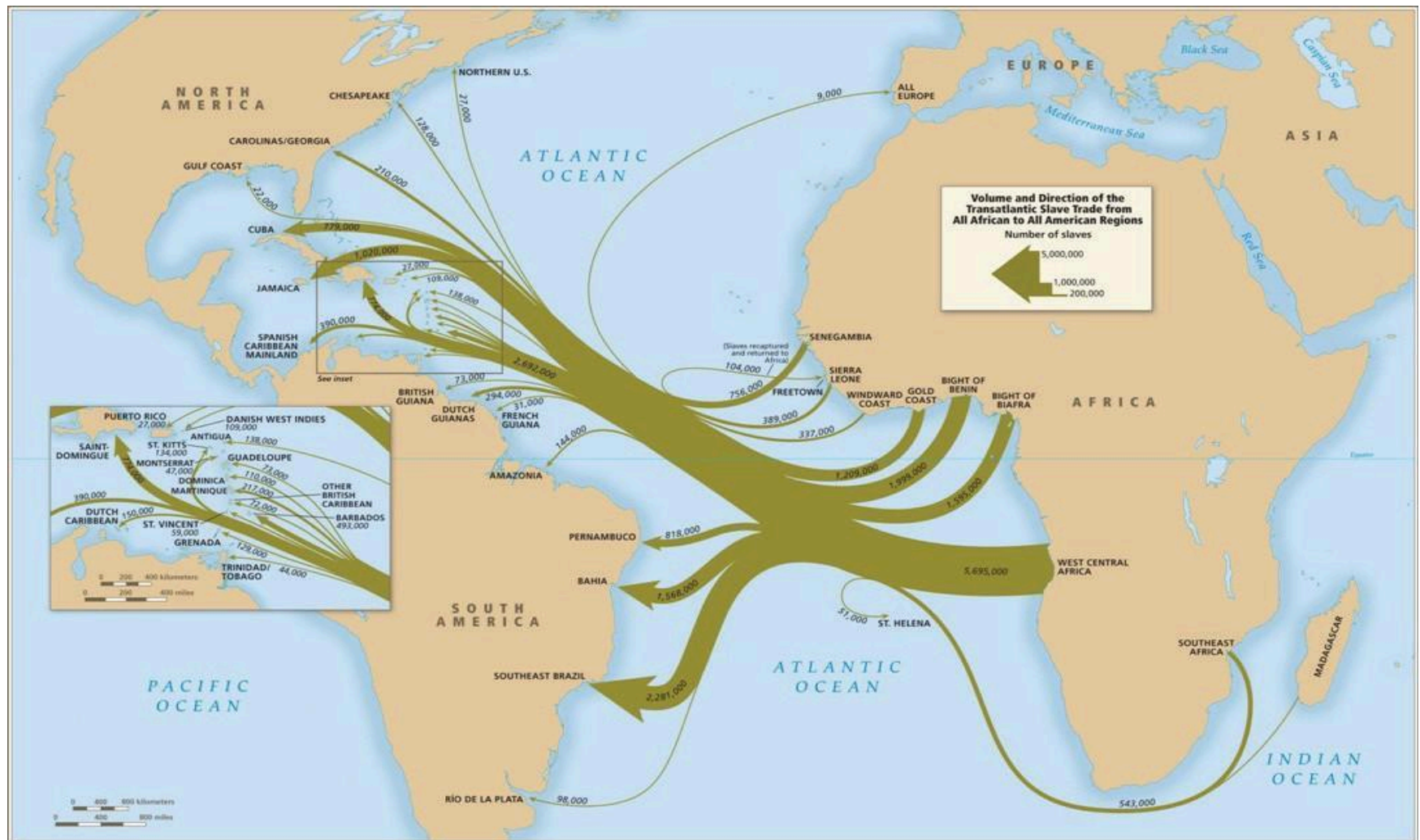
Native peoples continued to control North America's interior. They played an important part in shaping colonial influence outside of the immediate areas of European settlement. The Iroquois Confederacy in the Northeast, the Algonquian-speaking alliances of the Great Lakes, and the equestrian powers across the Plains are just a few examples of enduring Indigenous powers.

We must pay attention to such enduring forms of Indigenous authority. While they were devastated by waves of European pathogens, land theft, warfare, and religious impositions, still, Indigenous communities also adapted to the challenges of colonialism's onslaught by drawing on familiar as well as new ideas. Particularly in North America, forms of Indigenous self-rule continued throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. For the United States, treaties and federal patterns of diplomacy bound the new nation with the continent's oldest confederations and peoples.

Source: Blackhawk, Ned. "Teaching the Columbian Exchange." *OAH Magazine of History* 27, Issue 4 (October 2013), 31–34. <https://academic.oup.com/maghis/article-abstract/27/4/31/1113970>. This excerpt has been edited.

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Document 6



Source: Emory University. *Slave Voyages*. The Trans-Atlantic and Intra-American Slave Trade Interactive Database, 2019.

<https://www.slavevoyages.org/blog/volume-and-direction-trans-atlantic-slave-trade>

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Document 7

Casta paintings were created in colonial Mexico and showed the racial mixing of the main groups of people (Spanish, Indigenous Americans, and Africans) who lived in the Spanish colonies. The different racial mixes showed the racial hierarchies that existed in colonial Mexico under Spanish rule.



Source: Anonymous painting, *Las Castas*, Museo Nacional del Virreinato, Tepotzotlán, Mexico, eighteenth century.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Casta_painting_all.jpg