

Activity 6. Slavery and the Slave Trade Transform Europe

Source: Blackburn, R. (1997). *The Making of New World Slavery, From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800* (New York: Verso), pp. 381, 395, 541.

Background: Wealth generated by the trans-Atlantic slave trade and trade in slave produced commodities fundamentally transformed European society. Population nearly doubled between 1700 and 1800 (A) and international trade flourished (B). The British economy (C & D) was especially successful. For much of the 17th century, The Netherlands had a monopoly on providing enslaved Africans to the Spanish New World colonies. As a result, one of the most striking changes was in Amsterdam and The Netherlands where slave trade profits supported population growth and paid for the construction of canals and dikes and the reclaiming of previously flooded land that doubled the size of the country (E & F). Examine charts and graphs A – F and answer the questions that accompany each chart. As a culminating assignment, use the information from charts and graphs and your answers to the questions to prepare a 500 to 1,000 - word essay describing the transformation of Europe during the Age of Colonialism.

A. 18th Century European Population Growth, in millions

	England/Wales	France	Spain	Total Europe
1700	5.8	20	7.5	100
1800	9.1	27	11.5	190
% change	+56%	+35%	+53%	+90%

Questions

1. Which of these countries had the largest population increase by percentage in the eighteenth century?
2. What was the total population increase for Europe in the 18th century?

B. European International Trade, 1720-1800

Country	1720	1750	1780	1800
Britain	£13,000,000	£21,000,000	£23,000,000	£67,000,000
Germany	£8,000,000	£15,000,000	£20,000,000	£36,000,000
France	£7,000,000	£13,000,000	£22,000,000	£31,000,000
Total Europe	£62,000,000	£103,000,000	£137,000,000	£228,000,000

Questions

1. Which of these European countries had the largest international trade by value in 1800?
2. What happened to European international trade from 1720 to 1800?

C. Tonnage of Shipping in British Overseas Trade, 1663-1772

	1663	1686	1771-72
Northern Europe	16,000	28,000	78,000
British Isles (Ireland, Scotland, Wales)	39,000	41,000	92,000
Southern Europe	30,000	39,000	27,000
North America / West Indies	36,000	70,000	153,000
East India	8,000	12,000	29,000

Questions

1. What was the number one British overseas shipping partner in 1663?
2. What was the number one British overseas shipping partner in 1771-1772?

D. British Profits from Triangular Trade, 1770 (Prices in British Pounds)

Direct profits are from the sale of enslaved Africans and slave-produced commodities. Indirect profits include financing, insurance, shipbuilding, provisioning, and the manufacture and sale of trade goods.

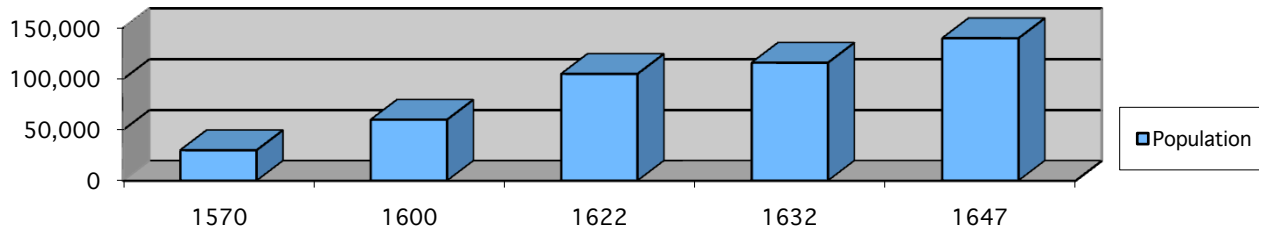
Direct Profits	
Plantation Profits	£1,307,000
Slave Trade Profits	£115,000
Sub-Total	£1,422,000

Indirect Profits	
West Indian Trade	£1,075,000
African Trade	£300,000
Sub-Total	£1,375,000
Grand Total	£2,797,000

Questions

1. How much profit was made from the sale of enslaved Africans in 1770?
2. Which was the most profitable portion of the Triangular Trade?

E. Population Growth of Amsterdam, 1570-1647

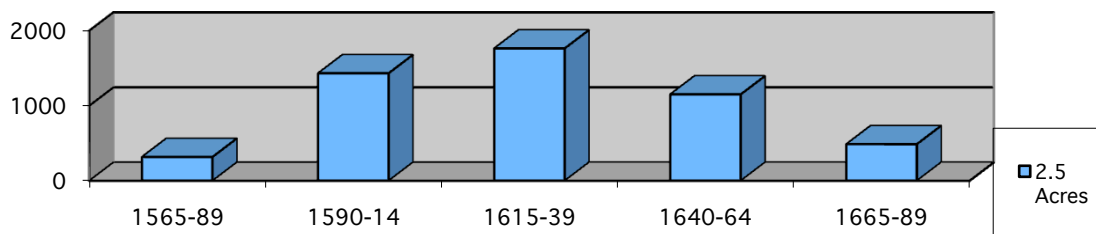


Questions

1. How did the population of Amsterdam change between 1570 and 1647?
2. Why would the population of Amsterdam be able to grow rapidly during this time period?

F. Land Reclamation in The Netherlands, 1565-1689

Much of The Netherlands is below sea level. Habitation and profitable use of the land requires an elaborate system of dikes, canals, and windmills to pump out ocean water.



Questions

1. In which time period was the most water reclaimed from the sea?
2. Why would land reclamation be very expensive?