

America Before Columbus Questions

Student Name: _____

Prologue

- 1) What is the importance of the year 1491?

- 2) What are the big 5 domesticated animals which gave Europeans, Africans and Asians a huge advantage over Natives?

- 3) What food source fueled the Aztecs in Mexico and mound builders (Cahokia) in North America and how was it created?

- 4) What are the advantages of the potato, a food source which fueled the Incans Empire high in the Andes mountains?

- 5) What were the only two domesticated animals in the New World AND what advantages did they have over their European counterparts?

- 6) The Southwestern United States is a dry region. What native civilization was wiped out despite building the highest and largest buildings in North America after the climate warmed and dried out centuries ago? How do we know when things dried out and the last tree was cut down?

Part I. Columbus Reaches the Americas, Impact:

- 1) How many million people live in the Americas in 1491?

- 2) How are the cultures and people of the Americas different than Europe?

- 3) Why could one call the Spanish arrival a 'stampede'?

- 4) What resource does the narrator describe as the “perfect source of food”?
- 5) How does the animal in question serve as a staple food for some and a curse for others?
- 6) What was the “hidden passenger” on board European ships and what were the consequences?

Part II. The Great Dying:

1. What was the impact of sheer number of Native American deaths on Latin-American Society?
2. What was the unwelcome passenger which followed the Europeans back to Europe with deadly consequences in Europe?

Part II. A New Wave of Settlement in the 17th Century:

1. After 1492, who became the unexpected new “superpower of Europe?”
2. There was no gold in the rivers, but what did Europeans find there that amazed them?
3. How long does it take for European settlements to encounter ‘overfishing’?
4. Why were American trees ‘doomed’?
5. Other than the actor’s head who is chopping down a tree, what other areas of the Americas does the narrator describe as ‘completely bald’?
6. Europeans create the new world in the image of _____.
(Briefly explain what this phrase means)

Part IV A “New” New World:

1. List some of the new items do Europeans bring to the new world?
2. What unwelcome guests do the Europeans bring with them in their bags of seeds?
3. How do these new items impact the Americas?
4. What is the Columbian Exchange and its impact on the world?
5. What impact does the potato have and why does it thrive in Europe?
6. Only one animal native to the Americas ends up in Europe. Which animal becomes widely adopted there?
7. Why did Columbian Exchange impact America’s environment so much less than Europe’s?

Part V.

- 1) As students today, 500 years later, what do you believe Columbus and Isabella would say if they could see The New World in the present moment?