



The History of Sugar

Grade Level 4-5



Connection to The Big Race, Pickles and Skippy the Super Roo Film:

Throughout the film, Skippy teaches Pickles to say "SHFAT THAT" to foods with added sugar. This lesson shows students how sugar consumption has increased over time and become more commonplace in many food items.

Student Learning Objectives:

I can discover how the history of sugar has changed over time and how now sugar is more available and damaging to our bodies.

Content Areas Addressed:

- **Social Studies**

Approximate Time To Complete:

25-30 Minutes

Materials:

- Printed copies of the 5 clues, one clue per team. (see below)

Applicable Colorado State Standards:

Grade Level 5 Social Studies Standard 1:

The historical eras, individuals, groups, ideas, and themes in North America from 1491 through the founding of the United States government

Procedure:

1. Introduce this lesson to students by saying they are going to learn all about the history of sugar.
2. Split students into five teams.
3. Each team is going to receive a "clue" about an important part in the history of sugar. They will read it as a team and come up with a way to teach about that part in history to the class. This could, for example, be a quick skit or a talk show interview.
4. Tell students that each of their clues will ultimately fit together in a timeline.
5. Give students time to work on their clue.
6. When they are ready to present, start with the first piece in the timeline. Then present the groups in chronological order. As each group presents, hang up their clue so students have a visual timeline to view that grows with the presentation of each clue.
7. The ultimate goal of this lesson is to show how over time our consumption of sugar has changed. It began as a rare delicacy and now has transformed into something that is found in so many popular foods.
8. Continue this discussion with students to help them realize that our bodies are not meant to consume this much sugar at such a fast rate.

Optional Next Steps & Resources:

Students can compare the history of sugar to that of tobacco, a cash crop originally only found in the Americas. This aligns with the 5th grade US history standards about the development of the United States.

Clue # 1: 600-1100 A.D.

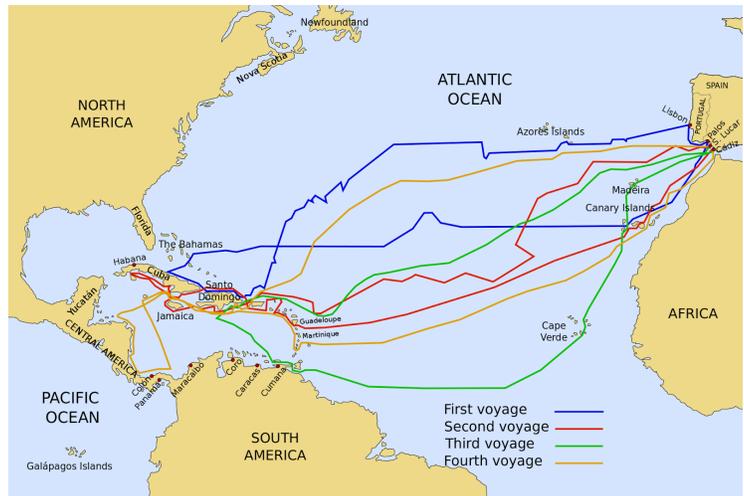


People in the Middle East begin to use sugar as art and religious displays. In Europe, sugar was very rare and only eaten by Kings. Some say an entire building was built out of sugar cubes.



Fun Fact: One bag of sugar that you can find in the grocery store today was the same amount that was found in ALL of England during this time period.

Clue # 2: 1492-1600



In 1492, Christopher Columbus brought sugar to the Americas and planted the first sugar crop in the United States.



Fun Fact: Queen Elizabeth I loved sugar so much that her teeth blackened because of it. During this time you could tell if someone was wealthy because their teeth would be black but those that were poor and couldn't afford sugar had healthier teeth because they couldn't eat it.

Clue # 3: 1675-1800



Sugar cane grew on the islands in the Caribbean and over a million slaves were brought over from Africa to work in the fields.



Sugar is found inside the sugar canes. It is a very dangerous process because the cane must be cut down and shredded to get the sugar juices out.

Clue # 4: 1800-1900



Sugar began growing slowly in popularity.
It was used as a medicine to treat
fevers, coughs, and chapped lips.

Tea and coffee truly increased how much sugar people were consuming. It was added to beverages and as it became less expensive, more people than ever were consuming sugar.



Clue # 5: 1900- Today



Today, sugar is everywhere. It occurs naturally in fruits but the problem comes when it is added to different foods and drinks. On average, humans today have forty teaspoons of sugar a day.

