

What impact did early European exploration and colonisation have on indigenous people?

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New leaders and systems of rule:	When they colonised places like the Aztec Empire, the Spanish replaced old leaders (like Moctezuma) with new ones - often Spanish governors. There were new governments, laws, and ways of controlling the land.
Destruction and disease:	European colonists brought deadly diseases that killed many indigenous people: smallpox wiped out most of the Aztec people. Wars and violence also destroyed many towns across the Americas.
Culture and beliefs:	The colonisers often forced European culture and Christian beliefs on indigenous people, changing old traditions, languages and ways of life. Sometimes, the indigenous people resisted, holding on to their old ways.
Exploitation and enslavement:	Colonists forced indigenous people (as well as Africans they had enslaved and brought over to the Americas) into hard labour. They took away their freedom, and work on plantations or in mines.

Key dates:

1492: Christopher Columbus sets sail on his first voyage to the Americas.

1530s: Francisco Pizarro leads the colonisation of the Inca Empire.

1620: The Plymouth Colony is established.

1519: Hernán Cortés defeats the Aztec Empire.

1580s: Walter Raleigh's colonists set out to try to settle on Roanoke Island.

Key terms:

Colony	A country or area controlled by another (often distant) country.
Colonisation	When a country takes control of land and people in another part of the world.
New World	The name Europeans used for the Americas after they discovered it.
Indigenous	People who are originally from a particular place or region.
Enslave	To force someone to work without freedom or payment.
Massacre	The violent killing of many people at the same time.
Codex	An ancient, handwritten book or manuscript. Often it tells the story of a key event (like Spanish colonisation of the Aztec Empire).
Plantation	A large farm where crops are grown, often using enslaved workers.
Fortification	A strong building put up for protection from possible attack.
Mestizo	A person of mixed European and indigenous ancestry in the Americas.
Puritan	A Christian whose beliefs meant they wanted to 'purify' the Church of England and remove 'Catholic' practices.
Persecution	Treating people unfairly or even with violence, often because of their beliefs.
Settler	A person who moves to live in a new colony or land.