

Economics and History Activity 1



Mercantilism

BACKGROUND

During the early years of exploration, several European countries were influenced by the economic theory of mercantilism. Mercantilism is the belief that exports, or products sold to other countries, should be more than imports, or products brought into the country to be sold. Since gold and silver served as currency, there was a strong belief that the economic health of a country could be measured by the amount of gold and silver it possessed. More exports than imports increased a country's holding of gold and silver and resulted in a favorable balance of trade.

THE SPICE TRADE

East Asia played a major role in European mercantilism. One factor that led to exploration was the desire to control the East Asian spice trade. In order to do this, European countries searched for a more direct route to Asia. European countries were driven by the large profit to be made from the sale of spices. Profit is money gained on a business deal. The cloves that were sold by the remaining crew of the Magellan voyage, for example, paid for the entire ill-fated voyage.

Columbus's first voyage in 1492 involved three ships. His second voyage in 1493 involved 17 ships and 1,300 paid seamen. Approximately 200 investors financed his second voyage. Because of such a large investment of money and men, the investors expected a substantial profit from Columbus's voyage.

Read the following letter written by Columbus describing his second voyage.

... Hispaniola is a marvel. Its hills and mountains, fine plains and open country, are rich and fertile for planting and for pasturage, and for building towns and villages. The seaports there are incredibly fine, as also the magnificent rivers, most of which bear gold . . . There are many spices and vast mines of gold and other metals in this island. [The Natives] have no . . . weapons, nor are they fit for them, because although they are well-made men of commanding stature, they appear extraordinarily timid . . . Often I have sent two or three men ashore to some town to converse with them, and the natives came out in great numbers, and as soon as they saw our men arrive, fled without a moment's delay . . .

SOURCE: Christopher Columbus's letter to Luis De Sant Angel, Keeper of Accounts for the Spanish court, announcing his discovery of land, February 15, 1493.

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Economics and History Activity 1



DIRECTIONS: Answer the following questions.

1. Why did it make sense to Europeans to travel westward to Asia?

2. Columbus had not sailed to Asia, yet he mentioned spices in his letter. Why do you think he did this?

3. Why is gold mentioned in Columbus's letter?

4. Why do you think Columbus described the native people the way he did?

5. Why do you think Columbus's second voyage was financed with so many men and ships even though Columbus had not discovered a westward route to Asia?

CRITICAL THINKING

Drawing Conclusions How did mercantilism continue to drive world exploration even when it became clear that finding a westward route to Asia would be very difficult?

★ Cooperative Learning Activity 1 ★



Find the Local Story

❑ BACKGROUND

Before Europeans came to North America, Native Americans already inhabited many parts of the United States. What happened when Native Americans first encountered the Europeans? Who were the Native Americans in your area, and what do we know about their first encounters with people from Europe?

❑ GROUP DIRECTIONS

1. Find the story of Native Americans in your area and their first encounters with Europeans. Put it together in a magazine article using words and illustrations. In some places, the story is well known and will be easy to find, but in other parts of the country, finding the story may require some research.
2. To prepare the article, interview people, use information from written sources, take photographs, find pictures, create pictures, and draw maps.
3. Use the list of possible resources to start your search.

❑ Cooperative Group Process

1. Assign group members to work in pairs to investigate local sources of information for this story. Assign each pair one resource (from the list of possible resources) to investigate. Within each pair, one person should be responsible for the written material, and the other person should be responsible for the visual material.
2. Go with your partner to the local resource assigned to you and gather information about the story. Ask questions, read written material, interview people, find pictures, draw pictures, or take photographs. Then prepare a written report of your findings.
3. Meet together as a group. Have each pair report its findings and share pictures and stories.

Possible Resources

- Museums
- Parks
- Monuments
- Historical sites
- Libraries: school, community, college, or university
- County or other local historical society
- Historians at local colleges or universities
- Native Americans who live in the area
- Your teacher

★ Cooperative Learning Activity 1



UNIT 1

- Put the pictures, interviews, and written reports together to form the magazine article. Pay attention to the layout and the story line. Is anything missing? Do you need another illustration or piece of information? If that is the case, assign someone to get it. Individuals should realize that information may be duplicated, and there may not be room for everything everyone has found. The goal is to create an interesting and informative article that tells the story of the early Native Americans in your area and their first encounters with Europeans, given the information you have gathered.
- Make copies of the article and distribute it to the entire class.

☑ Group Process Questions

- What is the most interesting thing you learned about early interactions between Native Americans in your area and Europeans?
- Which part of this project presented the most difficulties?
- How was it helpful for you to work together?

Quick CHECK ✓

- Was the goal of the assignment clear at all times? _____

- Were you satisfied with your contribution to the project? _____

- Did you have problems working well together? _____

American Literature Reading 1



A Native American Tale

About the Selection Thousands of Native American tales and legends have been passed down orally from one generation to the next. Native Americans use tales to teach lessons. This Iroquois tale is about why the owl has big eyes.

GUIDED READING As you read, try to understand the message of the story. Then answer the questions that follow the tale.

Why the Owl Has Big Eyes

Raweno, the Everything-Maker, was busy creating various animals. He was working on Rabbit, and Rabbit was saying: "I want nice long legs and long ears like a deer, and sharp fangs and claws like a panther."

"I do them up the way they want to be; I give them what they ask for," said Raweno. He was working on Rabbit's hind legs, making them long, the way Rabbit had ordered.

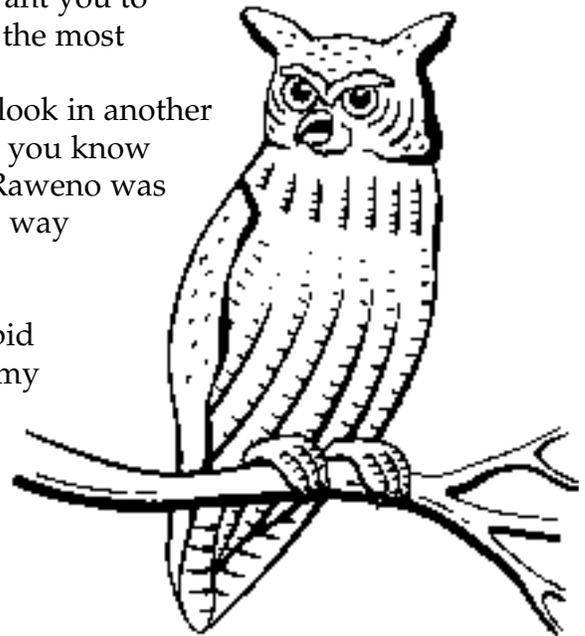
Owl, still unformed, was sitting on a tree nearby and waiting his turn. He was saying: "Who, who, I want a nice long neck like Swan's, and beautiful red feathers like Cardinal's, and a nice long beak like Egret's, and a nice crown of plumes like Heron's. I want you to make me into the most beautiful, the fastest, the most wonderful of all the birds."

Raweno said: "Be quiet. Turn around and look in another direction. Even better, close your eyes. Don't you know that no one is allowed to watch me work?" Raweno was just then making Rabbit's ears very long, the way Rabbit wanted them.

Owl refused to do what Raweno said. "Who, who," he replied, "nobody can forbid me to watch. Nobody can order me to close my eyes. I like watching you, and watch I will."

Then Raweno became angry. He grabbed Owl, pulling him down from his branch, stuffing his head deep into his body, shaking him until his eyes grew big with fright, pulling at his ears until they were sticking up at both sides of his head.

"There," said Raweno, "that'll teach you. Now you won't be able to crane your neck to watch things you shouldn't watch. Now you have big ears to listen when someone tells you what not to do. Now you have big eyes—but not so big that you can watch me, because you'll be awake only at night, and I work by day. And your feathers won't be red like



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American Literature Reading 1



Cardinal’s, but gray like this”—and Raweno rubbed Owl all over with mud—“as punishment for your disobedience.” So Owl flew off, pouting: “Who, who, who.”

Then Raweno turned back to finish Rabbit, but Rabbit had been so terrified by Raweno’s anger, even though it was not directed at him, that he ran off half done. As a consequence, only Rabbit’s hind legs are long, and he has to hop about instead of walking and running. Also, because he took fright then, Rabbit has remained afraid of most everything, and he never got the claws and fangs he asked for in order to defend himself. Had he not run away then, Rabbit would have been an altogether different animal.

As for Owl, he remained as Raweno had shaped him in anger—with big eyes, a short neck, and ears sticking up on the sides of his head. On top of everything, he has to sleep during the day and come out only at night.

SOURCE: *American Indian Myths and Legends*. Edited by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz. Pantheon Books, New York, 1984.

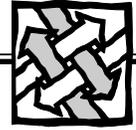
DIRECTIONS: Recalling Facts Answer the following questions.

1. Who is Raweno? _____
2. Why did Raweno not give Owl the appearance Owl wanted? _____

3. **CRITICAL THINKING** What lesson about life does this tale teach? _____

4. In what ways is Raweno like a parent in this tale? _____

5. **READER RESPONSE** If you had been Rabbit, how would you have felt when Raweno became angry with Owl? Why? _____

Interdisciplinary Connection 1

History and Geography

CHANGING MAPS IN A CHANGING WORLD

Maps have been changing and improving ever since the Sumerians drew the first map thousands of years ago. The earliest maps showed property lines and boundaries. Later, when people began to explore beyond their own borders, they drew maps to show the lands they visited and the routes they took.

Ancient Greeks made some of the greatest contributions to mapmaking. They were skilled sailors, colonizers, and scientists. By the sixth century B.C., Greece was a center of geographic knowledge.

In the second century A.D., Ptolemy, a Greek scholar, put everything that was known about geography and mapmaking into a book called *Geographica*. It showed the earth was shaped like a globe, it described a location system using latitude and longitude, and it contained map projections. Unfortunately, Ptolemy's book was lost, and in time, mapmakers went back to using earlier incorrect ideas.

MAPS IN THE MIDDLE AGES AND RENAISSANCE

During the Middle Ages, many maps were based on religious stories. The most commonly used map showed the earth as flat. Jerusalem was at the center of the earth, while Asia was at the top, Europe was at the lower left, and Africa was at the lower right.

Around 1400, mapmaking changed. Ptolemy's book was recovered and translated. Trade increased and mapmakers

began to draw maps based on observations and measurements.

An important contributor to accurate mapmaking was Prince Henry the Navigator. Henry used his wealth to attract shipbuilders, mapmakers, instrument-makers, and sailors to Portugal. Henry wanted to find a sea route to India, and he directed the efforts of all these people toward his goal. By the time he died in 1460, the Portuguese had accurately mapped the coast of West Africa. The voyages of Bartholomeu Dias and Vasco da Gama further added to mapmakers' knowledge of Africa.

MAPPING THE NEW WORLD

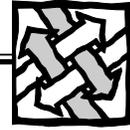
Following close on the heels of these discoveries were the voyages of Christopher Columbus, Giovanni Verrazano, and John Cabot. Verrazano had hoped to find a northwest passage to the Indies. Instead, he found the coastline from Maine to the Carolinas. Explorers' voyages led to new maps of the world. Each time mapmakers learned something from explorers, they added it to their maps, and knowledge of the earth and what it looked like grew.



Prince Henry the Navigator

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Interdisciplinary Connection 1



MAKING THE GEOGRAPHY CONNECTION

DIRECTIONS: Recalling Facts Write the answers to the questions below in the space provided.

1. What were the earliest maps used for? _____

2. What contributions did the Greeks make to mapmaking? _____

3. How were the religious maps of the Middle Ages different from those made by Ptolemy? _____

4. Why were maps of Africa becoming more and more accurate during the last half of the 1400s? _____

APPLYING GEOGRAPHIC KNOWLEDGE

5. Today's world maps do not change very much, except when political boundaries and the names of countries change. What modern tools do you think account for the accuracy of modern maps? _____

Activity

DIRECTIONS: Making a Map Using the information in the essay, draw a picture of what people thought the world looked like during the Middle Ages. Why do you think Jerusalem was put in the center of the map? Locate a map of the world today. Which continent or continents are in the center of the map? Why do you think this is so?