

# CLASS SET- DO NOT WRITE ON!!!

**Directions:** Read the following passage about the Columbian Exchange. Answer the questions that follow using complete sentences. Remember to give specific details from the text to support your answer.

## THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE

Can you imagine life today without orange juice, without milk, without bread, and without hamburgers? If you lived in Florida in 1491, you would not have had any of these foods, or many others. Florida and the United States are part of the New World, also known as The Americas (North, Central and South America and the Caribbean). In 1491, no one living in the New World had ever seen oranges, cows, or wheat. These were all products of the Old World (Europe, Africa and Asia). If you had lived in the Old World in 1491, you would not have known tomatoes, corn, or chocolate since these products only existed in the New World. Today you can find any of these products in either the Old World or the New World because of a phenomenon known as the Columbian Exchange. This phenomenon takes its name from Christopher Columbus, who sailed from the Old World to the New World in 1492 and back to the Old World the next year. This was how people of the Old World and the New World not only met one another, but also began to make each other's plants, animals, and germs part of their daily lives. Life changed dramatically and forever after 1492 for both the New World and the Old World. Some of these changes were good, and some were bad. All of them affect the way we live today anywhere in the world, Old or New.

The first Old World settlers in The Americas brought horses with them. The New World did not have horses before Christopher Columbus arrived. Just think, if horses had not arrived in The Americas, we would not have had the plains Indians in the North American Southwest, and that in turn, would have prevented us from having popular western movies. Upon returning home, the early explorers and settlers took tomatoes with them that were new to the Old World. Tomatoes were native to The Americas. If tomatoes had not been transferred to the Old World, we may never have had the popular Italian dishes of pizza and lasagna, which are both made with tomato sauce.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of The Columbian Exchange at work is the transfer of disease from the Old World to the New World. Between the late fifteenth and the late seventeenth centuries, about thirty to ninety percent of Native Americans died from diseases such as: chicken pox, malaria, measles, pneumonia, scarlet fever, smallpox, and typhus. Before the Spanish explorers came to the New World, Native Americans had none of these diseases. People in the Old World, however, had

suffered and died from these diseases for many centuries. As time went on, these diseases remained deadly in the Old World, but some people in the Old World built up a natural immunity to some or all of these diseases, having suffered and survived them in the past. Native Americans did not have this biological resistance, making these diseases far more deadly in the New World. They had never been exposed to these diseases and the onset of them in the New World was devastating. Many Native Americans died from the exposure of these diseases. This natural immunity is seen today. A present-day example of this is chicken pox. People may get sick with chicken pox early in their lives, but they will rarely die from it. After being inflicted, most will develop a biological resistance to the disease.



Two major consequences resulted from the transfer of Old World diseases to the New World. First, the Columbian Exchange made the Spanish Conquest of the New World much easier. The Spaniards were able to take over large empires, such as the Aztec of Mexico and the Inca of Peru. The odds seemed against the Spaniards because both empires far outnumbered them. However, disease killed off and

