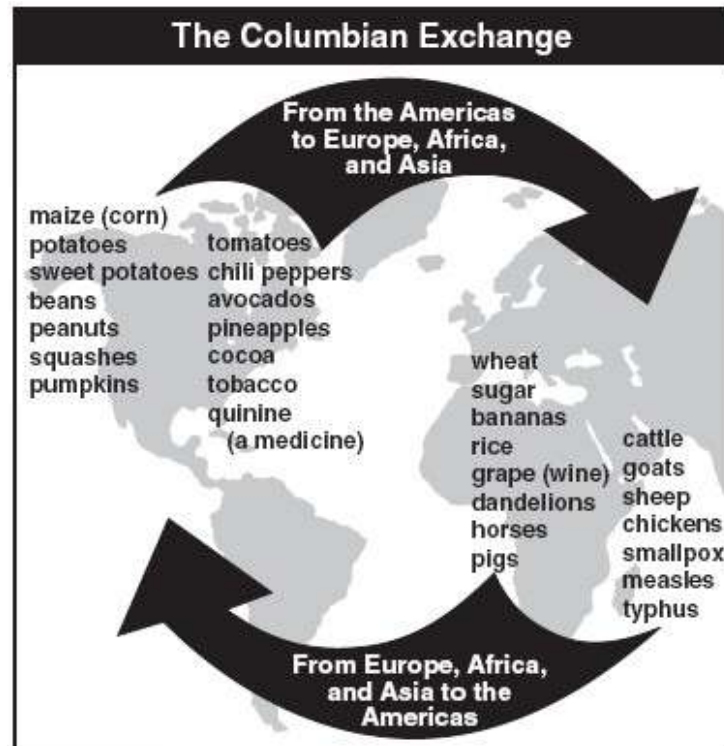


## The Columbian Exchange:

Q1: What was exchanged between Europe, Africa, and the Western Hemisphere?

Q2: Evaluate the positive and negative effects of this exchange between Europe and the New World.

### Document 1:



Source: *Guide to the Essentials of World History*,  
Prentice Hall (adapted)

### Document 2:



Even as the Aztecs fought to defend their capital from Hernán Cortés and his men, they fell victim to diseases introduced by the Spaniards. This drawing depicts Indians suffering from smallpox, one of the deadliest diseases introduced by the Europeans. The symbols near the subjects' mouths represent speech.

"The Columbian Exchange." Exploring the European Past.  
<[http://custom.cengage.com/etep/module/age\\_of\\_exploration/8\\_columbian.html](http://custom.cengage.com/etep/module/age_of_exploration/8_columbian.html)>

**Document 3:**

The disaster began almost as soon as Columbus arrived, fueled mainly by smallpox and measles. Smallpox--the disease that so ravaged Tenochtitlan on the eve of Cortes's final siege-- was a particularly efficient killer. Alfred Crosby, author of "The Columbian Exchange," likens its effect on American history to "that of the Black Death on the history of the Old World." Smallpox made its American debut in 1519, when it struck the Caribbean island of Santo Domingo, killing up to half of the indigenous population. From there outbreaks spread across the Antilles islands, onto the Mexican mainland, through the Isthmus of Panama and into South America. The Spaniards were moving in the same direction, but their diseases often outpaced them. "Such is the communicability of smallpox and the other eruptive fevers," Crosby notes, "that any Indian who received news of the Spaniards could also have easily received the infection."

"The Great Disease Migration" Geoffrey Cowley, in Newsweek Fall 1991

**Document 4:**

Exchanging crops proved to be a far more intricate, involved process than ever could have been imagined at the time. Remarkably, the people of the Americas realized that crops with higher caloric value could not only feed more people, but also allowed people to work harder because they were more energized. This led to an adoption of American crops by European peasantries that changed entire cuisines in various cultures and spread rapidly through the Americas, Europe and finally, Africa. An important crop in Europe was potatoes, as they could be left in the ground until they were ready to be eaten and allowed many Europeans to evade taxes, as tax collectors did not go so far as to dig up not yet harvested crops. Similarly, potatoes were also a helpful crop and food source because when armies invaded and rounded up food for themselves, they were similarly unable to steal the potatoes; thereby, leaving food for the European people.

Animals were also a key part of the Columbian Exchange. Horses, pigs, sheep, and cattle were all European animals that flourished rapidly in the Americas because they were able to reproduce without being hindered by predators. Pigs were also a key animal used during ocean travels because they could be dumped on the way to a country or place and then picked up and eaten on the way back. The horse, too, was also a very useful animal as it helped with battle; it allowed for faster travel, it allowed for the surprising of opponents, and allowed people to fight from a higher level.

"Columbian Exchange" March 31, 2006 Lauren Ree

**Document 5:**

More astonishing than the difference between the length of the lists of Old World's and New World's domesticated animals is the difference between the lengths of the lists of infectious diseases native to the two. The New World had only a few, possibly because humans had been present there and had lived in dense populations, cities, for a short time compared to the Old. Possibly of greater importance is the relative lack of domesticated herd animals in America, one of our richest sources of disease micro-organisms. (For instance, we share influenza with pigs and other barnyard animals).

*"The Columbian Exchange, Plants, Animals and Disease between Old World and New"*  
Alfred

**Document 6:**

Above all, it leaves out the fact that this encounter was inevitable. This is not simply to state the obvious: that if Columbus hadn't set sail in 1492, some other European voyager would have made the trip soon afterward. The key point is that whoever made the first crossing and whenever it occurred, the consequences for the people of the Western Hemisphere would not have been much different. To expect otherwise is to ask that history be rolled back long before 1492 and that its course be plotted along other lines entirely.

In particular, European civilization would have to be recast. What drove Columbus westward was not just a search for a lucrative new trade route to Asia. It is too simplistic to picture him and the other European explorers as mere money-grubbers, early real-estate developers who lucked into an entire continent to subdivide. Money was obviously important to them, but they were also animated by a certain restlessness and curiosity. The voyage into the unknown, after all, had been part of European culture since the days of Odysseus. To some degree this questing instinct was bound up with religious zeal: look, for example, at the search for the Holy Grail and the history of the Crusades. On a more mundane level, it was often a social necessity: families were large, houses were small, land was scarce, and so young people were encouraged to leave home and seek their fortune. Missionaries set out to preach the Gospel. Merchants set out to find new goods and new markets to sell them in. Armies sometimes led this process, sometimes followed. The spread of Western civilization was built on intrusion.

Kenneth Auchincloss, *When Worlds Collide* Newsweek Fall/Winter 1991

**Document 7:**

The charge of genocide is largely sustained by figures showing the precipitous [*abrupt*] decline of the Indian population. Although scholars debate the exact numbers, in Alvin Josephy's estimate, the Indian population fell from between fifteen and twenty million when the white man first arrived to a fraction of that 150 years later. Undoubtedly the Indians perished in great numbers. Yet although European enslavement of Indians and the Spanish forced labor system extracted a heavy toll in lives, the vast majority of Indian casualties occurred not as a result of hard labor or deliberate destruction but because of contagious diseases that the Europeans transmitted to the Indians.

The spread of infection and unhealthy patterns of behavior was also reciprocal. From the Indians the Europeans contracted syphilis. The Indians also taught the white man about tobacco and cocaine, which would extract an incalculable human toll over the next several centuries. The Europeans, for their part, gave the Indians measles and smallpox. (Recent research has shown that tuberculosis predated the European arrival in the new world.) Since the Indians had not developed any resistance or immunity to these unfamiliar ailments, they perished in catastrophic numbers.

*"The Crimes of Christopher Columbus"* Dinesh D'Souza

**Document 8:**

One of the most significant and visible features of the contemporary United States is its multiethnic and culturally pluralistic character. Scholars describe the United States as one of history's first universal or world nations--its people are a microcosm of humanity with biological, cultural, and social ties to all other parts of the earth. The origin of these critical features of our demographic and our civic life lies in the initial encounters and migrations of peoples and cultures of the Americas, Europe, and Africa.

Another significant feature of the United States is the fact that the nation and its citizens are an integral part of a global society created by forces that began to unfold in 1492. Geographically, the Eastern and Western Hemispheres were joined after millennia of virtual isolation from one another. Economically, the growth of the modern global economy was substantially stimulated by the bullion trade linking Latin America, Europe, and Asia; the slave trade connecting Africa, Europe, and the Americas; and the fur trade joining North America, western Europe, and Russia. Politically, the contemporary worldwide international system was born in the extension of intra-European conflict into the Western Hemisphere, the establishment of European colonies in the Americas, and the accompanying intrusion of Europeans into the political affairs of Native Americans, and the Native Americans' influence on the political and military affairs of European states. Ecologically, the massive transcontinental exchange of plants, animals, microorganisms, and natural resources initiated by the Spanish and Portuguese voyages modified the global ecological system forever.

*"The Columbian Quincentenary: An Educational Opportunity"* An official position statement developed by National Council for the Social Studies, October 1991

**Document 9**

**From Volume 1 of J.H. Bernardin de Saint Pierre's *Voyage to the Isle de France, Isle de Bourbon, The Cape of Good Hope* (1773)**

I do not know if coffee and sugar are essential to the happiness of Europe, but I do know well that these two products have accounted for the unhappiness of two great regions of the world: America has been depopulated so as to have land which to plant them; Africa has been depopulated so as to have the people to cultivate them.