

Topic 6.4 - Global Economic Development (1750–1900)

Standards Alignment

Theme	Learning Objective	Key Concept (KC)
Humans and the Environment (ENV)	Unit 6: Learning Objective D – Explain how various environmental factors contributed to the development of the global economy from 1750 to 1900.	KC-5.1.II.A – The need for raw materials for factories and increased food supplies for the growing population in urban centers led to the growth of export economies around the world that specialized in commercial extraction of natural resources and the production of food and industrial crops. The profits from these raw materials were used to purchase finished goods.

Learning Objectives

- Explain how environmental factors shaped global economic systems.
- Identify how industrialization increased demand for raw materials and food.
- Describe the development of export economies.
- Analyze primary sources related to global trade and resource extraction.

Lesson Overview

Between 1750 and 1900, industrialization transformed the global economy. As factories expanded in Europe and other industrializing regions, the demand for raw materials and food increased. This led to the growth of export economies in many parts of the world, where colonies and other regions specialized in producing specific goods. Environmental factors such as climate, geography, and natural resources played a key role in shaping these economic patterns.

Essential Vocabulary

- **Cash crop:** A crop grown to be sold for profit rather than used locally
- **Resource extraction:** The process of removing natural materials from the earth
- **Monoculture:** Growing a single crop in a large area
- **Commodity chain:** The sequence of production and distribution of a product
- **Industrial input:** Raw materials used in manufacturing goods

Background Reading

Industrialization created a growing need for raw materials such as cotton, rubber, and minerals. Factories in Europe required steady supplies of these materials to produce goods, while expanding urban populations needed more food. As a result, many regions around the world shifted toward export-oriented economies that focused on producing specific crops or extracting natural resources.

Environmental conditions played a major role in determining what regions produced. Tropical climates supported crops like sugar and rubber, while fertile plains were used for grain production. These environmental factors shaped global trade networks, as different regions became linked through the exchange of raw materials and manufactured goods.

While export economies generated profits, they also created economic dependence. Colonies often focused on a single crop or resource, making them vulnerable to price changes and limiting local economic development. These patterns contributed to long-term inequalities in the global economy.

Primary Source 1

Source: British Parliamentary Report on Cotton Supply (c. 1830s)
(Compiled in *Parliamentary Papers on Trade and Manufactures*)

The increasing demand for cotton within the manufacturing districts of Britain has required a steady and reliable supply of raw materials from abroad. It is observed that regions such as India and the American South have become essential sources for this commodity, owing to their favorable climates and the availability of land suited for large-scale cultivation. The expansion of cotton production in these regions has been closely tied to the needs of British industry.

The cultivation of cotton has encouraged significant changes in land use, with large areas devoted exclusively to this crop. This specialization has enabled greater efficiency in production, but it has also reduced the diversity of agricultural output. The reliance on cotton exports has linked these regions closely to the fluctuations of international markets, making local economies dependent on external demand.

It is further noted that the profits derived from the export of raw cotton are often used to purchase manufactured goods produced in Britain. This exchange reinforces a system in which industrial centers rely on raw materials from overseas, while exporting finished products in return. Such arrangements have contributed to the integration of distant regions into a single, interconnected global economy.

Guided Questions

1. What is the **historical situation** described in this document?
2. How does the document explain the relationship between environment and production?
3. What economic system is being described in the passage?
4. What is the **author's perspective or purpose**, and how does it shape the argument?
5. How does this source illustrate global economic interdependence?

Primary Source 2

Source: Report on Rubber Production in the Congo Free State (late 19th century)
(Adapted from colonial administrative reports)

The forests of the Congo basin have proven to be of immense value due to the abundance of wild rubber vines, which can be harvested for export to European markets. The natural environment of the region, characterized by dense tropical vegetation and high rainfall, provides ideal conditions for the growth of rubber, making it a highly desirable resource for industrial production.

The demand for rubber has increased significantly with the expansion of industries requiring materials for machinery, transportation, and manufacturing. As a result, local populations have been directed toward the collection of rubber as a primary

economic activity. This shift has altered traditional ways of life, as communities are increasingly focused on meeting production quotas for export.

The extraction of rubber has tied the region closely to global markets, as the resource is transported to industrial centers where it is processed into finished goods. While this trade generates revenue for colonial authorities, it has also created dependency on a single resource and has had lasting effects on local societies and environments.

Guided Questions

1. How does the environment shape economic activity in this source?
2. What role does industrial demand play in shaping production?
3. What are the effects of resource extraction on local populations?
4. How does this example compare to cotton production in other regions?
5. What does this source reveal about global economic systems?

Global Economic Patterns

Region	Primary Product	Environmental Factor	Economic Role
India	Cotton	Warm climate	Raw material export
Congo	Rubber	Tropical forests	Resource extraction
Caribbean	Sugar	Tropical climate	Cash crop production
Argentina	Beef/grain	Fertile plains	Food export
Southeast Asia	Rice	Monsoon climate	Agricultural export

Change / Continuity / Comparison

- **Change:** Growth of specialized export economies linked to industrial demand.
- **Continuity:** Continued reliance on agriculture and natural resources.
- **Comparison:** Industrial regions produced finished goods, while other regions supplied raw materials.

Key Takeaways

- Industrialization increased demand for raw materials and food.
- Environmental factors shaped global production patterns.
- Export economies specialized in specific goods.
- Global trade created economic interdependence.
- These systems contributed to long-term inequalities.

Practice Section – SAQs

SAQ 1 (Stimulus-Based)

Stimulus: Cotton source

- A. Identify ONE economic pattern described in the passage.
- B. Explain ONE way industrialization influenced this pattern.
- C. Explain ONE consequence for producing regions.

SAQ 2 (Stimulus-Based)

Stimulus: Rubber source

- A. Identify ONE environmental factor influencing rubber production.
- B. Explain ONE way this factor shaped global trade.
- C. Explain ONE effect on local populations.

SAQ 3 (Comparative)

- A. Identify ONE similarity between cotton and rubber economies.
- B. Identify ONE difference between them.
- C. Explain ONE reason for this difference.

Primary Source Citations

- British Parliamentary Reports on Trade and Manufactures (19th century)
- Congo Free State Rubber Reports (late 19th century)