

What is globalization?

By National Geographic Society, adapted by Newsela staff on 09.14.17

Word Count **738**

Level **580L**



A street in Guangzhou, China, with many American fast-food restaurants. In many countries, globalization leads to "Americanization." This means having American companies and goods. Over time, this makes other cultures more American. Photo by: David Chen/Wikimedia.

People, ideas and businesses can spread from one place in the world to another. This is called globalization. People become more connected and start having more in common.

Globalization In History

Globalization has a long history.

For example, Greek culture spread from Europe to the rest of the ancient world. This was thousands of years ago.

Many years later, Europeans started colonizing other countries. They took over those countries in order to get their goods.

Globalization sped up 200 years ago. Many businesses got metal and other goods from distant lands. They got these goods for little or no money.

About 100 years ago, globalization sped up even more. Goods, people and ideas could move around more easily. Some of the reasons were airplanes and the Internet.



Communication

Globalization depends on how ideas are spread. News zips around the world on the Internet. People can read the same news all over the world.

Many people in the world use cellphones. A farmer in Nigeria can talk to his cousin in New York City, New York. Nigeria is a country in Africa.

Travel



Being able to travel around the world also helps globalization. Each year, millions of people move from one country to another. They are looking for better jobs.

People do not travel just for work. Millions of people take vacations to other countries.

Travelers learn about new ideas, goods and services. They know more about other cultures.

Popular Culture

Popular culture has also become more globalized. People in the United States like listening to South African music. They read Japanese comic books. American TV shows are popular in Israel.

People also eat foods from different countries. At the same time, there are American fast-food chains around the world. McDonald's has restaurants in more than 100 countries.

Economy



People all over the world buy from American companies. Many countries buy oil from Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East.

Most large companies have offices all around the world. Many of them have moved factories to poorer countries. This is called outsourcing. The company can pay workers less in the poorer country.

Politics

Globalization can have good effects. People are able to get medicines they don't have in their country. Globalization also brings poor people new jobs.

But not everyone likes globalization. Some people worry that their own cultures will be lost. Everyone might start eating hamburgers and watching Hollywood movies.

Some say globalization is also bad for workers. Even if people in poor countries have new jobs, they probably don't get good ones. Also, when companies move across the world, they take away jobs from the rich countries.

But other people say globalization is good. They say that workers would be worse off without these jobs. This helps poor countries get more jobs and become richer.

Globalization is also good for rich countries. The people there get to buy cheaper goods.

Fast Facts:

Battle In Seattle

In 1999, the World Trade Organization (WTO) had a meeting in Seattle, Washington. The WTO is a group of government officials from around the world. These officials make decisions about trade. When governments make trade easier around the world, it helps globalization. Thousands of people came to Seattle to protest. They were against globalization. The protests became violent and hundreds of people were arrested. Many were hurt by police, and buildings were damaged. This event is sometimes called "the Battle in Seattle."

Powerful Peppers

Globalization happens through food, too. Many foods in Korea and China today are spicy. That is because they use chili peppers. Korea and China did not have chili peppers until 400 years ago, though. The hot chili pepper came from the Americas. The explorer Christopher Columbus first brought chilies to Europe in 1493. Through trade, these peppers then spread to Asia.

URL: <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/globalization/>

Quiz

1 Read the paragraphs from the section "Globalization In History."

Globalization has a long history.

For example, Greek culture spread from Europe to the rest of the ancient world. This was thousands of years ago.

Many years later, Europeans started colonizing other countries. They took over those countries in order to get their goods.

What is the BEST definition of "colonizing" based on the context clues in these paragraphs?

- (A) moving to a new place
- (B) buying things from other countries
- (C) trying different foods
- (D) selling goods to others

2 Read the paragraph from the section "Popular Culture."

Popular culture has also become more globalized. People in the United States like listening to South African music. They read Japanese comic books. American TV shows are popular in Israel.

Which word or phrase could replace "culture" WITHOUT changing the meaning of the first sentence?

- (A) music
- (B) beliefs and practices
- (C) fast food
- (D) businesses

3 Which section of the article gives information about how globalization might hurt workers?

- (A) "Communication"
- (B) "Travel"
- (C) "Popular Culture"
- (D) "Politics"

- 4 What information do you find in the section "Communication"?
- (A) An explanation of how ideas are spread around the world.
 - (B) A description of why people around the world read the same news.
 - (C) An explanation of why globalization happened so quickly.
 - (D) A description of how people in Nigeria use cellphones.