

Key Concepts:

This minilesson lends itself to learning four foundational social studies concepts:

- the economic concept of **scarcity**;
- the economic concept of **globalization**;
- the historical concept of **turning point**;
- and the geographic concept of **migration**.

1. Key Concept: Scarcity

According to economic theory, scarcity is a basic human problem. People will always want more of something than they can have. Scarcity can result from a resource being very rare—like gold, for example—so that it limits the amount people can acquire.

Scarcity can also result when potential consumers don't have enough money to get what they want. Say you want a new smart phone. While there are plenty of smart phones to be bought, you might not have enough money to buy a particular one. In this case, scarcity refers to the resources (money) you have available to exchange for the object you desire.

Scarcity is related to how things are valued. Something that is scarce—hard to get, like gold—will be valued more highly than something that's abundant—like paper. That can explain why gold is so expensive and paper is relatively inexpensive.

Apply the concept of scarcity to the history of pepper. Use your reading from "[Spice Migrations: Pepper](#)" to answer these questions to guide you.

- What caused the scarcity of pepper by 1500 CE?¹
- How did the scarcity of pepper eventually lead to European exploration and colonization?²

2. Key Concept: Globalization

Historians and economists study globalization all over the world and at different times in history. Technology usually spurs on globalization, whether it be advanced navigation and

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ship building in the Middle Ages or computers, smart phone and the Internet today. Every globalization event is transformational, meaning that significant change occurs that is lasting and important.

Apply the concept of globalization to the history of pepper. Use your reading from “[Spice Migrations: Pepper](#)” to answer these questions to guide you.

- How did trade in pepper between Asia and Europe have an impact on globalization?³
- How did the use of pepper and other spices lead to greater understanding between Asians and Europeans?⁴
- How did the global demand for pepper cause conflict among Asians and Europeans?⁵

3. Key Concept: Turning Point

Historians study continuity and change over time. Many things remain constant, and sometimes, things change. Sometimes, there’s a big event that leads to the change. That kind of big event is called a turning point.

Apply the concept of turning point to the history of pepper. Use your reading from “[Spice Migrations: Pepper](#)” to answer these questions to guide you.

- China’s extensive control of the pepper market caused a shortage in Europe. How did countries like Portugal alleviate this shortage and get more pepper?⁶
- How did the Portuguese’s attempt to establish trade in pepper bring about conflict in the region?⁷

4. Key Concept: Migration

Migration refers to movement, of people, of animals or of things. The six articles in this series, *Spice Migrations*, explore how spices moved, over time, from their places of origin to other parts of the world.

Apply the concept of migration to the history of pepper. Use your reading from “[Spice Migrations: Pepper](#)” to answer these questions to guide you.

- During the Middle Ages, pepper traveled from its original location along the Malabar Coast to Arabia. Trace pepper’s journey from India to areas in the Middle East.⁸

- How did China’s massive consumption of pepper bring about another type of migration from Europe?⁹
- The article states that Portuguese expeditions to India resulted in “centuries of war that broke both Indian and Arab control of the pepper trade. How did the Portuguese help move the migration of pepper?”¹⁰

1. China consumed much of the world’s pepper.

2. For centuries, the pepper trade was controlled by East India. By the 1500s, China consumed so much pepper little made its way to Europe. So, countries like Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, and eventually France and Britain began exploring other sources east and west to colonize and control the trade.

3. Trading in pepper also brought trade in other commodities and ideas between countries.

4. Because pepper and other spices were used to enhance the flavor of food, plant and animal food products, and recipes were also traded, giving Europeans and Asians greater understanding of one another.

5. As pepper was used more widely in these regions, the demand increased from those peoples that wanted it and led them to find ways to take it from those that had it.

6. The Portuguese and other European countries sailed around Africa to India, demanding exclusive access to the pepper trade.

7. When Indian merchants in Qaliquat rejected the Portuguese’s demand for exclusive access to the pepper trade, the Portuguese took their business to Kochi, another port on the Indian coast. The result was centuries of war over the spice.

8. Across Arabian Sea, through Arabia to the cities of Jiddah, Makkah, and Madinah. Then north through the Levant, (Syria, Jordan, Israel) ending In Constantinople. Pepper continued migrate to Cairo, Alexandria and west along the Mediterranean Sea.

9. The high consumption of pepper by the Chinese prompted Europeans to venture out to find other sources during the Age of Exploration.

10. By the 1500s, the Portuguese were trading across the world. Pepper migrated along with them.