

## Key Concepts:

This learning tool lends itself to learning three foundational social studies concepts:

- the concept of **climate**;
- the concept of **resources**;
- and the concept of **trade**.

### 1. Key Concept: Climate

Climate refers to the long-term pattern of weather in a particular area. Weather changes from day to day, but climate is defined longer term, usually over a 30-year period. Climate affects what can grow in a particular place, as well as the ways that people live in that place.

Apply the concept of climate to ginger. Use your reading from “[Spice Migrations: Ginger](#)” to answer these questions.

- In what type of climate does ginger need to grow?<sup>1</sup>
- Think about the climate of the Arab world. Why might Arab merchants have wanted to get ginger?<sup>2</sup>
- How does climate today affect when ginger is planted and harvested?<sup>3</sup>

### 2. Key Concept: Resources

Resources are physical materials that people value. A material becomes a resource when people want or need it. In other words, we call something a resource because it matters to us. Here’s an example. Before people recycled glass, bottles that had been used and discarded were no longer a resource, because they had no more value. They were just garbage. But once recycling became common, used glass bottles became a resource because they could be melted down and remade. In some places, they became worth actual money that would be refunded when people returned the empty bottles. Think about another physical material. Is it a resource? If so, why? If not, why not?

Apply the concept of resources to the history of ginger. Use your reading from “[Spice Migrations: Ginger](#)” to answer these questions to guide you.

- Ginger is a plant. According to the article, it has also been a resource for thousands of years. Explain why ginger is a resource.<sup>4</sup>
- How is ginger being a resource connected to the fact that merchants sold and traded ginger?<sup>5</sup>
- According to Ibn Battuta, sailors on Chinese junks grew ginger on their ships. What does this suggest about ginger as a resource?<sup>6</sup>

### 3. Key Concept: Trade

Trade refers to the voluntary exchange of goods and services. It is both a geographic and an economic concept. Individuals and groups (including countries) may benefit by trading something they have a lot of for something they are lacking. Through trade, resources get redistributed from places where they may be less valued to places where they may be more valued.

Apply the concept of resources to the history of ginger. Use your reading from “[Spice Migrations: Ginger](#)” to answer these questions to guide you.

- Why might Indian, Chinese, and Southeast Asian merchants have wanted to trade ginger?<sup>7</sup>
- Why might Arab merchants have wanted to trade for ginger?<sup>8</sup>
- According to Ibn Battuta, sailors on Chinese junks grew ginger on their ships. What does this suggest about ginger as a resource?<sup>9</sup>

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1. Ginger grows in a tropical climate.

2. Ginger would probably not grow in the Arab world, which tends to be dry.

3. In Kerala and along India’s West Coast, ginger is planted before the monsoons, in early May. In assam and the Northeast, it is planted earlier.

4. Ginger was valued as a spice and as a medicine. Therefore, it was a resource among the cultures that used it.

5. By definition, ginger is a resource because it is valued. As such, merchants can trade for or sell ginger.

6. Sailors used precious space and water to grow ginger on their ships. That suggests it was a very valuable resource.

7. They had easy access to it, and they could trade it for resources that were scarce in their native lands.

8. Ginger needs a tropical climate, while the Arab world is mostly dry. Through trade, Arab merchants would gain access to a resource they could not produce themselves.