

Prompt: Evaluate the extent to which commercial exchange systems such as mercantilism fostered change in the British North American economy in the period from 1660 to 1775.

Essay:

In the Colonial Period, the colonies' economy evolved greatly. The colonies' exchange system grew into an industrial giant. The economy of the colonies sparked independent feelings that led to the revolution. The British North American economy evolved from simple farm crops to manufactured goods. The colonies' economy grew due to cash crops, slaves, and industrialization.

When colonists first settled in the New World, their main goal was to find valuable resources and gold to send back to England. When they arrived, they did not find gold but found very nutrient-rich soil to grow crops. They grew cash crops such as tobacco, indigo, and cotton. The colonists' first economy was shaped around traditional trading with Britain and the Native Americans.

Mercantilism and triangle trade evolved from cash crops. The colonies now had a commercial exchange system that led to expansion. The colonies acquired more land westward. The need for cheap labor was needed to keep up with the flourishing economy. The Middle Passage supplied colonists with slaves. Slaves were an essential part of the colonial economy. In the Southern Colonies, slaves were used to farm, harvest, and prepare all products. Slavery played a crucial role in the economy of the colonies.

Industrialization in the North led to a self-sufficient economy in the colonies. Northerners used wage labor to manufacture and sell goods to England. The colonies now had an efficient government and economy. The colonies' economy started to deter the colonies from British control.

The colonies' economy changed immensely from 1660 to 1775. From simple cash crops to a vast economy, the colonies flourished into a nation. Mercantilism and industrialization fostered change in North America. The colonies' increasing independence resulted in a war that established the colonies as an independent nation: the United States of America.

Feedback:

A. Thesis/Claim: 0 The response did not earn the point for the thesis. The first paragraph includes various phrases that point toward the idea of the prompt but do not make a historically defensible claim or establish a clear line of reasoning about how commercial exchange systems fostered change in the British North American colonies.

B. Contextualization: 1 The response earned 1 point for contextualization because the second paragraph provides a clear summary of the early colonial period relevant to the topic of the prompt, including the motives for settlement and the growth of a cash crop-based economy.

C. Evidence: 1 The response earned 1 point for use of evidence. In the third paragraph the response explains the connection between the “triangle trade” and “cash crops.” The response also explains the need to gain “more land westward” as well as the use of slave labor. The response did not earn the second point because the evidence is limited and does not build support for argumentative claims in response to the prompt. In addition, the statement, “The colonies now had a commercial exchange system that led to expansion,” is too vague.

D. Analysis and Reasoning: 0 The response did not earn the point for using historical reasoning. It provides a brief description of an increased reliance on cash crops and slavery (“The colonies’ economy changed immensely [sic] from 1660 to 1775. From simple cash drops to a vast economy”), but it is too vague and does not frame a meaningful argument that demonstrates historical thinking skills.

Total Score: 2