



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2009 Volume V: Evolutionary Medicine

Introduction to the Diseases of Smallpox, Measles and Influenza and the Effects on the Indigenous Populations on the Continent of North America

Guide for Curriculum Unit 09.05.03
by Todney Harris

The purpose of the unit is to teach the students at Jepson Magnet School the long-term effects of the Columbian Exchange on the continent of North America. Students will have the opportunity to learn about the causal relationships between the Age of Exploration and the unfortunate set of circumstances that led to the reduction of indigenous Native American populations. Students will also have the opportunity to identify the diseases that were transmitted from the Europeans to the Native American populations. In addition, students will learn the difference between a virus and a bacterial illness and how each is formed. Lastly, students will be able to identify when a disease becomes an epidemic and what the human responses are to such an occurrence.

(Developed for U. S. History, grade 8; recommended for U. S. History, grade 8, and Geography and Cultures, grade 7)

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