Student Handout - Fact Sheet

The Columbian Exchange – an exchange of plants, animals and diseases that altered life on both sides of the Atlantic

European diseases such as Smallpox destroyed Native American populations

European nations Spain, England and France took ownership of land in the New World

Mercantilism – European countries looked to expand their empires and increase their power by increasing their wealth

The colonies became a source of raw materials for European countries to produce manufactured goods

Triangular Trade routes developed between Europe, the Americas and Africa

The Middle Passage was the most inhumane part of the Triangular Trade System

Native Americans often traded with their European colonizers

Conflict arose between Europeans and natives when Europeans encroached on Native lands

Some colonists like William Penn of Pennsylvania believed in paying the Natives for their land and had laws passed to ensure that they were treated fairly.

European rivalries existed and these nations fought over land in the Americas

Powhatan's daughter Pocahantas married John Rolfe of Virginia creating an alliance between the English and the Natives in Virginia.

“For Native people, the discovery of Europe (through colonization) was a discovery of death on an unimaginable scale and of a struggle for cultural survival that continues to this day.” Daniel Richter Professor of History – University of Pennsylvania

The French had generally better relations with the Natives than the English. They often married Native women, adapted to their way of life and traded with the Natives peacefully.

“In 1508 there were 60,000 people living on the island of Hispaniola, including the Indians, so that from 1494-1508, over three million people had perished from war, slavery and the mines”
Bartholome de las Casas

Native Americans, many of whom lived in great poverty, were at the bottom of the class system, slightly above or with enslaved Africans.

Native Americans signed treaties with European settlers and at times coexisted peacefully. Often Natives helped Europeans adapt to the environment by helping them to grow crops.
Student Handout 2 - Spectrum

1. The introduction of weapons by the Europeans had a positive impact on Native Americans

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List facts and information your group used to come to your decision.

2. The actions of the European colonizers were justified by their quest for God, Gold and Glory

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3. The Triangular Trade System opened up trade routes between Europe, Africa and the Americas, allowing the British to pursue its policy of mercantilism

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List facts and information your group used to come to your decision.
4. The Columbian Exchange positively impacted Native Americans

Negative  Neutral  Positive

List facts and information your group used to come to your decision

5. Native Americans were treated fairly by European colonizers once enslaved Africans were brought to the colonies

Negative  Neutral  Positive

List facts and information your group used to come to your decision
Bartoleme de Las Casas, *Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies*. (1542) Excerpt

The Indies were discovered in the year one thousand four hundred and ninety-two. In the following year a great many Spaniards went there with the intention of settling the land. Thus, forty-nine years have passed since the first settlers penetrated the land, the first so claimed being the large and most happy isle called Hispaniola, which is six hundred leagues in circumference. Around it in all directions are many other islands, some very big, others very small, and all of them were, as we saw with our own eyes, densely populated with native peoples called Indians. This large island was perhaps the most densely populated place in the world. There must be close to two hundred leagues of land on this island, and the seacoast has been explored for more than ten thousand leagues, and each day more of it is being explored. And all the land so far discovered is a beehive of people; it is as though God had crowded into these lands the great majority of mankind.

And of all the infinite universe of humanity, these people are the most guileless, the most devoid of wickedness and duplicity, the most obedient and faithful to their native masters and to the Spanish Christians whom they serve. They are by nature the most humble, patient, and peaceable, holding no grudges, free from embroilments, neither excitable nor quarrelsome. These people are the most devoid of rancors, hatreds, or desire for vengeance of any people in the world. And because they are so weak and complaisant, they are less able to endure heavy labor and soon die of no matter what malady. The sons of nobles among us, brought up in the enjoyments of life’s refinements, are no more delicate than are these Indians, even those among them who are of the lowest rank of laborers. They are also poor people, for they not only possess little but have no desire to possess worldly goods. For this reason they are not arrogant, embittered, or greedy. Their repasts are such that the food of the holy fathers in the desert can scarcely be more parsimonious, scanty, and poor. As to their dress, they are generally naked, with only their pudenda covered somewhat. And when they cover their shoulders it is with a square cloth no more than two varas in size. They have no beds, but sleep on a kind of matting or else in a kind of suspended net called bamacas. They are very clean in their persons, with alert, intelligent minds, docile and open to doctrine, very apt to receive our holy Catholic faith, to be endowed with virtuous customs, and to behave in a godly fashion. And once they begin to hear the tidings of the Faith, they are so insistent on knowing more and on taking the sacraments of the Church and on observing the divine cult that, truly, the missionaries who are here need to be endowed by God with great patience in order to cope with such eagerness. Some of the secular Spaniards who have been here for many years say that the goodness of the Indians is undeniable and that if this gifted people could be brought to know the one true God they would be the most fortunate people in the world.

Yet into this sheepfold, into this land of meek outcasts there came some Spaniards who immediately behaved like ravening wild beasts, wolves, tigers, or lions that had been starved for many days. And Spaniards have behaved in no other way during the last forty years, down to the present time, for they are still acting like ravening beasts, killing, terrorizing, afflicting, torturing, and destroying the native peoples, doing all this with the strangest and most varied new methods of cruelty, never seen or heard of before, and to such a degree that this Island of Hispaniola once so populous (having a population that I estimated to be more than three million), has now a population of barely two hundred persons.

Source: Bartoleme de Las Casas, *Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies*. (1542)

Sunday, 14th of October

...these people are very simple as regards the use of arms, as your Highnesses will see from the seven that I caused to be taken, to bring home and learn our language and return; unless your Highnesses should order them all to be brought to Castile, or to be kept as captives on the same island; for with fifty men they can all be subjugated and made to do what is required of them...

Sunday, 16th of December

...your Highnesses may believe that this island (Hispaniola), and all the others, are as much yours as Castile. Here there is only wanting a settlement and the order to the people to do what is required. For I, with the force I have under me, which is not large, could march over all these islands without opposition. I have seen only three sailors land, without wishing to do harm, and a multitude of Indians fled before them. They have no arms, and are without warlike instincts; they all go naked, and are so timid that a thousand would not stand before three of our men. So that they are good to be ordered about, to work and sow, and do all that may be necessary, and to build towns, and they should be taught to go about clothed and to adopt our customs.
