

The Americas in the Early Colonial Period

*We are crushed to the ground; we lie in ruins.
There is nothing but grief and suffering in
Mexico and Tlatelolco, where once we
saw beauty and valor.*

—from “Flowers and Songs of Sorrow,” anonymous
Aztec poet, (c. 1521–1540)

The first transatlantic voyage by *Christopher Columbus* in 1492 was the initial event in what is known as the *Columbian Exchange*—the widespread sharing of animals, plants, cultures, ideas, technologies, and diseases between Afro-Eurasian cultures and the native peoples of the Americas.

European Interests in the Americas Columbus and other European explorers were seeking a new route to Asia and hoping to find gold, silver, and other valuable resources. The Spanish found so little of value in their first two decades of contact that they considered stopping further exploration. The English, after sponsoring voyages in the 1490s, made little attempt to explore or settle for almost a century.

However, European interest in the Americas was rekindled when the Spanish came into contact with the two major empires in the region, the Aztecs in Mesoamerica and the Incas in South America. These empires had the gold and silver that made exploration, conquest, and settlement profitable. In addition, Europeans soon realized that, by using enslaved Native Americans and later enslaved Africans, they could grow wealthy by raising sugar, tobacco, and other valuable crops.

Interaction of Cultures As the excerpt from the poem above suggests, initial contact and the subsequent conquest and colonization of the Americas did not bode well for the native peoples. Overpowered by superior weapons and decimated by disease, many native populations declined, dissipated, or were forced to submit to new rulers and a new religion.

Although European conquest seriously damaged entire native societies and their ways of life, eventually new ways of life developed out of the interaction of three broad traditions of culture: indigenous American, European, and African.

Why Did the Europeans Want to Explore?

There were several motives for the new age of European exploration that began in the late 1400s:

- Italian cities with ports on the Mediterranean had a monopoly on European trade with Asia. By controlling access to the trade routes, the Italians controlled prices of Asian imports to Europe, driving Spain and Portugal, and later France, England, and the Netherlands, into the search for new routes to Asia.
- Various inventions made it possible for Europeans to venture farther out into the ocean. The magnetic compass, originally invented in China, made it easier to steer a ship in the right direction. The astrolabe, improved by Muslim navigators in the twelfth century, allowed sailors to determine how far north or south they were from the equator. The *caravel*, a small, three-masted sailing ship developed by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century, allowed sailors to survive storms at sea better than earlier-designed ships.
- Many Europeans believed that it was their Christian duty to seek out people in other lands to convert them.
- Explorers hoped to find riches overseas, especially gold and silver.

Christopher Columbus was fortunate in 1492 to gain the support of the Spanish monarchs, Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, for his voyages across the Atlantic. For his first voyage, he had the use of two caravels and one larger ship. Columbus was successful in reaching the Americas, although that had not been his intent: he had wanted to get to the East Indies or China.

Demographic and Environmental Changes

Demography, which refers to population patterns and changes, was an important feature in the European conquest of the Americas, reflected primarily in a dramatic decrease in population among indigenous American peoples. Up until this era, the peoples of the Americas had been almost completely isolated from the Eastern Hemisphere. For that reason, they had no exposure to the germs and diseases of that region. Although European horses, gunpowder, and metal weapons were instrumental in subjugating indigenous Americans, disease was responsible for the majority of deaths, including those among the *Tainos*, a group of Arawaks native to the Caribbean. *Conquistadores*, Spanish conquerors such as Francisco Pizarro, Hernán Cortés, and Columbus, brought *smallpox* with them. Smallpox pathogens are spread through the respiratory system. When Europeans, who were largely immune had face-to-face contact with indigenous populations, they infected these populations with the deadly disease. In addition to smallpox, measles and influenza also killed many native peoples of the Americas. Historians estimate that the indigenous population fell by more than 50 percent through disease alone in less than a century. Some American lands lost up to 90 percent of their original populations.

Columbian Exchange Germ and disease transmissions were only one part of what is now called the Columbian Exchange. Another major component of the exchange was the sharing of new crops and livestock in both directions. Before the exchange began around 1500, Mesoamerican peoples consumed very little meat. Although contemporary Mexican food sold in the United States is reliant on pork, beef, and cheese, the indigenous people of Mexico knew nothing of pigs or cows until Europeans introduced them. These animals, along with Mediterranean foods such as wheat and grapes, were introduced to the Western Hemisphere and eventually became staples of the American diet. Another domesticated animal the European brought to the Americas, the horse, transformed the culture of the American Indians living in the plains region. Along with crops and livestock, the Europeans also brought with them vermin, such as mosquitoes and rats, adding to more environmental stresses to the American environment.

Conversely, European explorers took back Mesoamerican maize, potatoes, tomatoes, beans, peppers, and cacao to their home countries, where people started to grow them. Potatoes became so popular in Europe that they are often thought of as being native to certain regions, such as Ireland. The introduction of these vegetable crops caused tremendous population growth in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

People themselves also became part of the exchange. The arrival of enslaved Africans to the Americas brought biological and demographic changes. For example, Africans brought okra and rice with them to the Americas. As part of the Atlantic Ocean slave trade, tobacco and cacao produced on American plantations were sold to consumers in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Despite the fact that slave traders kidnapped millions of Africans from their homelands, populations actually grew in Africa during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries because of the nutritious foods that were introduced to the continent; yams and manioc, for example, were introduced to Africa from Brazil. (Test Prep: Write an outline of the effects of the Atlantic slave trade on Africa. See pages 323–327.)

Columbian Exchange				
Exchange	Plants	Animals	Disease	Technology/ Ideas
From Afro-Eurasia to the Americas	Wheat, grapes, okra, sugar, rice, barley, oranges, lettuce, coffee	Pigs, cows, horses, oxen, chicken, sheep, goats, rats	Bubonic plague, typhus, influenza, measles, smallpox	Written alphabet, farming technology, firearms, architecture, corporate structure
From the Americas to Afro-Eurasia	Potatoes, tomatoes, beans, peppers, yams, manioc, tobacco, avocado, maize, pineapple, squash, chocolate, vanilla	Turkeys, llamas, alpacas, guinea pigs	Syphilis	Rubber, quinine

Economic Changes

Western Europeans who traveled to the Americas were largely motivated by profit. For example, on his first voyage, Columbus was convinced that gold was plentiful on *Hispaniola*, the name he gave to the island now occupied by Haiti and the Dominican Republic. But gold was sparse in the Caribbean. Insisting on returning with something of value, Columbus and his crew kidnapped Tainos and took them back to Spain as slaves.

In the early 1500s, the Spanish established a coercive labor system called the *encomienda* to gain access to gold and other resources of the Americas. *Encomenderos*, or landowners, compelled indigenous people to work for them in exchange for food and shelter. This coercive labor system was notorious for its brutality and harsh living conditions.

While gold did not yield riches for Spanish conquistadores, the discovery of silver in Mexico and Peru revived economic fortunes—not only of individual explorers but also those of their sponsoring country, Spain. Developments in mining, including the use of mercury to separate silver from its ore, allowed silver mining to grow rapidly. By the end of the sixteenth century, the cities of Zacatecas, in Mexico, and especially *Potosí*, in the Andes Mountains in modern-day Peru, became thriving centers of silver mining. In order for this industry to flourish, Spanish prospectors needed labor. The indigenous populations would do all but the most dangerous work in the mines. In response, Spanish authorities in Peru transformed the traditional Incan *mit'a* system of labor obligation, in which young men were required to devote a certain amount of labor to public works projects, into a coerced labor system. Villages were compelled to send a percentage of their male population to do the dangerous work in the mines for a paltry wage.

The silver trade not only made individual Spanish prospectors wealthy, it also strengthened the Spanish economy. European powers at the time were adopting mercantilism, an economic system that increased government control of the economy through high tariffs and the establishment of *colonies*, claimed lands settled by immigrants from the home country. In the case of Spain, the main purpose of the colonies in the Americas was to supply as much gold and silver as possible. Another way to increase national wealth, according to the mercantilist system, was for a colonizing country to export more than it imported. A percentage of overseas silver production went directly to the Spanish crown. The empire used this wealth to build an impressive military and to establish trade with foreign lands.

China was a particularly enthusiastic consumer of this silver from the Western Hemisphere. Mexican silver, for example, made its way across the Pacific Ocean to East Asia in heavily-armed Spanish ships known as *galleons* that made stops in the Philippines. At the trading post in Manila, Europeans exchanged silver for luxury goods such as silk and spices, and even for gold bullion. The impressive Manila *galleons* allowed the silver trade to flourish. Indeed, the Chinese government soon began using silver as its main form of currency. By the early seventeenth century, silver had become a dominant force in the global economic system.

While Spain and Spanish America profited from silver, the Portuguese empire focused its endeavors on agriculture. Brazil, the center of the Portuguese-American empire, with its tropical climate and vast tracts of land, was perfect for *sugarcane* cultivation. As disease had decimated the indigenous population, however, there were not enough laborers available to do the cultivation. Moreover, many of the people who were forced to labor in the sugar fields escaped to the uncharted Brazilian jungle. In response, the Portuguese began to import enslaved people from Africa, especially from the Kongo Kingdom and cities on the Swahili coast.

Sugar's profitability in European markets dramatically increased the number of Africans captured and sold through the *transatlantic slave trade*. Sugar cultivation in Brazil demanded the constant importation of African labor. African laborers were so numerous in Brazil that their descendants became the majority population of the region. Slaves often died from backbreaking working conditions, poor nutrition, lack of adequate shelter, and tropical heat and the diseases that accompanied such heat. Sugar plantations processed so much sugar that they were referred to as *engenhos*, which literally means "engines" in Spanish. Because of the *engenhos*'s horrible working conditions, plantation owners lost from 5 to 10 percent of their labor force per year. The Spanish noticed Portugal's success with plantation agriculture and returned to the Caribbean to pursue *cash crop* cultivation, such as sugar and tobacco. Cash crops are grown for sale rather than subsistence. Soon, sugar eclipsed silver as the main moneymaker for the European empires. (Test Prep: Write a paragraph comparing the economic practices of Spain's and Portugal's colonial empires with later European imperialism. See pages 465–477.)

Political Changes

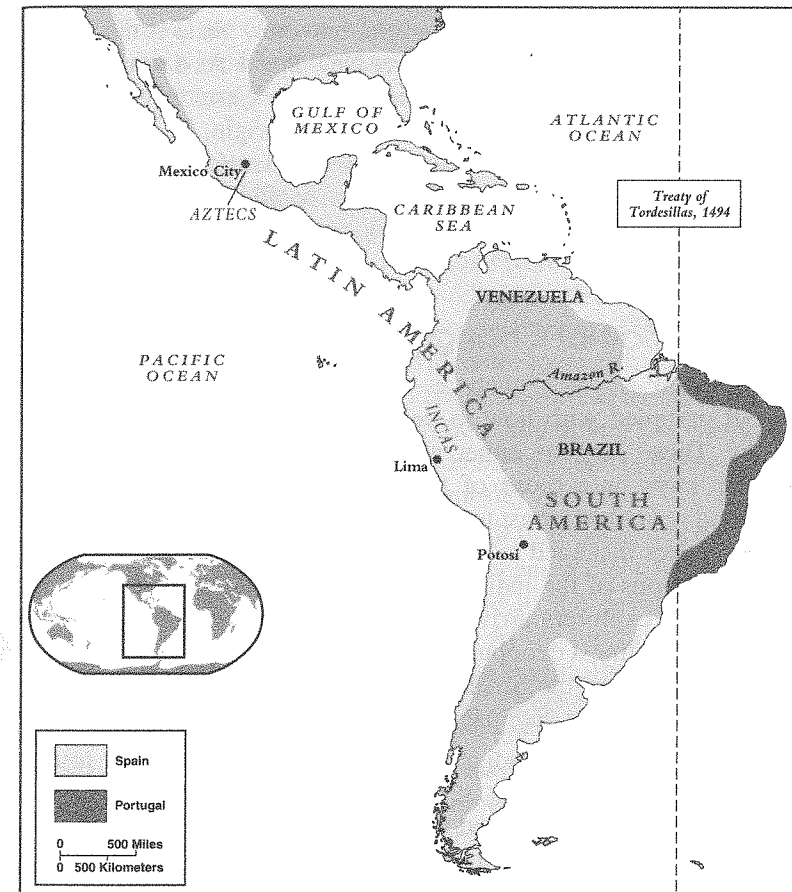
In the late fifteenth century and early sixteenth century, the *Aztec* and *Inca Empires* collapsed relatively soon after the arrival of Europeans. (Test Prep: Write a brief outline of the Aztec and Inca Empires on the eve of the European conquests. See pages 258–264.)

The Fall of the Aztec Empire The Aztecs had accumulated numerous enemies throughout Mesoamerica as a result of the empire's militaristic actions toward its neighbors. In 1519, *Hernán Cortés* and his small band of conquistadors easily exploited the divisions among Mesoamerica's indigenous groups and marched on the Aztec capital of *Tenochtitlán*. The Aztecs offered Cortés gold to go away, but this gold made him even more determined. Helped by peoples that the Aztec ruled, Cortés's forces conquered the Aztec by 1521. Smallpox also aided his victory. The disease swept through Tenochtitlán, killing thousands and weakening the Aztecs' ability to defend their capital. Cortés quickly took control of the entire Aztec empire and founded the colony of *New Spain*. The Spaniards melted down the Aztecs' treasures and sent the gold back home. They destroyed Tenochtitlán and built their own capital, *Mexico City*, on its ruins.

The Demise of the Inca Empire In 1532, *Francisco Pizarro* and his crew attacked the Inca in Peru and captured their ruler, *Atahualpa*. Pizarro

offered to release Atahualpa if the Inca would fill a large room with gold. The Inca complied, but in 1533 the Spanish killed Atahualpa anyway. By 1572, the Spaniards had completed their conquest of the Inca empire, which at its height had a population of 12 million. Some historians believe that European germs were more of a factor than guns and swords in drastically reducing the population of the Inca. The Spanish established a colonial capital in *Lima*, Peru, that administered lands from as far north as present-day Panama to as far south as Argentina.

SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE COLONIES, C. 1600



Other Regions of the Americas In the *Treaty of Tordesillas* of 1494, Spain and Portugal divided the Americas between them, with Spain reserving all lands to the west of a meridian that went through eastern South America while Portugal reserved all lands east of this north-south line. This arrangement put Brazil under Portugal's rule, while Spain claimed the rest of the Americas. In addition to establishing colonies in Mesoamerica and South America, Spain explored other parts of North America north of present-day Mexico. The explorer Pedro Menéndez de Avilés established a fort in St. Augustine on the

east coast of Florida in 1565, which became the oldest continuous settlement in what later became the United States. Spain would not be able to control all of North America, however, because the French, British, and Dutch later made claims and settlements there.

Colonial Administration Indigenous political structures in Latin America were soon replaced by Spanish and Portuguese colonial administrations. Spanish royalty appointed *viceroy*s to act as administrators and representatives of the Spanish crown. To keep these viceroys from operating independently of the crown, Spain established *audiencias*, or royal courts, to which Spanish settlers could appeal viceroys' decisions or policies. Slow transportation and communication networks between Europe and the Americas, however, made it difficult for the Spanish crown to exercise direct control over New Spain. As a result, the Spanish throne did not focus on the affairs of its colonies in the Western Hemisphere.

By 1750, those born in America of Spanish origin, or *creoles*, enjoyed political dominance in New Spain and soon began clamoring for independence from the Spanish throne. (Test Prep: In a brief paragraph or outline, trace the connections between creole elites and revolutions in Latin America. See pages 404–408.)

Cultural and Social Changes

Earlier land-based empires, such as those of the Romans, Muslims, and Mongols, all grappled with how to deal with conquered people's traditions and cultures. These empires either allowed traditions to exist or they tried to graft their ways onto those of their subjects. European empires in the Americas stand in stark contrast to these land-based empires. The Spanish and Portuguese empires managed to erase the basic social structures and many of the cultural traditions of the indigenous Americans within a century of when the first European explorers arrived. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the Europeans' actions almost depopulated the Americas. (Test Prep: Create a two-column table comparing the Spanish and Portuguese maritime empires with earlier land-based empires. See pages 77–70, 146–155, and 241–248.)

Cultural Changes The indigenous peoples of the Americas lost a great deal of their culture and history at the hands of conquerors. Conquistadors, such as Cortés in Mexico, ordered the burning of native books, which were thought to be unholy. Thus, very few original accounts written in *Nahuatl*, the language of the Aztec, exist today.

The relative scarcity of firsthand accounts from indigenous peoples has played a major role in how historians view this time and place in history. For example, because the Spanish burned nearly all Aztec documents, very few original sources exist from the Aztecs themselves. Most of the information that historians have about the Aztec comes from documents that were written by Spanish conquistadores and priests after the conquest. The Spanish point of view shows clearly in these accounts; the authors' biases and lack of familiarity with Nahuatl limits the value of these sources. However, there are some sources

that are still considered reliable. For example, in 1545, a Spanish priest named Bernardino de Sahagún began compiling the *Florentine Codex*, one of the most widely cited sources about Aztec life before and after conquest.

Spanish and Portuguese conquerors transplanted their own languages and religion into the Americas. The remnants of this cultural interaction are present today; although indigenous languages thrive in certain regions, in Guatemala and in the mountains of Mexico, for example, Spanish predominates through much of Latin America and Brazilians overwhelmingly speak Portuguese.

Religion in Latin America Catholic missionaries successfully converted most of Latin America to Christianity, specifically Catholicism. Several European orders of the Church were sent to Latin America for that purpose: Dominicans, Jesuits, and Franciscans. The major religion of Latin America is still Catholicism, although some Protestant denominations are rapidly gaining in popularity.

Numerous examples of religious syncretism originated in the Spanish colonies. Catholic saints' days that coincided with days honored by indigenous people were especially celebrated. In Mexico, a cult developed around the dark-complexioned *Virgin of Guadalupe*, who was revered for her ability to perform miracles. Meanwhile, certain syncretic religions developed that combined indigenous and Christian practices. *Vodun*, a descendant of West African animist traditions, is practiced mainly in Haiti and includes some elements of Catholicism. The religion is at times, often condescendingly, referred to as “voodoo.” *Santería* in Cuba shares many similarities with Vodun, combining Christianity and the traditions of the Aja people in Africa. *Candomblé* in Brazil combines Christianity with the traditions of the Yoruba from present-day Nigeria.

Social Changes Coupled with the arrival of Europeans was the importation of African slave labor. The combination of European settlers, imported Africans, and the conquered indigenous population led to the development of a new social hierarchy based on race and ancestry. At the top of the social pyramid stood the *peninsulares*, those who were born on the Iberian Peninsula. Next down the pyramid were the *creoles*, those of European ancestry who were born in the New World. Below these two groups were the *castas*, people of mixed-race ancestry. At the top of this group were *mestizos*, those of mixed European and indigenous ancestry, followed by *mulattoes*, those of mixed European and African ancestry, and *zambos*, those of mixed indigenous and African ancestry. Indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans made up the bottom ranks of the hierarchy. Skin color became a signifier of power and status in many parts of the Americas. Thus, racial and ethnic background defined social status in the Spanish and Portuguese empires in the Western Hemisphere for centuries following the Europeans' arrival.

The French Colonies

Spain's rivals in Europe also explored and claimed regions in the Americas. French, English, and Dutch explorers all looked for a *northwest passage*—a route through or around North America that would lead to East Asia. In the

1500s and 1600s, the French government sponsored expeditions for that purpose. In 1535, for example, French explorer *Jacques Cartier* sailed from the Atlantic Ocean into the St. Lawrence River at today's northern U.S. border. He did not find a new route to Asia, but he did claim part of what is now Canada for France. Eventually, explorers such as Cartier and *Samuel de Champlain* (explored 1609–1616) realized that there were valuable goods and rich resources available in the Americas, so there was no need to go beyond to Asia.

Like the Spanish, the French hoped to find gold. Instead, they found a land rich in furs and other natural resources. In 1608, they established a town and trading post that they named *Quebec*. French traders and priests spread across the continent. The traders searched for furs; the priests wanted to convert Native Americans to Christianity. The missionaries sometimes set up schools among the indigenous peoples. In the 1680s, a French trader known as La Salle explored the Great Lakes and followed the Mississippi River south to its mouth at the Gulf of Mexico. He claimed this vast region for France.

Unlike the Spanish—or the English who were colonizing the East Coast of what is now the United States—the French rarely settled permanently. Instead of demanding land, they traded for the furs trapped by Native Americans. For this reason, the French had better relations with natives than did the Spanish or English colonists and their settlements also grew more slowly. For example, by 1754 the European population of *New France*, the French colony in North America, was only 70,000. The English colonies included one million Europeans.

The English Colonies

In 1497, the English king sent an explorer named *John Cabot* to America to look for a northwest passage. Cabot claimed lands from Newfoundland south to the Chesapeake Bay. The English, however, did not have enough sea power to defend themselves from Spanish naval forces—although English pirates called “sea dogs” sometimes attacked Spanish ships. Then in 1588, the English surprisingly defeated and destroyed all but one-third of the Spanish Armada. With that victory, England declared itself a major naval power and began competing for lands and resources in the Americas.

At about the same time the French were founding Quebec, the English were establishing England's first successful colony in North America. In 1607, about one hundred English colonists arrived in a region called *Virginia*, previously named for Elizabeth I, England's virgin queen. At a location approximately 60 miles from the coast, they built a settlement on the banks of a river they called the James, after the current English monarch for whom they also named their settlement, *Jamestown*. This settlement was the first successful English colony in what would become the United States.

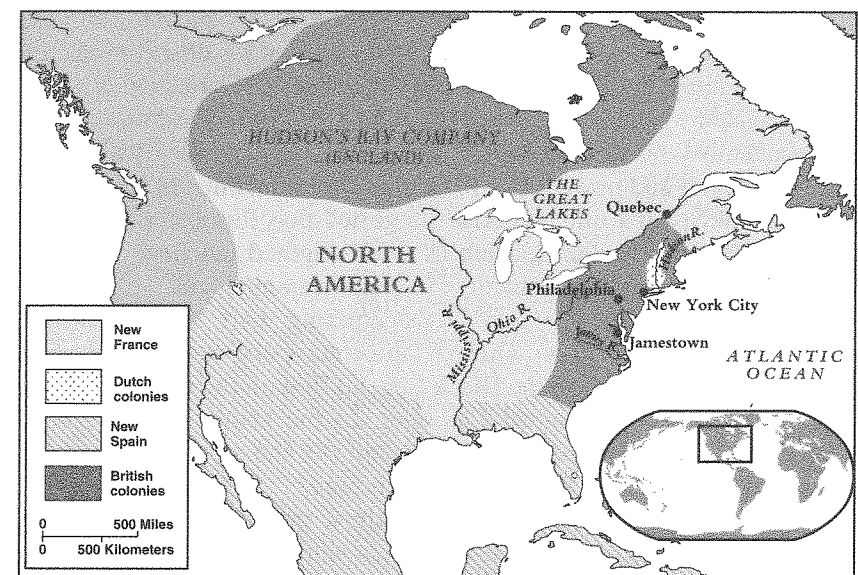
The *London Company*, a joint-stock company headquartered in England, owned Jamestown. In the hopes of making a profit, each English investor put up a portion of the money needed to fund the colony. Jamestown was not profitable at first, however; the colonists hoped to mine gold, but they found none. In addition, the town's swampy location caused many of its settlers to fall sick and die. Only food taken from the local Indians kept the colony alive. The

London Company replaced the deceased colonists by offering new settlers a free voyage to America.

Tobacco, a native plant grown by the Indians, proved profitable for the colony. By 1620, the colonists were growing a high-quality tobacco in great demand in Europe, spurring the establishment of more plantations in other parts of Virginia. As colonists took land for farming, however, local Native Americans attacked them. Not until the 1640s was the colony able to establish a peace with the local tribes.

The institution of *indentured servitude* became widespread in the English colonies of North America. An indentured servant was someone who contracted to work for an employer without pay for a set number of years in exchange for passage to America. In fact, the first Africans brought to Virginia in 1619 came as indentured servants. Virginia laws changed later in the 1600s, resulting in the enslavement of the African-American residents. Other Southern colonies enacted similar laws. Indentured servitude remained much more common in the northern English colonies, while slavery became the norm in the southern colonies.

FRENCH, ENGLISH, AND DUTCH COLONIES, C. 1650



The Dutch Experience

In 1609, the Dutch sent *Henry Hudson* to explore the East Coast of North America. Among other feats, he sailed up what became known as the Hudson River to see if it led to Asia. He was disappointed in finding no northwest passage. But the Dutch used his voyage as the basis of claims to the Hudson River Valley and the island of Manhattan, where they set up a town called *New Amsterdam*. The Dutch used this port town as an important node in their transatlantic trade network. Dutch merchants bought furs from trappers and

tobacco from Virginia planters; those goods and others went to the Netherlands in exchange for manufactured goods. In 1664, the English military forced the turnover of New Amsterdam to the English. Many Dutch settlers and merchants remained in Manhattan, however, and the Dutch language was spoken there for years to come.

Environmental Impact Contact between Afro-Eurasia and the Americas brought dramatic changes to both. Most changes resulted from the Columbian Exchange. In addition, though, Europeans used the land more intensely than did American Indians. Colonists cut down trees for farmland and created large fields that they cultivated year after year. As a result, deforestation and soil depletion became problems in the Americas.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: HOW HARSH WERE THE SPANISH?

After the first voyage of Christopher Columbus, Spanish conquistadors created a vast colonial empire in the Americas. In 1552, the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas described the greed, ruthlessness, and cruelty toward the native populations practiced by Spanish officials. Ever since, historians have debated the accuracy of his observations.

Writing in 1914, Spanish historian Julián Juderías labeled this belief in the evils of Spanish rule as the Black Legend. He argued that during the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, Europeans were jealous of Spanish wealth and power. As a result, they were inclined to believe the worst about Spain's rule. Juderías suggested that European historians focused so much on the Spanish as cruel, bigoted butchers that they ignored the positive achievements of Spanish colonialism.

Besides jealousy, another factor entering into how historians viewed Spain was religion. During the centuries of struggle between Protestants and Catholics, the Black Legend fit with the negative views many Protestants had toward Catholics. In the United States, where Protestants dominated the writing of history in the nineteenth century, acceptance of the Black Legend was common.

In the first half of the twentieth century, many Spanish historians shared the perspective of Juderías. Their works reflected the intense national pride that many Spaniards felt about their past. In defending Spanish colonization, they developed what their critics called a "white legend" to counter the Black Legend.

One American historian active in the debate over Spanish colonization was Lewis Hanke. He argued against the Black Legend by trying to show that Las Casas was just one of many Spanish reformers. Though the efforts of these reformers, Hanke, argued, the Spanish empire was "one of the greatest attempts the world has seen to make Christian precepts prevail in the relations between peoples."

Defenders of the Black Legend thought Hanke had exaggerated the strength of Las Casas and the reformers, thereby making the Spanish look better than they were. Others emphasized that, despite any attempts at reform, what actually happened was harsh.

In recent years, historians have compared colonial empires more systematically than did previous generations. While they often point out clear differences among the European colonies in the Americas, they have found ample examples of brutality in many colonies. Whether the Spanish were any worse than other Europeans remains hard to determine.

KEY TERMS BY THEME

STATE-BUILDING

Christopher Columbus
conquistadores
colonies
Aztec Empire
Inca Empire
Hernán Cortés
New Spain
Tenochtitlán
Mexico City
Francisco Pizarro
Atahualpa
Lima
Treaty of Tordesillas
viceroys
audiencias
Jacques Cartier
Samuel de Champlain
Quebec
New France
John Cabot
Virginia

Jamestown
Henry Hudson
New Amsterdam

ENVIRONMENT

caravel
smallpox
Hispaniola
Potosí
galleons
sugarcane
northwest passage
Columbian Exchange

CULTURE

Tainos
Nahuatl
Florentine Codex
Virgin of Guadalupe
Vodun
Santería
Candomblé

ECONOMICS

encomienda
encomenderos
mit'a system
transatlantic slave trade
engenhos
cash crop
London Company
tobacco
indentured servitude

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

creoles
peninsulares
castas
mestizos
mulattoes
zambos

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. What is the most likely cause for the majority of the population losses among indigenous Americans after European contact?
 - (A) Climate
 - (B) Disease
 - (C) Enslavement
 - (D) Warfare

Question 2 is based on the following excerpt.

“The vivid scene of animals cavorting around the edge of lakes that once shimmered in Mexico City was painted by Aztec Indians in the early 1530s . . .

“At the center of the 16-yard-long painting is a Christian cross in black and white, floating above a colorful, lively scene of fishermen, frogs, fish and other creatures.

“To the right of the cross and below it, the Indians painted an Ahuizotl, a mythical Aztec animal with paws resembling hands that was considered a servant or representative of the Aztec rain god, Tlaloc. To the left, there is a jaguar with a stylized plant on its back, upon which rests an eagle – a reference to pre-Hispanic place names and the kingdoms that ruled before the Spanish came.

“Indians also drew gracefully executed depictions of lakeside plants, some of which were used in traditional Aztec medicine.”

—From “Aztec Mural Melds Cultures,” by Mark Stevenson

2. Based on the excerpt, which statement best reflects the relationship between the Aztec and the Spanish in 1530?
 - (A) The Aztec remained isolated from the influences of Spanish culture.
 - (B) The Spanish had successfully converted most of the Aztec to Christianity.
 - (C) Aztec religion and culture were very similar to Christianity and Spanish culture.
 - (D) The Aztec maintained some of their culture in the face of Spanish influences.
3. What do the encomienda and mit’a systems used in Spanish colonies and the labor system used on Brazilian sugarcane plantations have in common?
 - (A) Both were coerced labor systems designed to enrich European colonizers.
 - (B) Both made use of enslaved Africans as agricultural workers.
 - (C) Both were successful in teaching indigenous peoples European farming techniques.
 - (D) Both were labor systems that provided economic opportunities for immigrants.

4. Which generalization best describes the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Vodun, and Santeria?
 - (A) A mixture of Catholic and Protestant religious elements
 - (B) A mixture of indigenous and Christian religious elements
 - (C) A mixture of African and European religious elements
 - (D) A mixture of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religious elements

Question 5 is based on the following table.

Transoceanic Voyages, c. 1300–c. 1800				
Sponsoring Empire	Explorer	Key Voyages	Purpose	Impact
China	Zheng He	To India, the Middle East, and Africa	To open up trade networks with India, Arabia, and Africa and to spread Chinese culture	China decided not to continue exploring
England	James Cook	To Australia, New Zealand, and Newfoundland	To collect botanical specimens, chart islands, and make astronomical observations	Europeans made contact with people in Australia and Hawaii, charted large areas of Pacific, and mapped Newfoundland
Portugal	Vasco De Gama	To India and western coast of Africa	To open a sea route from Europe to India and China	Portugal expanded trade and cultural exchange between India and Europe
Spain	Christopher Columbus	To the Americas	To find a sea route to India and China going west from Europe	Spain led the European exploration and colonization of the Americas
Spain	Ferdinand Magellan	Around South America to the Philippines	To demonstrate that Europeans could reach Asia by sailing west	Spain established links between the Americas and Asia across the Pacific Ocean

5. Which statement best compares the voyages of Zheng He with those of the Portuguese and Spanish explorers in the table?
 - (A) They resulted in closer contact between China and Europe.
 - (B) They focused on the Indian Ocean trading network.
 - (C) They shared some motives but had different results.
 - (D) They promoted more exploration in the Pacific Ocean.

6. Which economic system was largely responsible for the economic development of Brazil, Spanish America, and parts of western Africa in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?
- (A) Columbian Exchange
 - (B) Feudalism
 - (C) Socialism
 - (D) Mercantilism
7. What factor played the greatest role in determining a person's social status in Spanish and Portuguese empires in the Americas by the seventeenth century?
- (A) Commercial wealth
 - (B) Land ownership
 - (C) Racial ancestry
 - (D) Religious affiliation
8. Which statement best describes the way Spain ruled its American colonies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?
- (A) The monarch effectively maintained long-distance control of the colonies from Spain.
 - (B) Appointed officials represented the crown, overseen by royal courts in the colonies.
 - (C) Spanish colonial subjects elected their own rulers with the approval of the monarch.
 - (D) Spain adapted the political systems of the Aztec and Inca in ruling the colonies.
9. What conclusion about the results of the Columbian Exchange in the sixteenth century is most accurate?
- (A) Africa benefitted more than Europe and the Americas.
 - (B) The Americas benefitted more than Europe and Africa.
 - (C) Europe benefitted more than Africa and the Americas.
 - (D) Africa, the Americas, and Europe all benefitted equally.
10. One characteristic of indentured servitude as a labor system was that
- (A) servitude was passed from parent to child
 - (B) it involved a contract between master and servant
 - (C) servants had strong legal protections
 - (D) it was generally used only with skilled workers

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE-OVER-TIME ESSAY QUESTIONS

Directions: You are to answer the following question. You should spend 5 minutes organizing or outlining your essay. Write an essay that:

- Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with appropriate historical evidence.
- Addresses all parts of the question.
- Uses world historical context to show continuities and changes over time.
- Analyzes the process of continuity and change over time.

1. Analyze continuities and change in ONE of the following aspects of life in Latin Americas from 1492 to 1750:
 - demographics
 - political organization
 - social structure

Questions for Additional Practice

2. Analyze continuities and change in the global economy after Europeans began mining silver in the Americas in the 1500s.
3. Analyze continuities and change in religion in TWO of the following colonial empires in the Americas in the period 1492–1750:
 - Spanish
 - French
 - English

COMPARATIVE ESSAY QUESTIONS

Directions: You are to answer the following question. You should spend 5 minutes organizing or outlining your essay. Write an essay that:

- Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with appropriate historical evidence.
 - Addresses all parts of the question.
 - Makes direct, relevant comparisons.
 - Analyzes relevant reasons for similarities and differences.
1. Analyze similarities and differences in the demographic effects of the Columbian Exchange on TWO of the following regions between 1492 and 1750:
 - Africa
 - The Americas
 - Europe

Questions for Additional Practice

2. Analyze similarities and differences in the goals and outcomes of exploration of the Americas by TWO of the following European powers from 1492 to 1750:
 - Great Britain
 - Netherlands (Dutch)
 - France
3. Analyze similarities and differences in the economic effects of mercantilism on one of the following European countries and its colonies between 1500 and 1750:
 - Great Britain
 - France
 - Spain

THINK AS A HISTORIAN: PRACTICE SYNTHESIS

In chemistry, synthesis is the combination of one or more constituent elements into a single or unified entity. Similarly, in history to synthesize is to create a meaningful whole out of various pieces of information. *Which ONE of the questions and statements below would be least likely to prompt an answer that draws on synthesis?*

1. How were entire lifestyles and cultures destroyed due to the arrival of the European conquerors?
2. Explain the ways in which Italian trade monopoly, religious fervor, and economic motivations contributed to the rise of the Age of Exploration.
3. True or false: Germs caused more suffering to indigenous peoples than guns did.
4. Analyze the impact of the silver trade on the Spanish economy, European governments generally, the colonies in the Americas, and the global economic system.

WRITE AS A HISTORIAN: SUPPORT GENERALIZATIONS

Writing a generalization is one way to sum up information, but generalizing is sometimes justly criticized for leading to overly broad statement. To use it effectively, provide solid evidence to support your conclusions. *Which choice best supports the generalization below?*

During the exploration of the Americas by Western Europeans, demography (population patterns, shifts, and changes) played an important role in the European conquest of the Americas.

- a. Up until the Europeans arrived, indigenous Americans had not been exposed to smallpox, influenza, and measles, which are estimated to have killed 50 percent of the indigenous population.
- b. The indigenous people of Mexico knew nothing of pigs and cows until the Europeans introduced them.
- c. Western Europeans traveled to the Americas mostly to make money, but some also had religious motivations.