

RESOURCE LIBRARY
ACTIVITY : 50 MINS

A History of Trade in New York City

Students analyze the seal of the city of New York, use maps, and read and discuss a passage to understand how trade connected Native Americans and Dutch sailors in early New Amsterdam.

GRADES

3 - 5

SUBJECTS

Geography, Human Geography, Physical Geography

CONTENTS

1 Image, 2 PDFs

OVERVIEW

Students analyze the seal of the city of New York, use maps, and read and discuss a passage to understand how trade connected Native Americans and Dutch sailors in early New Amsterdam.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/a-history-of-trade-in-new-york-city/>

DIRECTIONS

1. Have students brainstorm about New York City, past and present.

Draw a simple T-chart on the board with heads “Past” and “Present.” Write the title “New York City” above the T-chart. Ask students what they think of when they think about New York City today and in the past. Have them brainstorm words, phrases, and images. Write students’ ideas on the board in the appropriate columns. Elicit responses from them such as tall buildings, Times Square, Statue of Liberty, and immigration.

2. Show students the New York City seal.

Project the New York City seal. Explain to students that a seal is an official mark. This seal is the official seal for New York City. First, ask students to describe everything they see on the seal. Then, ask:

- *Who do you think the people are?* (Dutch sailor, Native American)
- *What clues can help you to identify the people?* (Dutch colonial clothing, oar or paddle; Native American dress, bow and arrow)
- *What kinds of animals do you see?* (beavers, eagle)
- *What other items do you see?* (barrels, windmill)
- *Why do you think these images are on the New York City seal?*

Tell students you will investigate the last question as a class.

3. Use the map to introduce the concept of trade.

Give each student a copy of the map Early Dutch Trade in North America. Ask students to identify the location of the Atlantic Ocean, Europe, and North America. Then ask students if they have ever traded, or exchanged, one thing for another thing. Prompt them to think about trading one type of food for another, or money for an item they bought. Invite volunteers to give examples, and make sure all students understand the concept of trade. Explain that people will make a trade when they want something they think is valuable. People will also travel great distances to get valuable trade goods. Point out that in the 1600s, people traveled all the way across the Atlantic Ocean from Europe to North America to trade goods.

4. Distribute the worksheet Trade in New Amsterdam.

Give each student a copy of Trade in New Amsterdam. Explain to students that the reading passage explains why sailors traveled between the Netherlands in Europe and New Amsterdam (early New York City) to trade with Native Americans. Have students take turns reading aloud a sentence or paragraph to the class. Ask students to follow along and circle any unfamiliar words and underline sentences they have questions about. Review any difficult vocabulary and sentences together. Then have students answer the comprehension questions independently. Review the answers as a class.

5. Have students add symbols to the map to illustrate trade in the 1600s.

Have students use their map Early Dutch Trade in North America to identify the locations of Amsterdam and New Amsterdam described in the reading. The cities are marked with dots.

Have students write the labels. Then write the information below on the board for students to refer to. Have students add this information to their map as a map key. Then have them add these symbols to the map in the appropriate locations to show trade between the Dutch and Native Americans in the 1600s.

- Triangle—where the Dutch sailors came from
- Star—where the Native Americans lived
- Arrow—the path that the Dutch sailors traveled to trade with the Native Americans

6. Have students reflect on what they learned.

Have a whole-class discussion about what students learned. Ask:

- *Based on what you've learned, why is there a Dutch sailor, a Native American, and a beaver on the New York City seal?* (These people and animals were important in the early history of New York City as a trading port.)
- *Does the information you have learned make you think about New York City in a new way? Explain.*
- *How are New Amsterdam in the 1600s and New York City today similar?* (New York City is still a place where different cultures meet and a port for international trade.)

Informal Assessment

Have students write brief sentences summarizing how trade connected Native Americans and Dutch sailors in early New Amsterdam.

Extending the Learning

Have students use library resources or the Internet to investigate two other prominent symbols on the New York City seal: the windmill and the barrels. Students should be able to orally describe what each means. The windmill is a symbol of the city's Dutch history as New Amsterdam. The flour barrels are symbols of the city's earliest trade goods.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Geography

- [Human Geography](#)
- [Physical Geography](#)

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- describe and analyze elements of a historical symbol, the New York City seal
- describe key groups and goods in New York trade during the 1600s
- examine maps and add symbols to maps to demonstrate understanding of trade routes
- reflect on what they learned and revise assumptions about the identity of New York City

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Brainstorming
- Discussions
- Hands-on learning
- Reading

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
 - [Acquiring Geographic Information](#)
 - [Organizing Geographic Information](#)

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- **Standard 1:**

How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information

- **Standard 11:**

The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface

- **Standard 17:**

How to apply geography to interpret the past

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HISTORY

- **The History of the Students' Own State or Region (K-4) Standard 3:**

The People, Events, Problems, and Ideas that Created the History of Their State

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Pencils

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Required
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per classroom, Projector

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Large-group instruction

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Dutch explorers sailed to present-day New York City in the 1600s and began trading with Native Americans in the area. The Dutch eventually established the colony of New Amsterdam. The New York City seal reflects this history with its illustrations of a Native American, a Dutch sailor, and a beaver. By examining this historical symbol, students construct new knowledge about the early history of New York City.

Prior Knowledge

☐ Recommended Prior Activities

- None

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
Atlantic Ocean	<i>noun</i>	one of Earth's four oceans, separating Europe and Africa from North and South America.
culture	<i>noun</i>	learned behavior of people, including their languages, belief systems, social structures, institutions, and material goods.
good	<i>noun</i>	object or service that serves a human need or want.
immigration	<i>noun</i>	process of moving to a new country or region with the intention of staying and living there.
international	<i>adjective</i>	having to do with more than one country.
trade	<i>noun</i>	buying, selling, or exchanging of goods and services.

For Further Exploration

Interactives

- [The Hudson: The River That Defined America](#)

Websites

- [National Park Service: Dutch Colonies](#)
- [White Oak Society: White Oak Learning Centre & White Oak Fur Post](#)

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