

European Colonization

In the early days of North America, there was a struggle for control between the British, French, Spanish, and Dutch. These powerful European nations were in a race to claim new land. They also wanted to expand their cultures across the Atlantic Ocean. The competition between them was not just about land. It was also about economics, politics, culture, and religion.

These early European explorers wanted to **colonize**, or settle and take over, parts of North America. However, this land was already **occupied** by Native Americans. This did not stop Europeans from wanting to claim the land for themselves. The arrival of Europeans greatly affected the land and people of North America.

There were several motivations for the Europeans to colonize North America. Each of the countries had different reasons to explore. Some wanted to find better trade routes to Asia for their ships, some wanted to find gold, some wanted to claim land for their country, and some wanted to **convert** the Native Americans to Christianity. The Spanish sent men called **conquistadors** to do this. These conquistadors sought fame and glory for themselves and for Spain by converting the Native Americans. All of these countries fought to get the most land and resources they could.

Most relationships between the Europeans and the Native Americans began peacefully. Though they were distrustful at first, some tribes began trading with the Spanish colonizers in Florida. Native Americans even helped Spain get the French out of Florida. However, eventually the Spanish turned on the tribes and made them leave their colony in St. Augustine, Florida. For the French, they also started off friendly, but eventually became hostile towards the Natives.

When the Spanish attempted to convert the Native Americans to

History

Vocabulary

Colonize

Conquistadors

Convert

Customs

Occupied

Reading Skills

Effect
Un... causes
in e... graph in
b...

Christianity, they did not respond well to the attempts. This is because the Native Americans wanted to protect their own cultures and values. In order to convert, many of their traditions, languages, clothing, and **customs** would need to be changed or completely erased. Since they had lived in America for thousands of years, many tribes refused and fought against the Spanish for many years.

Europeans brought new diseases to North America as well. Smallpox, measles, and influenza are some of the diseases the Europeans exposed Native Americans to upon their arrival. These diseases killed many Native Americans across North America. As a result of the diseases and violence, the population of Native Americans continued to decline. Native Americans had lived for centuries without

diseases before the Europeans arrived. Once Europeans arrived, life was never the same again for the Native American people.

This colonization was also a key reason for enslaved people in America. During the early 1500s, a triangle shaped trade route developed between Europe, Africa, and the Americas. With the goods that were exchanged between all of the countries, people were exported from Africa and were then traded for labor purposes. Africans brought to America were treated poorly, forced to work for no pay, and did not have rights until after the Civil War ended in 1865.

The influences from the different European colonization can still be seen today. In particular, the British colonies began to form the eastern part of America. There were 13 colonies that eventually turned into the United States of America after the Revolutionary War. Different countries constantly fought for their own space in the New World and continued to do so until the modern United States was fully formed. While ultimately beneficial to the colonists, this time was incredibly problematic to the Native Americans and Africans that lived here.

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Directions: Match the vocabulary term to its definition.

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. _____ a person from Spain who wanted to convert others to Christianity | a. Colonize |
| 2. _____ land that is already owned by someone | b. Convert |
| 3. _____ to send settlers to a place to take control of it | c. Conquistador |
| 4. _____ changing a person's ideas | d. Occupied |

Directions: Circle the best answer choice based on the passage.

- Which is NOT a common reason for European exploration listed in the passage?
 - To find gold
 - To claim land
 - To map out new places
 - To convert others to Christianity
- Who initially lived in America?
 - Africans
 - Colonists
 - Native Americans
 - Europeans
- Conquistadors tried to _____ Native Americans.
 - Live with
 - Convert
- Which was NOT a disease brought to North America by early Europeans?
 - Influenza
 - Smallpox
 - Ebola
 - Measles
- How were Africans involved with colonization?
 - They colonized Florida
 - They were traded to the Americas as enslaved people
 - They colonized the Caribbean
 - They were not involved in colonization

6. Who tried to colonize parts of America?
- a. Britain
 - b. Spain
 - c. France
 - d. All of the above
7. The French had a better relationship with Native Americans than the Spanish did.
- a. True
 - b. False
8. Most Native Americans were happy to convert to Christianity.
- a. True
 - b. False
9. In 2-3 sentences, explain why Native Americans had a negative relationship with the colonists.

10. How do you think life for the Native American people may have been different if the Europeans had not come to colonize the land?
