

Teacher's Guide

Overview

Race to the New World is a strategy game designed to help middle school students explore the history of European colonization in the Americas by playing as Spain, England, France, or the Netherlands.

The students will not learn dates or events in this game, but rather why they occurred. Through strategic gameplay, students learn about trade, expansion, cooperation, and conflict in a way that mirrors the historical events of the early colonial period.

The game's educational purpose is threefold. First, the game introduces students to the motives for colonization, including the search for wealth, land, and resources, as well as the spread of Christianity.

Players must collect gold and food, expand their territories, and meet construction goals to win, in the same manner as historical powers competed for dominance in the New World.

Second, the game gives students a simplified understanding of the complex relationships between settlers and Native Americans. Players can choose to hire Native forces, trade, attempt peaceful takeovers of Native land, or enter into conflict with them, just as the colonial powers did in real life. Also, the event roll simulates events such as Native American raids and the Native American loss of trust with European settlers.

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Third, the game reflects the hardships of colonization: food shortages, military upkeep, and unexpected disasters. Event cards introduce challenges such as disease, storms, piracy, and famine that affect all players, underscoring that colonization was often risky and unpredictable.

It is important to note that making the Native Americans an unplayable faction was intentional. Especially in North America, there was no united Native American nation; rather, there were various tribes with different motives and cultures. Even the most unified Native American nation on the continent, the Iroquois Confederation, was prone to constant infighting and lacked true, unified leadership or goals.

Recommendations

For teachers to get the most out of this game, it is recommended that they do the following:

1. Have the students write a “journal entry” after every five turns or major event in the game. The entry should include their plans, strategies, thoughts, and the results of their actions. This not only can help them understand the motivations of real-life historical figures, but journaling will also teach them the causality of historical events.
2. Relate the game's event to the course material. For instance, if one student declares war on another student over territory, one could relate this action to the British takeover of New Amsterdam.