

Contextualization & Synthesis... *Columbian Exchange*

From the 2012 Framework:

Contextualization involves the ability to connect historical events and processes to specific circumstances of time and place and to broader regional, national, or global processes. **Proficient students should be able to ...**

- Explain and evaluate ways in which specific historical phenomena, events, or processes connect to broader regional, national, or global processes occurring at the same time.
- Explain and evaluate ways in which a phenomenon, event, or process connects to other, similar historical phenomena across time and place

Synthesis involves the ability to develop meaningful and persuasive new understandings of the past by applying all of the other historical thinking skills, by drawing appropriately on ideas and methods from different fields of inquiry or disciplines, and by creatively fusing disparate, relevant, and sometimes contradictory evidence from primary sources and secondary works. Additionally, synthesis may involve applying insights about the past to other historical contexts or circumstances, including the present. **Proficient students should be able to ...**

- Combine disparate, sometimes contradictory evidence from primary sources and secondary works in order to create a persuasive understanding of the past.
- Apply insights about the past to other historical contexts or circumstances, including the present.

From the 2015 Revised Framework:

Contextualization involves the ability to connect historical events and processes to specific circumstances of time and place as well as broader regional, national, or global processes. Proficient students will be able to situate historical events, developments, or processes within the broader regional, national, or global context in which they occurred in order to draw conclusions about their relative significance.

Synthesis involves the ability to develop understanding of the past by making meaningful and persuasive historical and/or cross-disciplinary connections between a given historical issue and other historical contexts, periods, themes, or disciplines. Proficient students will make connections between a given historical issue and related developments in a different historical context, geographical area, period, or era, including the present.

From the 2015 Revised Rubric for the DBQ:

CONTEXTUALIZATION: 1 point - Situates the argument by explaining the broader historical events, developments, or processes immediately relevant to the question.

Scoring Note: Contextualization requires using knowledge not found in the documents to situate the argument within broader historical events, developments, or processes immediately relevant to the question. The contextualization point is not awarded for merely a phrase or reference, but instead requires an explanation, typically consisting of multiple sentences or a full paragraph.

SYNTHESIS: 1 point - Extends the argument by explaining the connections between the argument and ONE of the following:

- A development in a different historical period, situation, era, or geographical area.
- A course theme and/or approach to history that is not the focus of the essay (such as political, economic, social, cultural, or intellectual history).
- A different discipline or field of inquiry (such as economics, government and politics, art history, or anthropology) (Note: For European and World History only).

Scoring Note: The synthesis point requires an explanation of the connections to different historical period, situation, era, or geographical area, and is not awarded for merely a phrase or reference.

Note to Teachers:

The revised framework contains some minor changes to the contextualization and synthesis skills and rubric regarding these two skills; however, the main focus remains the same. By combining these two skills we are essentially continuing the contextualization strategy utilized last year which involved identifying and explaining the historical context of an item, explaining the broad context (big picture), and finally the comparative context, or “other” context. Students who can effectively complete all three steps while answering a prompt are on their way to earning not one but two points out of seven on the DBQ (1 on LE). Synthesis is also an important skill in regards to making connections among documents/viewpoints. In this activity, however, students will simply be learning and practicing the 3 part contextualization/synthesis skill in regards to an event. The notes on the next page include the objectives from the revised framework. This activity can be easily extended by incorporating a discussion or written responses to one or more of the objectives connected to the Columbian Exchange.

Note to Students:

Identifying and analyzing context is a complex historical skill. It involves simple facts such as time (when did it happen?), but it also involves analyzing themes and making connections to other eras. Using this three part process, we will be able to analyze history on a higher level of complexity and communicate effectively that we understand history.

For example, if analyze the context of English mercantilism using the three step process of Local, Broad, and Other, we may come up with something like this:

- LOCAL { Who/What/When/Where, etc.: During the Colonial Era, the British Empire developed an economic policy of mercantilism which was a policy which dictated power and strength came from government regulated trade, colonies served the mother country by supplying raw materials and providing markets, and the accumulation of wealth was an ultimate goal. Regulations such as Trade and Navigation Acts were numerous as they served to support growth of a self-sufficient empire.
- BROAD { Big Picture/Themes: *The creation of colonies was motivated by economics. Colonial economies developed and operated inside a system of rules, regulations, expectations that served the mother country. Also, when regulations were more tightly enforced, the colonists became resentful as they had experienced a period of Salutary Neglect. The implementation of mercantilism had the unintended consequence of inspiring rebellion. The development of American identity and political systems over the era did not align with mercantilism.*
- OTHER { Similar (or Different) in Kind but from a different time: *Today, the United States operates in a global economy that has far fewer regulations and restrictions and more emphasis on reducing trade barriers like tariffs and encourages the buying and selling of goods across the globe.; This economic policy is much different from the mercantile policies of Britain during the Colonial Era.*

Think of context as a three part concept...

- a. Local context...** facts about the event, describing who/what/when etc.
- b. Broad context...** the bigger picture, theme, era, why/how
- c. Other (or Comparative) context...** similar (or different) in kind but from a different time... (connecting the theme/era to another era with same theme)

From the 2015 Revised Content Outline:

Key Concept 1.2: Contact among Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans resulted in the **Columbian Exchange** and significant social, cultural, and political changes on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

- I. European expansion into the Western Hemisphere generated intense social, religious, political, and economic competition and changes within European societies.
 - A) European nations’ efforts to explore and conquer the New World stemmed from a search for new sources of wealth, economic and military competition, and a desire to spread Christianity.
 - B) The **Columbian Exchange** brought new crops to Europe from the Americas, stimulating European population growth, and new sources of mineral wealth, which facilitated the European shift from feudalism to capitalism.
 - C) Improvements in maritime technology and more organized methods for conducting international trade, such as joint-stock companies, helped drive changes to economies in Europe and the Americas.

Related Thematic Learning Objectives (Focus of Exam Questions)

WXT-2.0: Explain how patterns of exchange, markets, and private enterprise have developed, and analyze ways that governments have responded to economic issues.

WXT-3.0: Analyze how technological innovation has affected economic development and society.

WOR-1.0: Explain how cultural interaction, cooperation, competition, and conflict between empires, nations, and peoples have influenced political, economic, and social developments in North America.

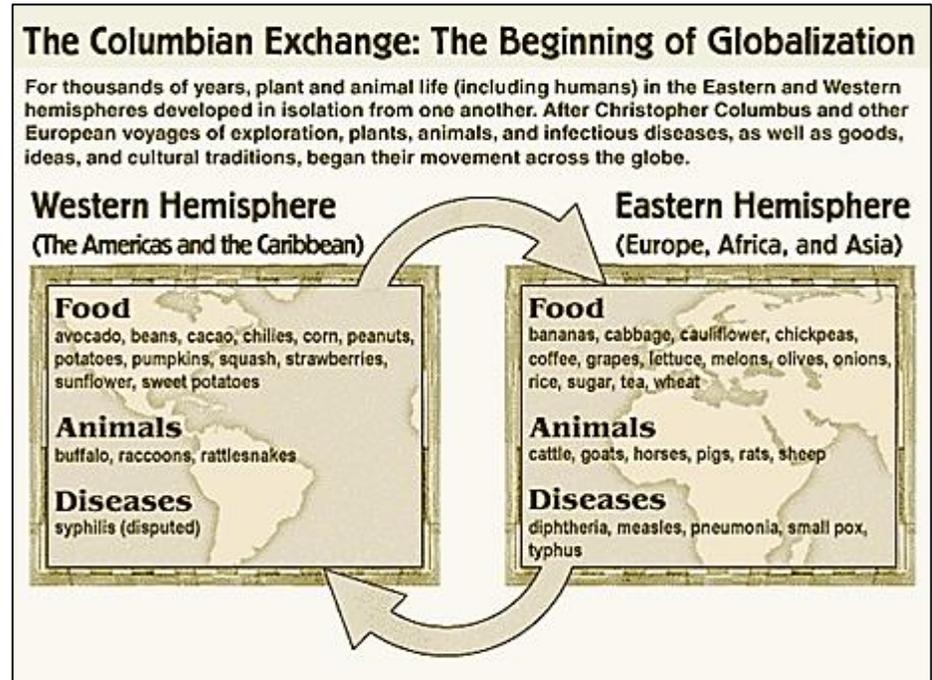
- II. The **Columbian Exchange** and development of the Spanish Empire in the Western Hemisphere resulted in extensive demographic, economic, and social changes.
 - A) Spanish exploration and conquest of the Americas were accompanied and furthered by widespread deadly epidemics that devastated native populations and by the introduction of crops and animals not found in the Americas.
 - B) In the *encomienda* system, Spanish colonial economies marshaled Native American labor to support plantation-based agriculture and extract precious metals and other resources.
 - C) European traders partnered with some West African groups who practiced **slavery** to forcibly extract slave labor for the Americas. The Spanish imported enslaved Africans to labor in plantation agriculture and mining.
 - D) The Spanish developed a **caste system** that incorporated, and carefully defined the status of, the diverse population of Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans in their empire.

Related Thematic Learning Objectives (Focus of Exam Questions)

MIG-1.0: Explain the causes of migration to colonial North America and, later, the United States, and analyze immigration’s effects on U.S. society.

WXT-1.0: Explain how different labor systems developed in North America and the United States, and explain their effects on workers’ lives and U.S. society.

GEO-1.0: Explain how geographic and environmental factors shaped the development of various communities, and analyze how competition for and debates over natural resources have affected both interactions among different groups and the development of government policies.



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Explain the historical context of the Columbian Exchange, and explain how the broad context of this exchange connects to another era/context.

Write in complete sentences!

