

Unit 1: Summative Assessment

Using the following reading and the painting, *The Soldier and the Laughing Girl*, by Johannes Vermeer you will respond to the following prompt:

Why is *The Soldier and the Laughing Girl* historically significant?

- 1 page limit-single spaced
- Place in your Google Drive folder--Title the file "Unit 1 Assessment"
- Use specific evidence from the reading to respond to the prompt
- Make sure to incorporate at least 1 of the 2 criteria for *historical significance*

The year 1657, when Vermeer's painting was being completed, was a time of large historical changes for the people of the New World, Africa, and Europe. Large maritime empires, first centered in Spain and Portugal, then in the Netherlands (where Vermeer lived) and Britain were establishing trade networks that were becoming global in scale. Their goal: to find the mythical Northwest Passage that would allow Europeans to trade directly with China using a sea route instead of land.

Financed by the wealth found through the subjugation of the people of the New World, including the Incan and Aztec Empires, the Mohawks, Arawaks, and countless other native groups, men like Columbus, Champlain, St. Lawrence, and Hudson explored the Americas in search of the route. These interactions often brought great wealth to European nations and companies, and great suffering to the indigenous peoples they encountered.

With the exploration Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans came into contact and exchanged goods, ideas, and diseases. Beavers became a highly sought after good as their pelts could be turned into fashionable pieces of clothing for Europeans; the desire for their pelts became so great that they were hunted nearly to extinction. The first multinational corporations were chartered by European nations to help with the expenses of the expeditions to the New World and Asia; the British East India Company became so powerful that it nearly ruled India through its powerful trade interests. Many of the concerns and issues we have today concerning globalization including environmental impact, the rise of multinational corporations, and the economic and cultural dominance of powerful countries over weaker nations all had their beginnings in the 17th century.