

World History One DBQ:
Global Exploration's Consequences for Native Americans



*Bartholome de Las Casas Condemning the Cruel Treatment
of the Indians by the Conquistadors*

The Following task is based on the accompanying documents 1-8. Some documents have been edited for this exercise. The task is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the sources of the documents and the purpose of the document and the author's point of view.

Directions:

1. Read the Historical Context & Answer the corresponding worksheet questions
2. Read the Documents & Answer the corresponding worksheet questions
3. Create a Thesis to answer the question presented in the “Task”
4. Write an Essay to answer the question (**The essay requires an outline, Introduction paragraph, 3 supporting body paragraphs and a Conclusion**)

-or-

Create a project which will present an answer to the question – (**The Project must still integrate a thesis & three items supporting the thesis & a Conclusion**)

Historical Context:

In the year 1492 Columbus landed on the shores of the American Continents. He was shortly followed by many more European Explorers. Most of these explorers had braved the journey across the Atlantic with the three “G’s” in mind: Gold to make them wealthy, Glory to make them heroes and God to help them spread their religion.

However the American Continents were not uninhabited – there were millions and millions of people already there. These Native Americans did not have much say in whether or not those European Explorers would be able to fulfill their hopes and dreams of the three “G’s”. The Europeans had far greater technology and weapons than the Natives and were easily able to enforce their will upon those they encountered. The Europeans also had another thing on their side – disease – but that is another story.

As a result the Native Americans faced a variety of consequences at the hands of these European Explorers because of their motivations- the three “G’s”.

TASK: Analyze how the motivations for exploration impacted the treatment of Native Americans by European Explorers?

Document #1 Letter of Christopher Columbus to Luis de Sant Angel, 1493

Because of this voyage their Highnesses will see how I can give them as much gold, spices, cotton, and as many Indian slaves as they choose to send for, if they will give me a little assistance.

The eternal and almighty God, our Lord, gives to all who walk in His way, victory over things apparently impossible. Our God has given victory to our most illustrious King and Queen, and to their kingdoms rendered famous by this glorious event.

Document #2 Law of Burgos, 1512 Regulation of the Spanish Crown

Whereas, the King, my Lord and Father, and the Queen, my Mistress and Mother (may she rest in glory!), always desired that the chiefs and Indians of the Island of Española be brought to a knowledge of our Holy Catholic Faith, ... it has become evident that nothing can be done to bring them to a knowledge of our Faith (necessary for their salvation)...

For these reasons and for many others, it was agreed that for their own good the chiefs and Indians should be moved to where we can watch over them. Each Indian will then be required to collect a required amount of gold for five months in the year and, at the end of these five months, the said Indians shall rest forty days ...we order and command that no person or persons shall dare to beat any Indians with sticks, or whip him, or call him dog, or address him by any name other than his proper name alone

Document #3 Friar Bartolome de Las Casas, The Black Legend, 1542

New Spain [Mexico] was discovered in 1517 and, at the time, great atrocities were committed against the indigenous people of the region and some were killed by members of the expedition. In 1518 the so-called Christians set about stealing from the people and murdering them on the pretence of settling the area.

And from that year until this--and it is now 1542--the great iniquities and injustices, the outrageous acts of violence and the bloody tyranny of these Christians have steadily escalated, the perpetrators having lost all fear of God, all love of their sovereign, and all sense of self-respect. Even now, in September 1542, the atrocities get worse by the day, it being the case, as we have said, that the infernal brutality and utter inhumanity of the acts committed have readily increased as time has gone on.

Document #4 Hernando De Soto Governor of Florida Tortures Native Chiefs



Document #5 European document, unknown author Circa 1580

[The Spanish] forced the people to stand all the day in the hot sun gathering gold in the sand of the rivers. By this means a great number of them died, and a great number of them (seeing themselves in a life of misery and slavery) out of desperation killed themselves. And many would not marry, because they would not have their children slaves to the Spaniards.

Document #6 Letter from Hernando Pizarro to the Royal Court 1533

When Atahualpa [the Native Chief] had advanced to the centre of an open space, he stopped, and a Dominican friar, who was with the Governor, told Atahualpa that he was a priest. He said he was sent there to teach the things of the faith if they should desire to be Christians. He showed Atahualpa a book which he carried in his hands, and told him that that book contained the things of God.

Atahualpa asked for the book, and threw it on the ground, saying: "I will not leave this place until you have restored all that you have taken in my land. I know well who you are and what you have come for." Then he rose up in his litter and addressed his men, and there were murmurs among them and calls to those who were armed.

The friar went to the Governor and reported what was being done and that no time was to be lost. The Governor sent to me; and I had arranged with the captain of the artillery that, when a sign was given, he should discharge his pieces, and that, on hearing the reports, all the troops should come forth at once. This was done, and as the Indians were unarmed they were defeated without danger to any Christian.

Document #7 *Massacre of Christian missionaries in Cumana* Theodor de Bry 1631



Document #8 Procedures used by Friars in Converting Areas in America

- Idols, temples, and other material evidences of paganism destroyed
- Temporary churches build
- Permanent churches and monasteries build
- Christian buildings often constructed on sites of destroyed native temples in order to symbolize and emphasize the substitution of one religion by the other
- Indians supplied construction labor without receiving payment
- In a converted community, services and fiestas were regularly held in the church building

Source: Based on information from Charles Gibson, *Spain in America*, Harper Torchbooks.