

Content Reading: Exploration Part 1 (Print for your students to read)

In 1492, **Columbus** left **Spain** in search of a new trade route through the Atlantic Ocean to **Asia**. In October of 1492, his ships, **the Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria**, reached land. Columbus initially believed he had reached islands near Asia and called the people he encountered **Indians**. Columbus and his crew were not in Asia. They had reached **the Americas**. Columbus landed in the **Bahamas Islands** and explored areas such as modern day Cuba. There, they encountered the Native America people group known as the **Taino (Ti'noh)**. Spain was thrilled with the expedition and longed to colonize the area.

The “new” land began to be claimed by European countries. This process is called **colonization**, when a more powerful Nation controls another area of the world. This meant they could grow crops, bring back resources like silver and gold, and expand their territorial control of the world. Colonization was meant to make European nations more wealthy and powerful. Yet, this also led to hostility between the nations of Europe. Eventually, wars developed to control the new world territories.

There were various impacts on Native Americans. The Europeans wanted to use forced labor and foreign resources to fuel their own economies. Armed with superior weapons, such as guns, they easily defeated Native American opposition to colonization. Europeans brought diseases with them, such as **small pox**. The Europeans had **immunities** to these diseases; yet, the Native Americans did not, because they had never been exposed to the diseases before. Therefore, the impact on Native Americans was harsh and drastic.

Due to the decline of the Native American labor, Europe looked elsewhere for slave labor. The **Africans** had the immunities of many European diseases and were taken as slaves. Native Americans also knew the land and escaped more easily than the Africans. This cruel practice of **slavery** devastated many African societies, particularly in West Africa. By the 1800s, millions of Africans had been forced into slavery. Slavery became hereditary as well so that the descendants of slaves were also trapped in the system.