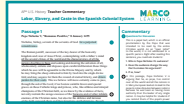


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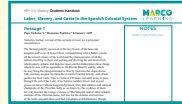
One or two class sessions of approximately 40 minutes each

Resources

1. Teacher Commentary



2. Student Handout



3. Multiple-Choice Homework



Objectives of Lesson

- To identify how the growth of the Spanish Empire in North America shaped the development of social and economic structures over time
- To read a historical source with speaker, audience, and context in mind
- To practice the multiple-choice question format

College Board Objectives from the 2019–20 CED

- **Topic 1.5: Labor, Slavery, and Caste in the Spanish Colonial System** (p. 42)
- **Learning Objective 1.E:** “Explain how the growth of the Spanish Empire in North America shaped the development of social and economic structures over time.” (p. 42)

Student Activities

- Close reading of a historical source (either in class or for homework)
- Class discussion of the causes and development of the slave trade
- Practice for multiple-choice questions

How to Use This Lesson Plan

This lesson is organized around materials related to slavery and the caste system in Spanish colonial territories. The Spanish began utilizing forced labor in the Americas almost immediately after contact in the fifteenth century. Through the *encomienda* system, the Spanish used forced labor to extract natural resources from the Americas.

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These practices were endorsed by some of the most powerful leaders in Europe. This lesson is built around “Romanus Pontifex,” a papal bull issued by Pope Nicholas V in 1455. In this document, Pope Nicholas V gives explicit permission for the kingdoms of Portugal and Spain to capture and enslave any people who are not Christian. It was used by the Portuguese and Spanish to justify enslaving indigenous populations on religious grounds and forcing them to extract precious metals and other natural resources. The intent of exploring this document is to give students an opportunity to analyze ideas of audience, perspective, and point of view in historical documents.

We have provided a teacher commentary with annotations and discussion questions for “Romanus Pontifex” as well as some suggestions on supplemental activities. The document is paired with “A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies” by Bartolomé de las Casas. These are not easy documents for students. They are dense texts that require both historical background and some help with the vocabulary. You may find it helpful to allocate some time for a reading comprehension “check in” before discussing them within the context of the AP® Exam.

You can conclude with a multiple-choice assignment to help students practice analyzing the causes and effects of the Spanish Empire on North America.



Portuguese traders attempted to forge alliances with African leaders so that they could rely on local cooperation seizing and exporting slaves. This image shows Portuguese soldiers and explorers showing respect to the King of Kongo. Portugal and the Kingdom of Kongo would be uneasy allies for almost 100 years.

NOTES

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Labor, Slavery, and Caste in the Spanish Colonial System

Passage 1

Pope Nicholas V, “Romanus Pontifex,” 8 January 1455

Nicholas, bishop, servant of the servants of God. **for a perpetual remembrance.**

The Roman pontiff, successor of the key-bearer of the heavenly kingdom and vicar of Jesus Christ, contemplating with a father’s mind **all the several climes of the world and the characteristics of all the nations dwelling in them** and seeking and desiring the salvation of all, wholesomely ordains and disposes upon careful deliberation those things which he sees will be agreeable to the Divine Majesty and by which he may bring the sheep entrusted to him by God into the single divine fold, and may acquire for them the reward of eternal felicity, and **obtain pardon for their souls.** This we believe will more certainly come to pass, through the aid of the Lord, if we bestow suitable favors and special graces on those Catholic kings and princes, who, like athletes and intrepid champions of the Christian faith, as we know by the evidence of facts, not only restrain the savage excesses of the **Saracens and of other infidels,** enemies of the Christian name, but also for the defense and increase of the faith vanquish them and their kingdoms and habitations, though situated in the remotest parts unknown to us...

We have lately heard, not without great joy and gratification, how our beloved son, the noble personage **Henry, infante of Portugal...** has not ceased for twenty-five years past to send almost yearly an army of the peoples of the said kingdoms with the greatest labor, danger, and expense, in very swift ships called **caravels,** to explore the sea and coast lands toward the south and the Antarctic pole.

And so it came to pass that when a number of ships of this kind had explored and **taken possession of** very many harbors, islands, and seas, they at length came to the province of Guinea, and having taken possession of some islands and harbors and the sea adjacent to that province, sailing farther they came to the mouth of a certain great river commonly supposed to be the Nile, and war was waged for some years against the peoples of those parts in the name of the said **King Alfonso and of the infante,** and in it very many islands in that neighborhood were subdued and peacefully possessed, as they are still possessed together with the adjacent sea.

Commentary

1 Questions for Discussion

This is a papal bull, which is an official proclamation by the Pope that was intended to be read by the entire Christian world. As an “open letter” to the world, it is not addressed to a specific person. Right after reading this sentence, you could ask students:

1. Who is Pope Nicholas V’s audience?
2. Does the audience change the way that he makes his argument?
3. If so, how?

- ② In this passage, Pope Nicholas V is arguing that he, as pope, has control over all the world and all the nations in it. Many European leaders looked to the pope to solve disputes between nations because he was seen as having more authority than the leader of any single nation. It may be helpful for students if you remind them of the pope’s power and reputation in the fifteenth century.

3 Questions for Discussion

Pope Nicholas V argues that he can make decisions about African lands on the basis of his religious authority. Religion was only one way that European expansion into Africa was justified. You could ask students:

1. In addition to religion, how did Europeans justify their explorations of Africa?

- ④ The term “Saracen” was used by pre-modern Christian writers to refer to Arab Muslims.
- ⑤ Henry, infante of Portugal, is sometimes called Prince Henry the Navigator.
- ⑥ Caravels were an important technological innovation that allowed for more accurate navigation around Africa.

7 Questions for Discussion

1. What does it mean for a European nation to have “taken possession of” African lands?

- ⑧ King Alfonso was the king of Portugal. Prince Henry (the infante) was his son and heir.

Thence also many Guineamen and other negroes, taken by force, and some by barter of unprohibited articles, or by other lawful contract of purchase, have been sent to the said kingdoms. A large number of these have been converted to the Catholic faith, and it is hoped, by the help of divine mercy, that if such progress be continued with them, either those peoples will be converted to the faith or at least the souls of many of them will be gained for Christ...

We [therefore] weighing all and singular the premises with due meditation, and noting that since we had formerly by other letters of ours granted among other things free and ample faculty to the aforesaid King Alfonso—to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit—by having secured the said faculty, the said King Alfonso, or, by his authority, the aforesaid infante, justly and lawfully has acquired and possessed, and doth possess, these islands, lands, harbors, and seas, and they do of right belong and pertain to the said King Alfonso and his successors...in the course of these letters we declare to be extended from the capes of Bojador and of Não, as far as through all Guinea, and beyond toward that southern shore, has belonged and pertained, and forever of right belongs and pertains, to the said King Alfonso, his successors, and the infante, and not to any others.

And we decree that whosoever shall infringe these orders...shall incur the sentence of excommunication.... Therefore let no one infringe or with rash boldness contravene this our declaration, constitution, gift, grant, appropriation, decree, supplication, exhortation, injunction, inhibition, mandate, and will. But if anyone should presume to do so, be it known to him that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul. Given at Rome, at Saint Peter's, on the eighth day of January, in the year of the incarnation of our Lord one thousand four hundred and fifty-four, and in the eighth year of our pontificate.

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9 Questions for Discussion

European kingdoms used exploration and warfare in Africa to gather slaves to bring back to Europe. This passage mentions that some slaves were seized by force and others were purchased.

1. Why did Europeans take slaves from Guinea?
2. How did Europeans acquire slaves from Africa?

10 Many slaves were forced to convert religions when they were captured in order to save their own lives. Europeans justified slavery by arguing that the forced conversions benefited the slaves.

11 Discussion

This is probably the most famous portion of "Romanus Pontifex." With this line, Pope Nicholas V grants King Alfonso the right to forcibly enslave anyone he considers one of the "enemies of Christ." European leaders, such as King Alfonso, used this to justify the growth and development of Atlantic slavery. This papal bull was used to justify removing people from Africa and, later, enslaving native populations in the Americas.

As a discussion exercise, students may find it helpful to discuss the impact of just this one line in small groups. If the technology permits, students can be encouraged to participate in a discussion board exercise where they come together to discuss the impact of this line on the development of the Atlantic slave trade as a whole.

12 Questions for Discussion

Pope Nicholas V is declaring large portions of Africa as exclusively belonging to Portugal. It may be helpful to lead students in a discussion exercise about the rights and voices of African people during the age of exploration. You may consider asking:

1. Whose point of view is left out of this decree?
2. Why does that matter?

13 Excommunication was the worst punishment that the pope could impose on a person. Someone who was excommunicated was considered no longer part of the Church. They could be subjected to the same treatment as the "enemies of Christ" mentioned earlier in the document.

Passage 2

Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, 1542

And this was the **great care they had of them**, they sent the Males to the Mines to dig and bring away the **Gold**, which is an intollerable labor; but the Women they made use of to Manure and Till the ground, which is a toil most irksome even to Men of the strongest and most robust constitutions, allowing them no other food but **Herbage**, and such kind of unsubstantial nutriment, so that the Nursing Womens Milk was exsiccated and so dried up, that the young Infants lately brought forth, all perished, and females being separated from and debarred cohabitation with Men, there was no **Prolifcation or raising up issue among them**. The Men died in Mines, hunger starved and oppressed with labor, and the Women perished in the Fields, harrassed and broken with the like Evils and Calamities.

①

②

③

④

Commentary

1 Questions for Discussion

Most of the official justifications for slavery used the language of religion to argue that slavery was a way to care for the indigenous people's souls. The "Romanus Pontifex" paired with this document heavily stresses the idea that slavers were acting in a paternalistic, and ultimately beneficial, manner.

In this passage, las Casas gives an eyewitness report of how that language of religious care was applied in the Americas.

1. Who is las Casas's audience?
2. Does the audience change the way that he makes his argument?
3. If so, how?

- ② The Spanish colonial empire in the Americas was heavily invested in extracting precious metals.

As a supplemental activity, you can ask students to discuss the effect of focusing on precious metals on the Atlantic economy as a whole. If circumstances permit, you may want to consider connecting this passage to a discussion board about precious metals, specie currency, and mercantilism.

- ③ This may be an unfamiliar word for students. There are several strategies that you can use to teach students how to handle unfamiliar vocabular on the AP® Exam. One strategy is to use context clues to determine meaning. In this case, the author makes it clear that the food is not nutritious enough to sustain hard labor.

4 Questions for Discussion

1. Can you put this section in your own words?
2. Why is las Casas concerned that the indigenous people are not having children?
3. What does this demonstrate about the Spanish colonial empire?

Thus an infinite number of Inhabitants that formerly peopled this Island were exterminated and dwindled away to nothing by such Consumptions. They were compelled to carry burthens of eighty or one hundred pound weight, and that an hundred or two hundred miles compleat: and the Spaniards were born by them on the Shoulders in a pensil Vehicle or Carriage, or kind of Beds made of Network by the Indians; for in Truth they made use of them as Beasts to carry the burthens and cumbersom baggage of their journeys, insomuch that it frequently happened, that the Shoulders and Backs of the Indians were deeply marked with their scourges and stripes, just as they used to serve a tired Jade, accustomed to burthens. And as to those slashes with whips, blows with staves, cuffs and boxes, maledictions and curses, with a Thousand of such kind of Torments they suffered during the fatigue of their laborious journeys it would require a long tract of time, and many Reams of Paper to describe them, and when all were done would only create Horror and Consternation in the Reader.

⑤

⑤ In order to implement such a widespread system of forced labor, the Spanish had to develop a social system that treated indigenous people as less than human. The caste system that they developed carefully defined the status of each person in their colonial empire. Indigenous people were placed lowest in the caste system, followed by people with mixed ethnic identities. People with purely Spanish identities ruled from the top of the caste system.

⑥ Questions for Discussion

1. What does las Casas see as the future of labor in the Spanish colonial empire?
2. Does las Casas see any way to stop the abuse of the indigenous people?

⑥

Labor, Slavery, and Caste in the Spanish Colonial System**Passage 1****Pope Nicholas V, “Romanus Pontifex,” 8 January 1455**

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NOTES

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Passage 2

Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, 1542

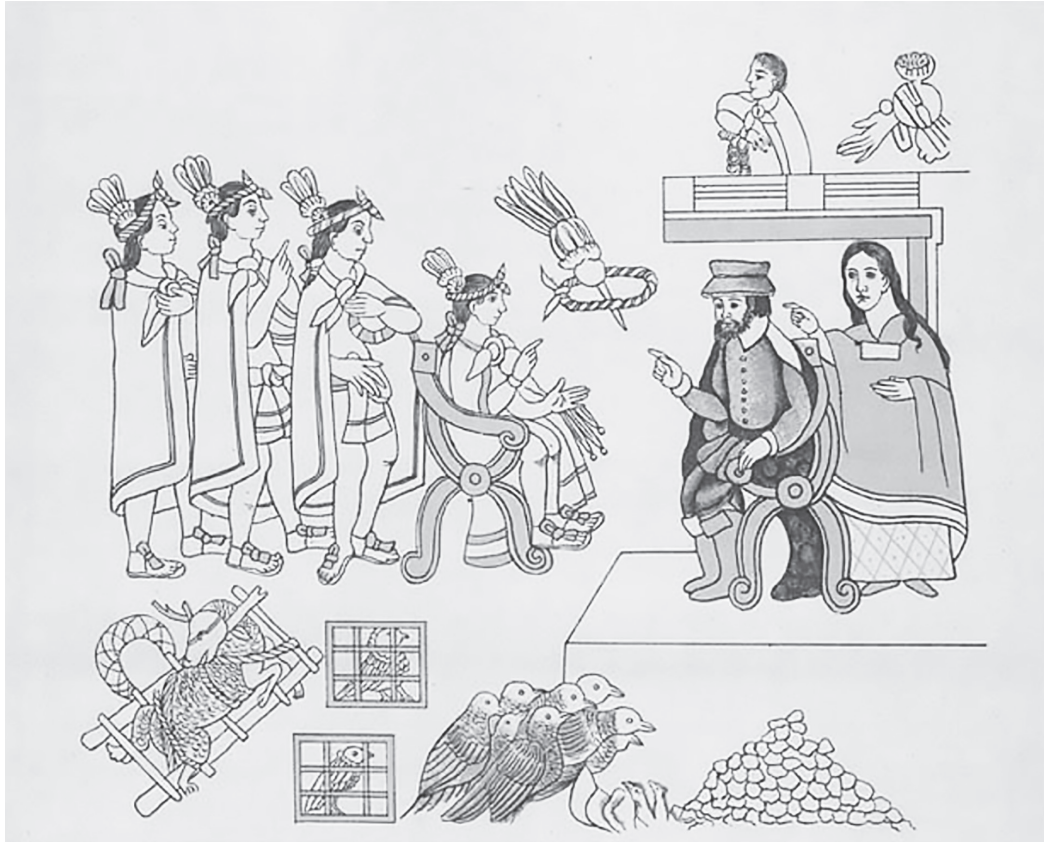
And this was the great care they had of them, they sent the Males to the Mines to dig and bring away the Gold, which is an intollerable labor; but the Women they made use of to Manure and Till the ground, which is a toil most irksome even to Men of the strongest and most robust constitutions, allowing them no other food but Herbage, and such kind of unsubstantial nutriment, so that the Nursing Womens Milk was exsiccated and so dried up, that the young Infants lately brought forth, all perished, and females being separated from and debarred cohabitation with Men, there was no Prolification or raising up issue among them. The Men died in Mines, hunger starved and oppressed with labor, and the Women perished in the Fields, harrassed and broken with the like Evils and Calamities.

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Questions 1-3 refer to the image below.



Diego Muñoz Camargo, *History of Tlaxcala*, published 1585. The illustrated codex was produced by a Spanish colonial officer who was the child of a Spanish father and an Indian mother. This image records the Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortes meeting Moctezuma II, the ruler of Tenochtitlan.

- The image most directly reflects which of the following developments during the end of the sixteenth century?
 - The desire of many indigenous groups to claim independence from Spain
 - The series of atrocities committed against the indigenous people by the Spanish
 - The limited interaction between Spanish conquistadors and indigenous political leaders
 - The attempt by some indigenous groups to retain cordial relationships with the Spanish
- The image was most likely intended to promote
 - more equitable Spanish leadership in the colonies.
 - immigration to the Spanish colonies.
 - the Spanish caste system.
 - increased tribute for indigenous leadership.
- In the sixteenth century, the idealized relationship between indigenous and Spanish leadership depicted in the image would be most challenged by
 - a culture of competition that pitted the Spanish against the Portuguese.
 - an increased need for Spanish conquistadors to use indigenous translators.
 - the realities of forced labor under the *encomienda* system.
 - the long-term decline of indigenous populations due to disease.