



British Mercantile Trade Statistics, 1662–1809

Teaching Pack

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Main Street, East Ardsley, Wakefield, WF3 2AP, UK

info@britishonlinearchives.com

britishonlinearchives.com

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Introduction

Britain was transformed during the long eighteenth century: economically, politically, and socially. One significant driving force for this change was the expansion of lucrative maritime trade networks, leading to the development of British and global commerce. British trading outposts, colonial plantations, and mercantile networks were established throughout parts of Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Caribbean, fuelling significant and sustained economic growth. This exponential expansion laid the foundations for a worldwide empire and enabled British consumers access to a diverse array of sought after commodities, such as sugar, rum, coffee, tobacco, cocoa, textiles, dyes, and spices. This growth came at a human cost, however, and was frequently built upon monetary injustice, exploitation, and enslaved labour.

British Mercantile Trade Statistics, 1662–1809, contains trade ledgers which chart nearly 150 years of British mercantile trade and shipping. The documents detail supply routes and record key imports and exports, and the receipt and shipment of goods at ports across England, Scotland, and Wales. As the documents in this teaching pack show, customs records chart the development of English, and later British, overseas trade, and illuminate Britain's rise to a commercial and maritime power.

The activities contained within this teaching pack could easily take around **45–50 minutes**, though the exact duration will depend on reading time and the breadth and depth of accompanying discussion.

Learning Objectives

1. **Explore** the nature and development of Britain's trade routes and relationships during this early era of globalisation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
2. **Investigate** the movements of commodities during the long eighteenth century: which products were imported and exported, and why.
3. **Consider** how Britain's commercial interests, networks, and strategies laid the foundations of a global empire.

Historical Background and Context

In 1700, England's trade was largely oriented towards domestic and European markets. By the early nineteenth century, Britain had a trading empire that spanned the globe, and the Royal Navy's unrivalled sea power controlled key trade routes. London was dominant in overseas commerce, alongside a growing influence of provincial, Scottish, and Irish merchants.

Some explanations for this transformation can be found in the customs records which survive at The National Archives (UK). The "Ledgers of Imports and Exports" (commonly referred to by historians as CUST 3) run from 1696 to 1780 and outline the goods that were imported to Britain from Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Caribbean. "States of Navigation, Commerce, and Revenue" (CUST 17) cover 1772 to 1809 and are yearly statistical tables giving detailed information on navigation, commerce, and accounts.

These trade ledgers, registers, and indexes supply detailed data about the nature, volume, origins, and destinations of Britain's imports and exports. The statistics were compiled by the Inspector-General of Imports and Exports, and a key theme in this period is a growing determination on the part of British governments to record, regulate, and promote maritime trade. This reflected the growing reach of the British state.

Also included in this teaching pack is a document from the registers of "Mediterranean passes". These were issued to English, and later British, ships from 1662 until the early 1820s by the Lord High Admiral. Part of a complex diplomatic treaty system, the passes granted immunity from Barbary privateers in the seas of the Mediterranean, North Africa, North America, and the West Indies.

Historical Background and Context (Continued)

Trade had a significant impact on British society, introducing commodities from Britain's Atlantic colonies and from Asia that were scarce or unheard of in England in the seventeenth century. These included sugar, tobacco, tea, coffee, spices, and also more developed consumer goods like printed cotton and silk textiles, wooden furniture, or fine porcelain. The supply of such goods significantly contributed to Britain's social and cultural development, transforming food, drink, and consumer products into sources of social status and ritual. Meanwhile, Britain exported foodstuffs, such as beef, butter, vinegar, candles, flax, or weaponry. These customs statistics and commodity lists have much to reveal about everyday colonial trade to Britain, but are also important for what is not noted in the ledgers, particularly the significance of transatlantic slavery and enslaved labour as part of that economic development.

SOURCE ONE

Source Intro

These source excerpts reveal the significance of Britain's Atlantic colonies in the early eighteenth century. Detailed are imports from Virginia and Maryland in 1719–1720, just over a century since English trading companies and settlers took over the Chesapeake region. Also shown are imports "From the West Indies in general". These shipments to London contained supplies of tallow, wax, wood, animal skins, beer, and wine. More exotic New World items included cocoa nuts (for making chocolate), spices, and "indico" plants (indigo dye).

Two shipments stand out: sugar from the West Indies, and tobacco from Virginian plantations. The latter had an estimated value of over £221,000: in excess of £25 million in today's money. These ledgers reveal burgeoning trans-Atlantic economies—imports of sugar in particular would grow exponentially during the eighteenth century. They also show the economic output of enslaved labour as the cultivation of both tobacco and sugar relied heavily on plantation slavery.

Source

"CUSTOMS 3/22: Imports and Exports, December 1719 to December 1720".

[Images 49–51.](#)

British Mercantile Trade Statistics, 1662-1809

Where Imp ^d From whence	For ^d Merchan ^d	Eng ^d Ships	For ^d Ships	Estimate of the first cost or Value	Amo ^t of the value
To					£ s d
London	Elephant's tooth	12:0:17		At 4:10 10 ⁷ 6	69 17 5
From	Ginger dry	4:3:7		At 23 10 27 0	7 4 4
	Rice	14:0:7		At 14 10 16 0	10 10 11
	Sugar brown	70742:1:15		At 27 10 30 0	105082 17 11
	Indico Plant ⁱⁿ	1400 1		At 12 10 10 5 ⁸	88 " "
	Lognum vite	5:2:3:0		At 4:10 10 5 ⁸ Sur.	24 8 " "
	Shruff	20 0 15		At 52 10 58 0	55 7 4
	Succoads	106 1		At 14 10 15 8	12 0 " "
	Tamarindus	20		At 1 8	1 0 " "
	Wine Madeira	2:2:5 9		At 19 10 28 10 ⁷ Ton	57 8 4
	Wood Swicks	25:5:2:0		At 8 10 10 0	227 9 6
	Redwood	9:19:0:0		At 38 10 42 2 ⁸ Sur.	398 " "
	Wool Cotton	290 1/2 bag		At 6 10 7 1/2 bag	1937 " "
	Citron water	24 gals		At	25 " "
	Cocoa Nuts	2:2:27		At	11 2 1
	Goods sev ^l sorts	0:13:0		At	16 " "
	Limejuice	30 gall.		At	1 10 " "
	Rum	22 11		At	267 4 7
	Tortoise shell	16 8		At	4 " "
				Total	108280 5 1
From	Battery	1:3:7		At 5:10 10 6 ⁷ 6	10 8 5
	Bugle great	620 8		At 9 10 11 8	26 3 4
Virginia	Drug Sassafras	389:2:21		At 6 10 7 0	126 12 11
	Elephant's tooth	134:2:3		At 4:10 10 7 ⁷ 6	773 10 7
Maryland	Indico	238 6		At 12 10 10 5 ⁸	149 2 6
	Nich & Tarr	29 1/2 bush		At 8 10 10 2 ⁸ Last	266 5 " "
	Plate unguett	36 0 ⁷		At 5 0 ⁷	14 " "
	Shruff	2:2:0		At 52 10 58 0	6 17 6
	Sugar brown	100:0:0		At 26 10 29 0	137 10 " "
	Beaver black	219 9 ⁷		At 6 10 7 0 ⁷	17 3 6
	Beaver	36 9		At 3 10 4 0 ⁷	64 11 6
	Buckandoe ⁷	19 4 1		At 2 10 3 0 ⁷	243 " "
	Cat	29 1		At 2 0 ⁷	2 8 6
	Fox orad ⁷	72 1		At 14 10 16 0 ⁷	45 1 3
	Mink	10 46		At 10 10 24 0 ⁷	91 10 6
	Otter	10 2		At 3 10 4 0 ⁷	17 17 " "

British Mercantile Trade Statistics, 1662-1809

Where Imp ^d From whence	For Merch ^{and}	Eng ^{lish} Ship	For Ship ^s	Estimate of the first cost value	Am ^t of the value
To					£ s d
London	Skins Wolf	57 ⁰		At 4.6 105.6 ⁰	1 5
	Tallow	19.2.9		At 26 to 30 ⁰	27 7 11
From	Succads	128		At 14. to 18 ⁰	16
	Tobacco	23,593,258 ⁰		At 2 to 2 ¹ / ₂ 0	221,186 15 10
Virginia	Wax Bees	10.2.12		At 4.10 to 5 ⁰	10 2
&	Vine Medera	3.0.13		At 19 to 23 Ton.	64 1 8
Maryl ^{and}	Logwood	0.5.0.0		At 10 to 14 Ton.	3
	Redwood	6.0.0.0		At 38 to 42 Ton.	240
	Stavac Bar ^{rel}	1243 1.20 ⁰		At 6 to 8 Ton.	135 3 11
	ht. & pipe	1910 3.0		At 14 to 16 ex ^{tra}	1439 1 3
	Cocoa Nut	4.2.6		At	7 9 1
	Rum	13 gals		At	1 6
	Beav ^{er} in ^{ter}	73 2 ⁰		At	7 6
	Deer und ^{er}	15483		At	2264 3
	Elk	23		At	11 10
	Musquash	392		At	9 16
	Raccoon	5102		At	127 11
	Woodshock	11		At	2 15
	Snakeroot	2308		At	17 7
	Tortoise shell	07		At	21 15
	Wood Wal ^{nut} tree	63.0.4 ⁰		At	63 4
	Sea tort ^{oise}	0.0.0		At	0
				Total	228,033 9 11
From	Elephant sketh	0.0.21		At 4.10 107 ⁰	1 1 6
	Ginger dry	603.0.0		At 23 10 27 ⁰	753 15
West Indies	Indico plant ^{ain}	30008		At 12 10 13 ⁰	107 10
	Skins bear black	13 2 ⁰		At 5 10 8 ⁰	13 19 6
in general	Beaver	36		At 3 10 4 ⁰	6 6

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Where Imp. From	For Merchants	Eng Ships	For Ships	Estimate of the first cost or value	Amo ^t of the value £ s d
To					
London	Buck under	294 1/2		At 2 10 8	36 15
	Cal	62		At 2 10 8	12 11
From	Tax	391		At 14 10 16	24 8 9
W ^{ts} Indies	Mink	1215		At 10 10 2 1/2	106 6 3
	Otter	34		At 3 10 4	5 19
in general	Sugar brown	3054 2 1/4		At 2 6 10 2 1/2	4200 3 2
	Wool Cotton	20 Bags		At 6 10 7	182
	Eleon water	14 0 0		At	14
	Pimento	26008		At	65
	Rum	102 fath		At	7 15
	Deer under	130 1/2		At	16 10
	Musquash	610		At	5 10
	Raccoon	3057		At	30 7 6
	Woodshock	77		At	8 10
				Total	5666 5

British Mercantile Trade Statistics, 1662–1809

Questions for Discussion

1. What do the imported goods say about British society at this time?
2. This ledger is from the early eighteenth century. Can you speculate about developments regarding imports from these British colonies over the next century?
3. What can we say about what is missing from this data in terms of how these goods were produced?

SOURCE TWO

Source Intro

In the seventeenth century, early trade forays of English merchants in commodities like currants, spices, or silk were often hindered by attacks from Barbary corsairs. These were privateers hailing from Ottoman-controlled territories along the Barbary Coast of North Africa. Following King Charles II's peace treaty with Algiers in April 1662, "Mediterranean passes" were issued to English (and later British) ships by the Admiralty. These documents ensured protection. Despite the name, "Mediterranean passes" were issued to vessels traversing a variety of trade routes: those bound for the Mediterranean, but also ships going to Africa, the Caribbean, America, and the Wine Islands (most notably Madeira).

The registers of these passes provide much information about maritime routes, trade cargo, ship sizes, and crews. Later registers also record initial and subsequent destinations of vessels.

Source

"ADM 7/103: Register of Passes, February 1780 to December 1784".

[Images 25–28.](#)

British Mercantile Trade Statistics, 1662-1809

N ^o of Tops	Date of Certificate	Nature	Ships Names	Of what Place	Tons	Men	Master's Names	Men Built	Built	Whether bound directly from the Place the Ship is received at	Whether Bound from thence
2861	June 14	1780 New	Pelgrim	Dover	170	6	Thomas Mark Holbeck	3	9	Pen built made free	Georgia
2862	19	Ship	Remon Emperor	London	200	6	do Thos. Dawson	1	10	B	America
2863	17	Brig	Adventure	Bristol	90	12	Bristol Thos. Morgan	25	-	P	Jamaica
2864	17	Ship	Suliana	Liverpool	100	18	Liverpl. Lamb. Smith	60	-	P	do
2865	20	Brig	Prince William	London	120	16	Thomas W. Kinghorn	10	30	B	Mediterranean
2866	20	Ship	Hannah	Whitby	300	6	do Thos. Rounder	3	13	B	Amer. & W. Indies
2867	19	do	Paulinsson	Liverpl.	170	28	Liverpl. John Daggens	80	-	B	Jamaica
2868	May 23	do	St. George	Shields	190	4	Thomas Allen Brown	3	9	B	New York
2869	June 21	do	Ann	Glasgow	101	10	Glasgow Wm. Smith	16	5	B	St. Kitts
2870	27	do	Charlotte	London	300	no	Thomas Thos. Graham	4	12	B	Amer. & W. Indies
2871	28	do	Beggy	Topham	100	8	do John Hill	4	11	Pen built made free	West Indies
2872	27	do	Hero	Liverpl.	380	14	Antimo Dan. L. Wilkes	22	0	Pen built made free	Africa
2873	27	do	Threewherry	London	700	6	Thomas Robt. Salmon	12	33	B	Amer. & W. Indies
2874	23	do	Jupiter	London	270	6	do John Disting	5	15	B	do of do
2875	30	Brig	Three Sisters	do	100	8	do Thom. Hogg	3	9	B	Madeira & Lisbon
2876	27	do	Thomas	Liverpl.	64	no	W. Haven John Barnes	7	-	Pen built made free	Lisbon
2877	20	do	Apia	Glasgow	100	4	Glasgow John Hunter	7	3	B	Georgia
2878	July 3	Ship	Devonshire	Dartmouth	400	no	Thomas Her. J. Turnhouse	7	18	B	America & W. Indies
2879	June 16	Brig	Dove	Batham	100	no	Barnstable John Tetherby	10	-	B	New York
2880	29	Ship	Teriastie	Glasgow	70	8	Glasgow Thos. Lalkeld	20	10	B	Barbados

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Names of the Custom House Officers at the Port who sign Certificates for Papers	Securities for Return of the Papers			Date of the Papers	By whom Signed	To whom sent or Delivered	When Returned
	Names	Place of Abode	Occupation				
				1784 June 16	Landricks H. Banton R. Man		N 13
				20			N 4 Mar. 1785
				20		Bristol	N ✓
				20		Liverpool	N 20 June 1785
				21			N
				22			N 23 June 1785
				22		Liverpool	N 28 Oct. 1785
				27			N 22 Dec. 1785
				27	Lisburne H. Banton R. Man	Edinburgh	✓
				28			N
				28			N
				28		Liverpool	N ✓
				30			N
				30			N
				July 1			N
				1		Whithaven	N ✓
				1		Edinburgh	✓
				3			N
				3		Barnstaple	N ✓
				3		Edinburgh	✓

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N ^o of Paps	Date of Certificate	Nature	Ships Names	Of what Place	Quar- ters	Of what Place	Masters Names	Men Borne Foreign	Built	Whether bound directly from the Place the ship is received at	Whether bound from thence
✓2881	17 th July 1	Slave	Robert	Bristol	100	no	Bristol John Thibstone	11 ~	B	West Indies	
✓2882	5	Ship	Scandinavian	London	200	8	Thames W. Chance	4 10	B	America & W. Indies	
✓2883	3	do	Henry	do	200	no	do Anthony Moll	5 15	B	Barbados & America	
✓2884	July 1	Ship	Henry & P. H. H. H.	London	20	2	do Mr. Mitchell	2 6	B	Opate	
✓2885	1	Ship	Greenwill	London	230	10	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	6 0	B	America	
✓2886	June 4	do	Colony of Am	London	215	6	do Mr. T. Morrison	15 ~	B	New York	
✓2887	July 4	Ship	Trenton	Lancaster	90	2	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	13 ~	B	S. H. H.	
✓2888	11	Ship	Catherine	London	250	10	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	8 22	B	West Indies	
✓2889	5	Ship	Cooper	Liverpool	70	4	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	10 ~	B	New York & W. Indies	
✓2890	7	Ship	Factor	do	100	10	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	4 0 5	B	Africa	
✓2891	7	do	Liverpool	do	220	10	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	4 0 5	B	do	
✓2892	5	Ship	London & H. H. H.	London	150	~	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	4 9	B	America	
✓2893	5	Ship	Mercury	Glasgow	80	10	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	15 5	B	S. H. H.	
✓2894	6	do	Richard	do	72	~	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	6 2	B	Charles Town	
✓2895	11	Slave	Happy Return	Bristol	80	2	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	12 ~	B	Madagascar & D.	
✓2896	10	Ship	Lark	Liverpool	80	12	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	30 ~	B	Africa & America	
✓2897	14	do	Two James	New York	80	no	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	3 6	B	New York	
✓2898	15	Ship	Marie	London	140	6	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	3 7	B	Madagascar & D.	
✓2899	11	Ship	Antigallian	Liverpool	130	20	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	29 6	B	Charles Town	
✓2900	11	Ship	Bella	do	70	no	do Mr. J. H. H. H.	8 ~	B	New York	

British Mercantile Trade Statistics, 1662–1809

Names of the Custom House Officers at the Port Ports who Sign Certificates for Exports	Securities for Return of the Daps			Date of the Daps	By whom Signed	To whom sent or Delivered	When Returned
	Names	Place of Abode	Occupation				
				1780 July 3 ^d	Lisburne H. Canton R. man	Bristol	N. H. Aug. 1781
				5			1 st N. B. Sep. 1782
				5			N
				5			N. B. Mar. 1783
				5		Falmouth	N. ✓
				5		Lisburne	N. B. Oct. 1782
				8		Lancaster	N. B. April 1782
				11			N
				11			N. ✓
				11		Liverpool	N. Sep. 1781
				11			N. Sep. Oct. 1782
				11		St. John's	N. Dec. 1781
				11			2 ^d Dec. 1782
				11		Edinburgh	✓
				13		Smith	N. ✓
				13		Liverpool	N. B. Oct. 1782
				14			N
				15			N
				15			N. ✓
				15		Liverpool	N. B. Aug. 1781

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Questions for Discussion

1. What do the passes tell us about the role of diplomacy in trade? What could threaten the protection provided by these passes?
2. What do voyage patterns tell us about the British empire in 1780? What can be gleaned from the nature of multilateral trade routes at this time (for example, Liverpool to Newfoundland to the West Indies)?
3. In what ways are these registers useful to the naval historian?

SOURCE THREE

Source Intro

The East India Company (EIC) was a key player in global trade in this period. From its establishment as a private trading company in 1600, the Company was granted a monopoly on British trade east of the Cape of Good Hope, and by 1700 strategic trading outposts were established across modern day India. From “East India” came spices (such as nutmeg and mace), silk, cottons, and porcelain, which were traded for silver and gold. Also included in the imports are a number of “Drugs”, derived from plants such as *nux-vomica* and *sanguis draconis*. These commodities became part of everyday life in Britain, essential for cooking, medicine, and preserving.

The EIC’s influence grew significantly in the eighteenth century, particularly after the Mughal empire crumbled after 1707. The Company amassed vast wealth and was backed by a formidable private army, eventually colonising large parts of modern day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Burma. During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Company trafficked enslaved African people to work on its plantations.

Source

“CUSTOMS 3/2: Imports and Exports, September 1698 to December 1698”.

[Images 8–11.](#)

British Mercantile Trade Statistics, 1662-1809

Where Imp ^{td} & From Whence	Goods Imported	In Eng Ships	In For Ships	Estimate of the Originall Cost or Value
London from E: Country	Wine Rhenish	10 Gallons		At 2:19 2:39 p Gal.
	Wool Polonia	51: 9: 102: 0: 0		At 7: 5: 5: 7: 0 w
	Boards Wainscot	1: 7: 24		At 4: 10: 10 6: 7: 0 N
	Clapboards	78: 1: 18	0: 0: 20	At 4: 10 30: 7: 0 20
	Deals Spruce	51: 0: 0	0: 0: 12	At 3: 10 7: 7: 0 20
	Handspike	2: 0: 0		At 20: 7: 0 N
	Masts Great	3		At 5: 10 20: 7: 0
	Masts Midling	11		At 3: 10 10 4: 10 7: 0
	Masts Small	25		At 15: 10 40: 7: 0
	Cars	14: 9: 12	0: 2: 0	At 5: 10 10 7: 0 20
	Oaken Planchs	361 1/2 Loads	51 1/2 Load	At 10: 10 30: 7: 0 Load
	Plauers	17: 1/2		At 9: 10 10 7: 0 20
	Scoops	65		At 3: 7: 0
	Spars Small	0: 2: 0	0: 7: 0	At 4: 10 6: 7: 0
	Haues Tye	387: 0: 0	24: 2: 0	At 20: 10 21: 7: 0
	Treenayls	8000		At 5: 10 7: 7: 0
	Yarne Spruce	394: 2: 26		At 30: 7: 0
	Anchor Stocks	12		At
	Bar Spruce	63: 1/2	4: 1/2	At 3: 7: 0 Barrel
	Cabinets Amber	1		At
	Grubins Richled	16 Keggs		At 5: 7: 0 kegg
				Total
East India	Cabinets Large	11		At 10: 10 10 7: 0
	Cabinets Small	14		At 27: 7: 0
	Fanes Rattan	283: 400		At 3: 4: 7: 0
	Fanes walking	202: 43		At 30: 7: 0
	Dimaty	584 Yards		At 7: 10 12: 7: 0
	Bozear stone	1160		At 4: 7: 0
	Gum Olibanum	3: 2: 0		At 10: 7: 0 w
	Signum Rhodium	1057: 3: 0		At 5: 7: 0 w
Drugs Voc:	Plutmegs Condruat	54 L		At 2: 7: 0 L
	Plux Vomica	1: 199 L		At 12: 7: 0 L

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The Amount of that Value	Subsidy	N. Subsidy	Add ^d Duty	Import	Add ^d Imp
£ s d	£ s d	£ s d	£ s d	£ s d	£ s d
1 15 0					
790 10 0					
23 7 3					
186 12 7					
306 12 0					
2 0 0					
42 0 0					
44 0 0					
34 7 6					
6 15 10½					
927 16 10½					
22 6 6					
0 16 3					
0 2 6					
421 15 9					
2 8 0					
886 16 6¾					
1 16 0					
32 3 0					
15 0 0					
4 0 0					
30562 19 3¾					
30 0 0					
15 15 0					
47 11 4					
30 12 3					
23 2 4					
232 0 0					
1 15 0					
264 8 9					
6 15 0					
74 19 0					
770 1 8					

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Where Imp ^d & From Whence	Goods Imported	In Eng. Ships	In For. Ships	Estimate of the Original Cost or Value
London from the East India	Drugs			
	Gum Benz	38 L		at 2 p L
	Gum Adjuv	35 2 23		at 2 p L
	Perl Seed	135 L		at 12 to 16 p L
	Rhubarb	320 L		at 3 6 p L
	Sanguis Draconis	320 L		at 9 to 2 4 p L
	Tamarinds	252 1/4 L		at 1 1/2 p L
	Elephants Teeth	2 3 7		at 4 to 5 p L
	Tanns Paper	8689		at 2 p L
	Mace	85 L		at 7 6 to 8 p L
	Nutmegs	24 L		at 2 9 p L
	Rice	0 1 0		at 7 9 p L
	Pepper	1063 7 8 L		at 4 p L
	Sugar Candy white	2 2 0		at 5 10 to 6 p L
	Callicot	106381 P ^d		at 5 to 12 p P ^d
Sinen	Diaper	54 Yards		at 9 p Yard
	Quilts Callico	80 7 1/2 p L		at 15 p L
	Salt Petre	190 1/4 1 13		at 10 to 11 6 p L
	Shellack	3378 L		at 9 1/2 p L
	Silk Flowers	128 Paper		at 6 p Paper
	Bengall Raw	12870 L		at 5 10 to 6 p L
	India wrought	21227 1/3 L		at 12 p L
	Slave Silk	69 L		at 5 to 6 p L
	Wastcoats	14		at
	Succads	67 L		at 9 p L
Value	Wax Sealing	2 L		at 2 1/2 p L
	Yarne Cotton	28816 L		at 3 p L
	Aggers	1136		at
	Allabans	736 P ^d		at
	Allajars	31 P ^d		at
	Alapies	363 P ^d		at
	Bamaquaz	2 P ^d		at
	Beads	84 L		at
	Cornelian			at

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The Amount of that Value	Subsidy	N. Subsidy	Add ^u Duty	Impost	Add ^u Imp
£ s d	£ s d	£ s d	£ s d	£ s d	£ s d
3 16 0					
49 19 9					
27 3 9					
36 0 0					
16 13 4					
13 13 6					
9 5 7½					
72 5 2					
32 18 9					
3 7 0					
0 1 11½					
1776 6 0					
3 12 6					
45211 18 6					
2 0 6					
5 5 0					
1055 17 1½					
133 14 3					
32 0 0					
11789 5 0					
12762 4 0					
18 19 6					
15 0 0					
2 10 8					
0 3 6					
360 4 0					
85 4 0					
332 0 0					
38 0 0					
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British Mercantile Trade Statistics, 1662–1809

Questions for Discussion

1. The spice trade was hugely significant in Britain's economic development during this period. Can you speculate on uses of different spices and plants?
2. How can these documents help to explain why a private trading company became so powerful? What insights do they offer about speculation, profit, enterprise, and competition in this period?
3. How did the East India Company change people's lives in Britain and Asia?

British Mercantile Trade Statistics, 1662–1809

Questions for General Discussion

The following questions are designed to prompt a wider discussion on the events, issues, and themes highlighted in the sources.

1. What were the main consequences of mercantile trade on Britain's rise as an imperial power? How is mercantile trade at sea related to the acquisition of power and influence on land?
2. How did Atlantic trade differ to trade with Asia? How did imports and exports change over time and why?
3. What was the significance of the relationship between naval power and commerce? How does the escalation of global trade relate to the development of a fiscal-military state?
4. How did the transatlantic slave trade fit into the development of Britain's numerous multilateral trade routes and relationships?
5. What was the impact of the expansion of trade on Britons and other peoples around the world?

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They boast extensive documentation from across the globe, providing invaluable source material for students and researchers working within a range of scholarly disciplines, including history, politics, sociology, and international relations. Our unique digital collections offer insights into global historical events and trends, typically through a British lens. They serve to broaden our understanding of history, and help us to make sense of contemporary social, cultural, economic, and political landscapes.

Related Collections:

BOA's primary source collections are organised thematically so as to enhance user experience and boost discoverability. Via careful reflection on our archival holdings, and in dialogue with scholars, we have grouped our collections under eleven key historical themes.

British Mercantile Trade Statistics, 1662–1809, falls under the broad themes of “Colonialism and Empire”, “Economics”, and “Slavery and Abolition”.

You can explore related collections, such as ***Bristol Shipping Records: Imports and Exports, 1770–1917***, and ***Liverpool Shipping Records: Imports and Exports, 1820–1900***, by scanning the QR code.



The Collection Development Process and its Benefits

At British Online Archives (BOA), our skilled team takes great care in curating and publishing our primary source collections. It is a process that yields high-quality products, as well as **substantial benefits for all involved: BOA, our archival partners, and, ultimately, our users**. Here is a brief outline of the key steps.

Based on a proposal from a member of BOA's content team (all of whom have a background in historical scholarship), **we collaborate with staff at the relevant archives, libraries, and heritage institutions**, as well as with external academics and heritage experts, to shape the collection and produce a full item listing. The next step is equally important: **the comprehensive conservation of the physical documents**. Typically, this is carried out by professional conservators at the archives themselves, but it is funded by BOA. This crucial process **ensures that the documents remain in excellent condition for use by other researchers for years to come**.

Following conservation, the documents are digitised to the highest standards, either by BOA's expert digitisation team, the archives' in-house digitisers, or by a specialist contractor. In every case, **the digitisation costs are borne directly by BOA**. Scans are then reviewed, organised, tagged, and marketed by BOA's relevant specialist teams, a process that is **verified by collection-specific editorial boards composed of scholars and heritage experts**. They likewise contribute key supplementary materials, such as contextual essays, which complement articles produced by members of our team, as well as our innovative **source-based teaching packs**.

Prior to publication, each document undergoes **Optical Character Recognition (OCR)**, meaning that you can search for words or phrases contained within images. Our published collections **employ the [Universal Viewer \(UV\)](#)**. Significantly, this offers the **"deep zoom" feature**, allowing users to examine details in a document without lowering the quality of the image. Collections that contain handwritten script also benefit from **Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR)** software. This delivers a significant increase in usability and search term accuracy.

Finally, we should highlight that the digitised images that each institution has contributed to the curation process **are made available to them for free and in perpetuity**, ensuring that they have a high-quality digital copy of the material to use as they see fit. Our archival partners likewise **receive royalties from any sales that we make**, providing a revenue stream that is welcomed, particularly by smaller archives, libraries, and heritage institutions.

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