



DRIVING QUESTION

Your lunch today probably contains ingredients from at least three different continents. Nobody planned that. How does that happen?

Answer this before the game with a gut instinct. Answer it again at the end using the three concepts you discover.

BEFORE THE GAME

Thai food is defined by chili peppers. Italian food is defined by tomatoes. Irish history was shaped by the potato. None of those plants existed in those places 600 years ago. Something moved them — and understanding what that something is tells you how the whole world got connected.

Think about what you ate today. Pick one ingredient — where do you think it originally came from, and how did it end up on your plate?

CONCEPTS TO WATCH FOR

Three ideas that explain the pattern — keep these in mind as you play.

CONCEPT 1

Diffusion

The process by which ideas, goods, crops, and culture spread from one place to another across a network. Diffusion is the engine — it explains *how* something moves.

CONCEPT 2

Hub / Centrality

A region where many routes converge. Hubs accelerate diffusion — goods and ideas pass through them faster and reach more places. Where the network concentrates, spread speeds up.

CONCEPT 3

Barrier & Isolation

Climate, distance, and geography that slow or stop diffusion entirely. Regions surrounded by barriers stay isolated even when exchange is happening nearby.

DURING THE GAME — WATCH & RECORD

For each concept below, log **at least two observations** from the game. Be specific — name the ingredient, the region, what happened.

Diffusion in Action — where did you see an ingredient actually spreading from one region to another? What drove it?

Hub Behavior — which region did ingredients pass through most often? What made it central to the network?

Barriers & Slowdowns — where did a crop get stuck, slowed, or blocked? Was it climate, distance, or isolation?

AFTER THE GAME — CRACK THE PATTERN

Your hub — what made it a hub? Was it location, number of connections, climate compatibility? Could it have been different if the game's geography changed?

Your barrier — what's the difference between isolation by distance versus isolation by climate? Did you see both types? Which was harder to overcome?

Connect all three concepts in one explanation: how did diffusion move through the network — and what role did hubs and barriers play in shaping where it went and where it stopped?

TRANSFER — SAME PATTERN, NEW CARGO

"K-pop Started in One Country. Now It's Everywhere."

In the 1990s, K-pop was a local South Korean genre. By the 2010s it had spread globally — but not evenly. It exploded first in cities with large Korean diaspora communities: Los Angeles, Sydney, London, São Paulo. From those hubs it radiated outward. It spread slowly into regions with language barriers or limited streaming access. Some places still haven't felt it much at all.

A. What is diffusing in this scenario — and is the process really that different from how chili peppers spread from Mexico to Thailand 500 years ago?

B. Why did cities with Korean diaspora communities become hubs for K-pop's spread? What made them central to the network?

C. What acts as the barrier that slows K-pop's spread — language, geography, limited internet? Is that the same kind of barrier as climate, or a different one?

RETURN TO THE DRIVING QUESTION

Your lunch today probably contains ingredients from at least three different continents. Nobody planned that. How does that happen?

Use all three concepts — Diffusion, Hub/Centrality, and Barrier/Isolation — in your answer. Draw on both the game and the internet example.
