

MERCANTILISM: TRADE BETWEEN THE AMERICAN COLONIES AND ENGLAND

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Preview of Main Ideas

Students participate in an activity about the impact of a mercantilist system on Colonial America will formulate generalizations about actions and reactions between the American Colonies and England over control and use of resources. This activity will lead the students to discover problems that the American colonists and Great Britain faced under the mercantilist system.

Connection with the Curriculum

This activity can be related to United States history, geography, and economics.

Teaching Level: Grades 5-8 (This lesson can be adapted to all grade levels.)

Objective Classification Outline (Also see objectives classification matrix below.)

Objective #1: The student will be able to identify the available resources and their uses in the American Colonies and England.

Essential Element: Environment and Society.

Standard #16: The changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources.

Knowledge Statement # 1: The worldwide distribution and use of resources.

Skill Set # 2: Acquiring geographic information.

Skill #1: Use a variety of research skills to locate and collect geographic data.

Theme: Movement.

Objective #2: The student will be able to identify and explain actions and reactions of the American Colonies and England over the control of resources.

Essential Element: The uses of Geography.

Standard #17: How to apply geography to interpret the past.

Knowledge Statement # 2: How people's differing perceptions of places, peoples, and resources have affected events and conditions in the past.

Skill #4: Analyzing geographic information

Skill #3: Interpret and synthesize information obtained from a variety of sources: graphs, charts, tables, diagrams, texts, photographs, documents and interviews.

Theme: Movement.

Materials

1. European wall map featuring Spain, France, and England.
2. 42 painted resource blocks per group: 7 green, 7 yellow, 7 brown, and 21 red.
3. Play money: \$500 per group.
4. American colony map (both wall and student copy).
5. Transparencies.
6. Information sheets: one per group.
7. Guideline sheet.
8. Response sheet for England.

Suggestions for Teaching the Lesson

Opening the Lesson

1. Divide the students into 4 groups. Instruct the students that they will participate in a simulation that will focus on mercantilism between the American Colonies and England.
2. Pass out Information Sheets and resource blocks that pertain to each group.

Note: Groups/resources

Northern Colonies: lumber, shipbuilding, and fishing (brown)

Middle Colonies: wheat, barley, and oats (green)

Southern Colonies: tobacco, rice, and cotton (yellow)

England: finished goods (red)

3. Each group receives a packet of money that equals \$500. Each packet will contain the following: 2- \$100 bills

10- \$20 bills

10- \$10 bills

4. Present guidelines for students to follow during activity.

Note: See guidelines sheet.

Developing the Lesson

1. Have each group read its information about its colonies. Have the students discuss the uses of the resources with in each colony and England.

2. Begin the activity.

Note: Be sure all students have an active role in this activity.

3. Allow the activity to be run through about seven times.

Note: The students in the colonies will begin to notice that their money will run out by the seventh round.

4. After the colonies run out of money, encourage students to discuss other means of making money under the mercantilist system.

Note to teacher: Be prepared to relate to all responses. Some general responses are provided on the Response Sheet for England. Also write all responses on transparencies. Students in the colonies have only one solution and that is independence from England.

Concluding the Lesson

1. Have students share generalizations about mercantilism.

2. Discuss other options that may not have been addressed during the activity.

3. Have students share reactions and feelings about activity.

4. Have students discuss the actions taken by the American Colonies and the reactions by England.

Extending the Lesson

1. Have students gather data about resources in the different colonies and create a map to show the resources in each section they are involved in.

2. Have students gather data about many manufactured goods that were sent to the colonies and relate those finished goods to resources brought from the American Colonies. Have them place the information on a chart they create on their own.

3. Ask students the question, “What if the technology of today existed during the 18th century?” Have students write a report based on data gathered to compare that time period to modern day.

Assessing Student Learning

1. Have students respond to the generalizations that were developed during the activity.

2. Have students write a paper identifying the barriers that arose from the use of resources between the two colonies and England under mercantilism and explain their impact on the two sides.

3. Identify resources from each section of the colonies and explain the uses of them by both the colonies and England.

GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS CLASSIFICATION MATRIX – GRADES 5-8

Title: Mercantilism: Trade Between the American Colonies and England
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Objective	Essential Element	Standard	Knowledge Statement	Skill Set/Skill Number	Geographic Theme
1. The student will be able to identify the available resources and their uses in the American Colonies and England.	Environment and Society	#16	#1	#2 / #1	Movement
2. The student will be able to identify and explain actions and reactions of the American Colonies and England over the control of resources.	The Uses of Geography	#17	#2	#4 / #3	Movement

Note: See also Objectives Classification Outline in the lesson.

Handouts

Handout A

GUIDELINE SHEET

Setting up Activity

Each colony section begins with 7 "resource" blocks

Sections:

Northern Colonies -- Brown

Middle Colonies -- Green

Southern Colonies -- Yellow

Each colony begins with a packet of \$500

England begins with 21 "finished goods" blocks -- Red

England begins with a packet of \$500

England begins with a Response Sheet

Running Activity

Beginning Trade:

Order of Turn: 1st - Northern Colonies

2nd - Middle Colonies

3rd - Southern Colonies

4th - England

Step 1 Colony products raw materials costing = \$30
Colony sells raw materials to England for a cost of = \$ 50
(Profit for each colony = \$ 20)

Step 2 England cost of buying raw materials - \$ 50 x 3 colonies = \$ 150
England's production of raw materials to finished goods costs - \$ 40 x 3 = \$ 120
Total cost of purchasing and manufacturing - \$90/colony or \$270 total
Sale of finished goods to Colonies - 100/colony or \$300
(Profit from colonies - \$ 10/colony or \$ 30 total)

Step 3 Colonies buy finished goods from England = \$ 100

Repeat steps 1-3 until Colonies run out of money

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Handout B

Information Sheets for England and the Colonies

ENGLAND

England's relationship to the colonies:

- England believed that the Colonies existed for the good of England.
- England had started the Colonies and had the right to benefit from them.
- England provided armies and ships during the French and Indian War to the Colonies.
- England developed a large debt during the French and Indian War to defend the Colonies.

Geographical Conditions:

- Very little farmland
 - Very little timber
 - Very little land to raise cattle
 - Short growing season
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NORTHERN COLONIES

Colonies involved:

- Massachusetts
- Rhode Island
- New Hampshire
- Connecticut

Geographical Conditions:

- Winters are longer and colder than other Colonies
- Soil not suitable for large farming but good for timber
- Little level land for farming
- Good harbors for trade and shipping
- Good fishing along the coast

Resources:

- Fishing and whaling
 - Shipbuilding and trade skills
 - Lumber
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Handout C

MIDDLE COLONIES

Colonies involved:

- New York
- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania
- Delaware
- Maryland

Geographical Conditions:

- Average soil for farming
- Average length of time for growing season
- Two large seaports: New York and Philadelphia
- Average manufacturing and commerce

Resources:

- Cattle
- Grains
- Iron

SOUTHERN COLONIES

Colonies involved:

- Virginia
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Georgia

Geographical Conditions:

- Good growing soil
- Longer growing season
- Wide plains for farming
- Good river systems for transportation

Resources:

- Tobacco
 - Rice
 - Indigo
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Handout D

RESPONSE SHEET

Colonists' ideas and responses

1. - Sell raw materials to other countries
- Build and use our own ships
- Use ships from other countries
- Produce our own finished goods
2. - Tax products coming from England
- Tax products or documents within the Colonies
3. - Buy finished goods from other countries
4. - Develop our own currency
- Develop more currency
5. - Remove taxes on imported goods
- Add taxes to finished goods transported within the Colonies
6. - Produce our own finished goods
- Create our own tax laws
- Right to self rule

England's Actions

Navigation Acts: Colonies can export their products only to England and her other Colonies. All goods from other countries must go through England (Extra tax will be added). All goods coming or going to the Colonies must be delivered by English ships.

Stamp Act: Placed tax on newspapers and other legal documents.

Sugar Act: Lowered taxes on products leaving the Colonies but raised taxes on imported goods.

Currency Act: England has the right to set currency only.

Townshend Act: Place taxes on colonial imports of everyday goods.

Declaratory Act: England has right to tax and rule over the Colonies