

# **Defining Heroes and Villains: The Legacy of Hernando Cortes and the Spanish Conquest of Mexico**

**Lesson Plan:** Advanced Placement Upper School Social  
Studies

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**Purpose:**

Students will examine the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Using images, primary source documents and historical interpretations; students will understand that historical interpretation changes in response to the time in which it is written. As part of this process, students will also examine the method of creating a national history. Students will ask why in many countries the “national story” raises some individuals up as heroes and some individuals are demonized and made into villains. This also leads to the creation of historical myths.

**Objectives:**

- Become sensitized to the idea that “facts” are seldom straightforward and instead that facts are subject to different interpretations.
- Understand the historical implications of the defeat of the Mexica<sup>1</sup> by the Spanish because the story of the conquest would be repeated time and again over centuries of European conquest of the Americas, Asia and Africa.
- Identify how the image of historical figures can be manipulated for specific purposes.
- Analyze what is included in any country’s national history and ask why it is included.
- Determine how the national history changes over time.
- Discover how cultural differences color the historical record and understanding of history.
- Compare the legacy of conquest on the Spanish colonies and the English colonies.

**Sequence of Activities:**

**Day One: The Image of Hernando Cortes<sup>2</sup>**

After students closely read the textbook materials regarding the Spanish conquest of Mexico and the actions of Hernando Cortes, they will analyze and compare three very different portraits of Hernando Cortes paying close attention to the time periods and the country of origin of the portraits.

This will lead into a class discussion of the world’s use of Cortes as a vehicle for political message.

The lesson ends with a writing exercise that looks at sixteenth-century prose, an eighteenth-century poem and a twentieth-century song about Hernando Cortes. Students will try to determine the authors’ motivations for their portrayal of Cortes.

**Day Two: Who Was La Malinche?<sup>3</sup>**

Students will expand their knowledge of Cortes by trying to construct the story of La Malinche.

First, students will learn who she was by looking at the Tlaxcala Codex portrayal of her. Lacking a source in La Malinche’s hand, students will understand that images of La Malinche really color how she is viewed today.

From there, students will analyze the historiography of La Malinche from two divergent viewpoints and do a writing exercise.

This will lead to a class discussion of two contemporary art portrayals of La Malinche which are both controversial.

**Day Three: First Contact: Myth and Reality**

In this activity students will identify myths associated with the first contact between the Spanish represented by Hernando Cortes and the Mexica Empire of Moctezuma II.<sup>4</sup>

First, students will compare two different artistic portrayals of the first contact and draw conclusions about how cultural differences can color historical interpretation.

Then, students will examine accepted facts about the conquest and take a fun true or false quiz. In correcting the quiz, students will identify myths and discuss how historical myths develop and what role historical myths play in the national story.

**Day Four: Mock Trial: *People v. Hernando Cortes and La Malinche***

Students will learn about the life of Cuauhtemoc, a national hero in Mexico.

They will then answer the question, should La Malinche and Hernando Cortes be condemned for conspiracy to murder Cuauhtemoc?

Students will read six differing accounts of Cuauhtemoc's death and formulate a well-argued conclusion of guilt or innocence.

**Day Five: Comparing the Spanish Colonies and the English Colonies**

In the culminating activity, students will identify the legacy of the conquest in the colonial period for both the English and Spanish colonies in the Americas.

Students will compare Spanish policies and attitudes and English policies and attitudes during the colonial period through a variety of primary source documents.

Students will look at four specific areas: Agriculture, Religion, Native Americans and Economy.

From this analysis, students will formulate a thesis that addresses the question, "To what extent were the Spanish colonies and the English colonies of the Americas similar for the period from 1550–1650?"

**Key Questions:**

What can historians and students of history really know about Hernando Cortes?

Why have Hernando Cortes and La Malinche become such controversial figures?

Can the actions of historical heroes be morally ambiguous?

Why are some figures in history vilified?

Who was La Malinche? Was she a victim? A traitor? A noble heroine?

What are the myths of the First Contact and the Spanish Conquest? Why are there so many myths associated with these events?

Why is Cuauhtemoc more appealing to modern Mexicans than Hernando Cortes?

What was the legacy of the Spanish Conquest for Mexico? For other Latin American countries? For the United States? For African countries? For Asian Countries?

To what extent were Spanish and English colonial situations similar?

**Standards:**

Advanced Placement U.S. History Course Content:

2. Transatlantic Encounters and Colonial Beginnings, 1492–1690
  - First European contacts with American Indians
  - Spain's empire in North America

Advanced Placement World History Course Content:

Key Concept 4.2 Economic Growth depended on new commercial patterns. Disease ravaged the Americas. The Columbian Exchange led to new ways of humans interacting with their environments. New forms of coerced and semi-coerced labor emerged in Europe, Africa, and the Americas, and affected ethnic and racial classifications and gender roles.

Advanced Placement European History Course Content:

1. Intellectual and Cultural History
  - Changes in religious thought and institutions
  - The diffusion of new intellectual concepts among different social groups
  - Impact of global expansion on European culture
2. Political and Diplomatic History
  - Relations between Europe and other parts of the world: colonialism, imperialism, decolonization, and global interdependence
  - War and civil conflict: origins, developments, technology, and their consequences
3. Social and Economic History
  - Changing definitions of and attitudes toward social groups, classes, races, and ethnicities within and outside Europe

Advanced Placement Historical Thinking Skills (Note: These apply equally to all fields of history.)

Skill 1: Crafting Historical Arguments from Historical Evidence

Historical Argumentation

Appropriate Use of Relevant Historical Evidence

Skill 2: Chronological Reasoning

Patterns of Continuity of Change over Time

Skill 3: Comparison and Contextualization

Comparison

Skill 4: Historical Interpretation and Synthesis

Interpretation

Synthesis

## Lesson One: The Image of Hernando Cortes

In order for students to become critical thinkers, they need to see how interpretation changes over time. This lesson is uniquely designed to introduce students to the concept of change over time. This lesson is also designed to identify bias or “point of view” and motivation in historical interpretation.

### Objectives:

- Develop an understanding of Hernando Cortes.
- Appreciate how much the Spanish Conquest has affected Mexican History, US History and World History.
- Analyze the image of Hernando Cortes and how it has changed over time.
- Appreciate the controversial nature, even today, of Hernando Cortes and his actions.
- Identify bias or “point of view.”

### Essential Questions:

What was Hernando Cortes’ real purpose in conquering Tenochtitlan? Was it religious, political, or economic?

What misconceptions did Europeans have about the Mexica empire? How much of those misconceptions persisted? Why did misconceptions or “myths” persist?

How does an artist use image to convey a message?

What has the historical image of Hernando Cortes meant to Mexico, England, Spain and the United States?

How has that historical image of Hernando Cortes changed over time?

How much can we really know about Hernando Cortes?

### Background Information:

Most World History, Modern European and United States history textbooks include a mention of Hernando Cortes. His story seems fairly straightforward on first glance, but it is hard to know exactly who he was because his place in history has become very complicated by later interpretations of him.

What we do know is that Hernando Cortes is one of the most important figures in the conquering of the Americas. He was a Spanish conquistador. He led an expedition that set out in 1518 that ultimately subdued the powerful Mexica empire. Early historians and others saw him as a Christian crusader who introduced the benefits of Christianity to the heathen peoples of Mexico. Later, others saw him as a great leader and noble warrior who valiantly defeated the evil human-sacrificing empire of the backward and primitive Mexicas. Still others saw his actions as heartless, cruel and driven by greed. And finally, some saw him as weak and ineffectual and really incidental to the defeat of the Mexicas. It is hard to know Cortes’ true motivations and even harder to assess his real impact on history. What is clear is that many more conquistadors followed after him due to the fact that Mexico (which the Spanish called New Spain) proved to be highly profitable for the Spanish crown. It can be argued that Cortes provided a blueprint of

conquest not just for Spanish conquistadors but conquerors from all over the world throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries .

**Lesson Instructions:**

This exercise is designed to explore the concept of “point of view.” First, break students into small groups and give each student group the three images and the analysis worksheet. Ask each group to study the three images and complete the attached analysis worksheet through a group discussion. Each student group should choose a scribe and turn in just one worksheet per group. Once the students have completed this task bring the class back together and discuss their conclusions. Here are some discussion points for you and your students for each image:

Image One: Students should understand that from the Spanish point of view, one of the most important elements of Cortes’ image that they wanted to portray is he was working very closely with the Catholic Church. For the national story of Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the most important aspect of the conquest was the introduction of Catholicism to Mexico. That is why Cortes shares equal place with a Spanish friar. The emphasis is not on the wealth of New Spain that was funneled out of the country back to Spain, but rather on what Mexican people gained from the conquest. The time period of the image is also important. The book where this image appeared was published at the beginning of the Counter Reformation when the Catholic Church was trying to attract Protestant converts back to the Catholic Church so it was vitally important to see the Catholic Church as influential and crusading, but most importantly as a blessing to the peoples of Mexico and to people all over the world.

Image Two: This painting is an overblown (even slightly ridiculous) rendition of Cortes’ role. First and foremost for this artist, the Mexica had to be portrayed as human sacrificers and Cortes had to be portrayed as a valiant hero who is putting a halt to their evil practices. The artist is French and by 1861 the French were heavily involved in colonizing Northern and Western Africa as well as parts of Asia. It was deeply important to the French to believe that the imperialistic Europeans could easily subdue the “savages” of the world and be a civilizing and modernizing force for the conquered peoples. It is also important to keep in mind that by the mid-nineteenth century the predominant art style was Romanticism. Romantic artists often wanted to include the unusual or exotic in their works; certainly the people of Latin American qualify, and the practice of human sacrifice is very exotic.

Image Three: Cortes is portrayed as a weak syphilitic surrounded by images of Spaniards enslaving, whipping, raping and mistreating native peoples. The message is clear that Cortes was greedy and pathetic, and not at all a heroic figure. This portrayal of Cortes is part of a larger mural series. The mural series has pride of place in one of the most important buildings of the independent Mexican nation, the Palacio Nacional. In the first part of the twentieth century, Mexico underwent a revolution that overthrew the dictatorial rule of Porfirio Diaz, known as the Porfiriato. The fighting forces that overthrew the government and ushered in the revolution

were largely made up of mestizos and Indians. Diego Rivera was a committed leftist and a Mexican nationalist. As a nationalist, he wanted to celebrate the ancient Indian civilizations of Mexico and offset the Spanish dominance in Mexican history. As a leftist, he believed that art had a powerful political function which in this case was “to glorify the Indian heritage and vilify that of the Spaniards as a means of rectifying a historical imbalance and advancing certain political ideas.”<sup>5</sup>

Once you have had a chance to discuss each image with the class, pass out the writing exercise worksheet and ask students to work individually to complete the questions.

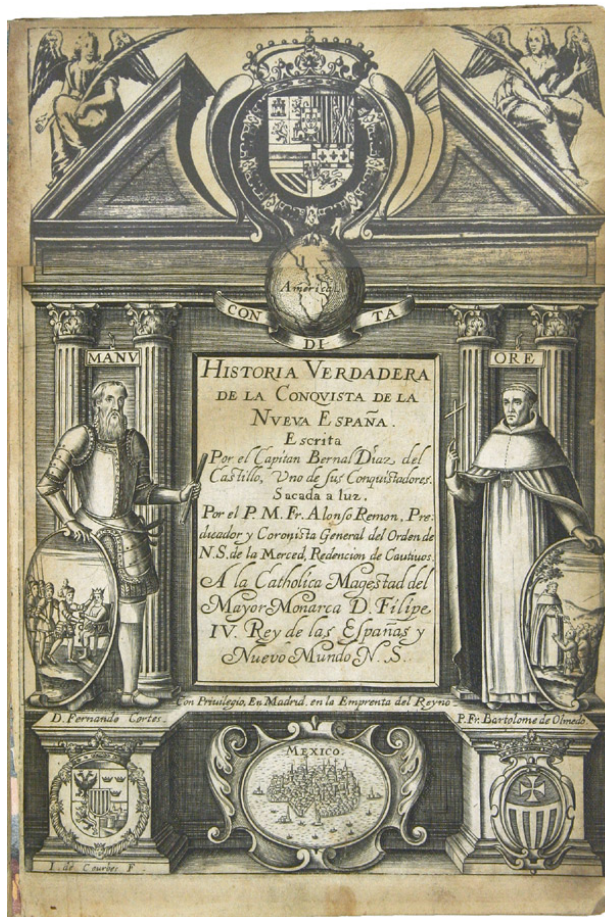
In assessing student understanding keep the following points in mind:

Document A: Gomara was Cortes’ official biographer and his viewpoint very much reflects the Spanish notion of “God, gold and glory!” For Gomara, it is very important that the rest of Europe respect Cortes’ accomplishments and recognize Spanish dominion in South America. This was especially an issue because of the growing threat from English and French pirates who were interfering with Spanish shipping and would later endeavor to found outposts in the New World that would compete with the Spanish.<sup>6</sup>

Document B – Mrs. Edward Jemingham wrote her poem from the perspective of a Protestant British colonist who found the Spanish Catholicism barbaric. She was also responding to the so-called “Black Legend” first introduced by Bartolome de las Casas that the Spanish were brutal and cruel and the Indians were innocent and heroic. In her view, the Protestant treatment of Indians by the British was not as brutal or as bloody as the Spanish. In many ways her portrayal of Cortes says more about the American belief that their colonies had a special divinely ordained destiny than it does about the Spanish conquest.<sup>7</sup>

Document C – Neil Young is a renowned folk singer and guitarist who performed and wrote in the late 1960s and 1970s while the United States was engaged in the controversial Vietnam War and many former colonies were undergoing the process of decolonization. At this time, many people were examining European relationships to subjugated people around the world and re-examining the imperialistic record. In the process of that re-examination, many conquerors of the past were vilified as greedy and exploitative and their “victims” as peaceful and pure.

## Image One



This is the front piece of a book written about Hernando Cortes and the conquest of New Spain by Bernal Diaz del Castillo in 1568.<sup>8</sup> Bernal Diaz was a Spaniard. He was actually present and participated in Cortes' expedition from Vera Cruz to the city of Tenochtitlan, where Cortes met Moctezuma II and ultimately claimed dominion over all of New Spain. He wrote this book in his later life about Hernando Cortes and his own actions in Mexico.

Cortes is the figure on the left. The book details not only the military campaigns of the Spanish against the Mexica but also gives some information about Mexica culture especially their practices of idolatry, human sacrifices and cannibalism which Bernal Diaz claims he witnessed firsthand. This book was very popular in Spain and widely read throughout Europe.



## Image Two



This is a painting by a Frenchman named Nicolas Eustache Maurin entitled, "Conquest of Mexico Hernando Cortes (1485–1547) Opposed to Human Sacrifice." It was completed around the middle of the nineteenth century. Cortes is the central figure, holding the sword. This painting is currently on display at the Museo de America in Madrid, Spain.

### Image Three



This is an image of Hernando Cortes by Diego Rivera that hangs in the Mexican National Palace and was completed in 1935. The National Palace, at one time, was Hernando Cortes' palace. He destroyed Moctezuma II's palace and rebuilt the structure known today as the National Palace for himself. After Mexican independence and the Mexican revolution, this building became the center of government. This mural is part of a larger series of murals that depict the history of Mexico from its pre-Columbian roots to the time of the conquest. This is the last in a series of ten murals. In this mural, Hernando Cortes is found in the central image of three figures as the person on the left with the red doublet (jacket).



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**The Image of Hernando Cortes**

Study the three images and answer the following questions:

	<b>Image One</b>	<b>Image Two</b>	<b>Image Three</b>
List adjectives that would describe Hernando Cortes in the picture.			
List what other figures you see in the picture and list what is included in the background of the picture.			
What is the artist trying to convey about Hernando Cortes in this portrayal? (complete sentences)			

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### The Image of Hernando Cortes

Read through the following three excerpts and try to understand the motivation of each one according to their country of origin and the year in which they were writing:

#### Document A

The Conquest of Mexico and the conversion of the peoples of New Spain can and should be included among the histories of the world, not only because it was well done but because it was very great . . . Long live, then, the name and memory of him [Cortes] who conquered so vast a land, converted such a multitude of men, cast down so many idols, and put an end to so much sacrifice and the eating of human flesh!

Francisco Lopez de Gomara (1552)

Source: Francisco Lopez de Gomara, Translated and Edited by Leslie Byrd Simpson, *Cortes, the Life of the Conquerer by His Secretary*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964, p. 4.

Motivations:

#### Document B

The God of day disclos'd his radiant eye,  
Which dropping luster on the conscious main,  
Shew'd to the deep desponding sons of Spain,  
A kindred fleet by urging zephyrs fann'd  
Triumphant failing to th'impatient strand.  
Rich tablature! By expectation glaz'd,  
By Hope high-colour'd and by Joy emblazon'd,  
See Cortez now, emerging from despair,  
For all the butchery of war prepare;  
Revenge and Massacre, the faints that crowne  
The bloody altar of his base renown,  
Now goad him on to snatch the wealthy prize  
Whose golden treasures glitter in his eyes.  
Meanwhile Despondence (like approaching night)  
Of Indian valor dims the splendid night.

Mrs. Edward Jemingham, "The Fall of Mexico" (1775)

Motivations:

**Document C**

He came dancing across the water  
With his galleons and guns  
Looking for the new world  
In that palace in the sun.

On the shore lay Montezuma  
With his coca leaves and pearls  
In his halls he often wondered  
With the secrets of the worlds.

And his subjects  
Gathered 'round him  
Like the leaves around a tree  
In their clothes of many colors  
For the angry gods to see.

And the women all were beautiful  
And the men stood  
Straight and strong  
They offered life in sacrifice  
So that others could go on.

Hate was just a legend  
And war was never known  
The people worked together  
And they lifted many stones.

They carried them  
To the flatlands  
And they died along the way  
But they built up  
With their bare hands  
What we still can't do today.

And I know she's living there  
And she loves me to this day  
I still can't remember when  
Or how I lost my way.

He came dancing across the water  
Cortez, Cortez  
What a killer.

Neil Young, "Cortez the Killer" (1975)

Motivations:

## Lesson Two: Who Was La Malinche?

One of the greatest challenges students face is analysis of primary source documents. Archaic language and determining the point of view of primary source materials can frustrate students. Many times starting with a visual image is a good way to spring board to a more detailed analysis of a subject matter. The analysis skills students acquire can then be applied to more complicated documents. In addition, students need greater understanding of historiography in order to have greater analytical skills. In order to build their knowledge of historiography, they should be exposed to historians who disagree. The subject of La Malinche is a good topic to explore for this purpose.

### Objectives:

- Introduction to who Doña Marina or La Malinche was and her connection to Hernando Cortes.
- Assess the lack of documents surrounding her life.
- Understand the problems of interpreting her.
- Identify her importance to Mexican history.
- Analyze the politics of the mestizo in modern Mexico.
- Introduce historiography.

### Essential Questions:

Why is it difficult to formulate a historical understanding of La Malinche?

What is the best way to describe her? A victim? A traitor? A noble heroine?

What has La Malinche meant to Modern Mexico?

Why do historians sometimes disagree?

How does the historical narrative affect national identity?

### Background Information:

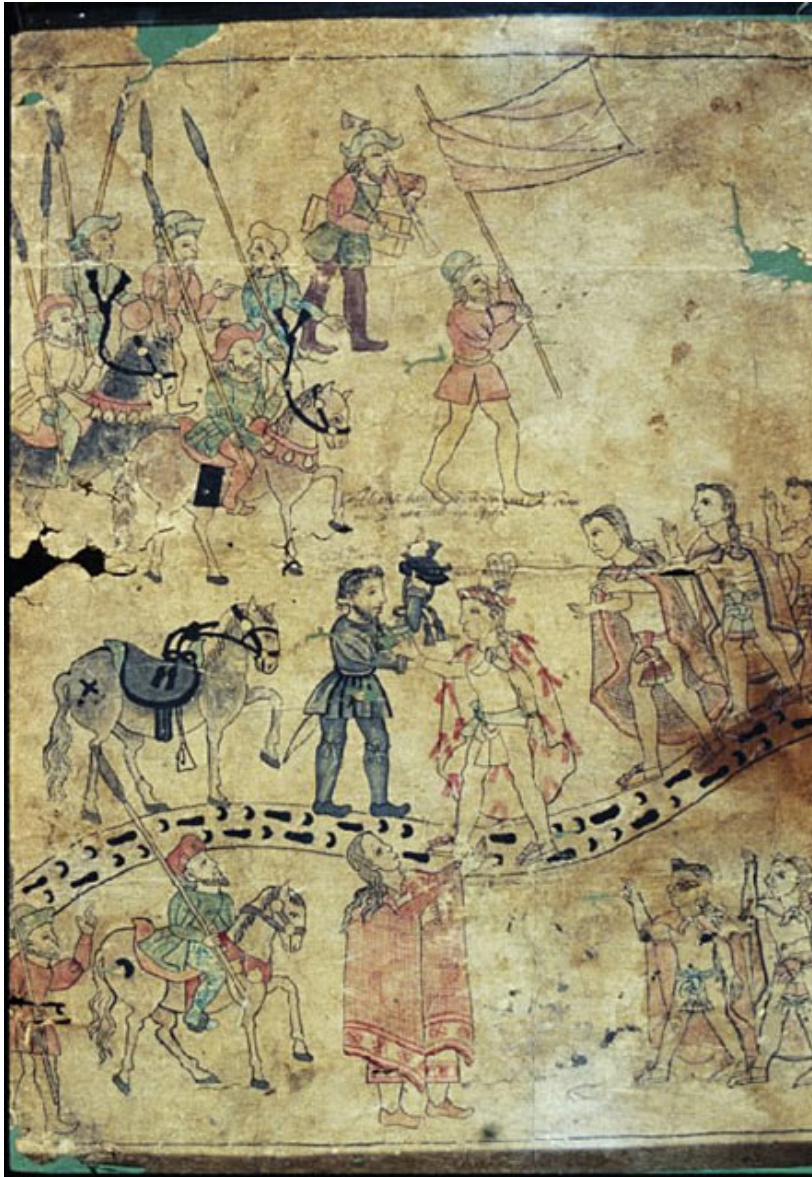
When Hernando Cortes landed along the Caribbean coast of present day Mexico in 1519, his goal was to conquer the Mexica empire. In order to do that, he understood that he would need native allies because he only had approximately 600 people and of those, probably only 530 were fighting men. The Spanish were delighted to learn that the Mexica were frequently warring with their neighbors and they had many surrounding city states under subjugation. These groups would be ideal to form alliances.

Obviously, to cultivate military alliances Cortes would need to communicate with the people under Mexica subjugation, but he didn't speak their language. The language of the Mexica empire was Nahuatl. Early on in the expedition, Cortes picked up Geronimo de Aguilar, a Spaniard shipwrecked in the Yucatan peninsula in 1511 who had become somewhat proficient in a Mayan dialect. Unfortunately, the groups that Cortes most wanted to ally with were the Tlaxcala and they spoke Nahuatl, not Mayan. Cortes was fortunate to have received from a Mayan cacique (leader) as a "gift" a woman who the Spaniards called Doña Marina. She was called Malintzin by

the Mexica, which was re-interpreted by the Spanish as La Malinche. She was originally a Mexica but she had been sold as a slave to the Mayans so she could speak both a Mayan dialect and Nahuatl. Between Aguilar and La Malinche, Cortes could communicate with native groups and forge crucial military alliances. Eventually, La Malinche became even more valuable to Cortes because she mastered Spanish quickly and Aguilar was no longer necessary. La Malinche and Cortes worked closely together and ultimately developed a sexual relationship. La Malinche gave birth to Martin, the son of Hernando Cortes.

**Lesson Instructions:**

After sharing the background information about La Malinche with the class, project the following image for the class to analyze and ask them to say what they notice about the image and for their questions about what they see.





Manuscript fragment, Tlaxcalan conquest pictorial, scenes 1 and 4, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin. By permission.

Notes: This is a codex from the Tlaxcala who were aligned with Cortes and jointly conquered the Mexica empire under Moctezuma. It shows the cementing of the relationship between the Spanish (on the top left) and the Tlaxcala (middle and lower right). The Tlaxcala, at first, fought the Spanish but in the end were unable to defeat the Spanish and their allies.

Facing the same way as the Spanish on the bottom of the scene is La Malinche or Doña Marina. She is directly below Hernando Cortes. She is portrayed as a large person, somewhat larger than other people in the Codex. In this type of portrayal, the size of a figure indicates importance. In addition, she is wearing a very intricate and rich garment, indicating her high status. Only aristocrats in Tlaxcala society wore this type of garment. It is unclear exactly what La Malinche's background was. The Spanish believed she was born into a Mexica noble family but after her father died, her mother, who had remarried, sold her as a slave to the Mayans. She was sold several times until she was sold to a Mayan lord in Tabasco who gave her as a gift to Cortes and the Spanish.<sup>9</sup> Once the Spanish received slave women they typically baptized them and used them sexually.

Next project the other image of La Malinche from the Texas fragment. Once again ask the class to say what they notice and for their questions.



Note: This picture depicts La Malinche along with the Spanish again. In this image, La Malinche is translating for Cortes, directly above her, as the Tlaxcala leader presents gifts to Cortes. Five daughters of Tlaxcalan lords stand facing La Malinche. Other unidentified women are also depicted. Beneath them are the luxurious gifts of gold, feather work, finely woven blankets and precious stones. The women come from three different social strata, with the noble women at the top.

Once the students have had a chance to examine the codex, pass out the historiographical worksheet and ask them to answer the questions in complete sentences as an individual writing exercise.

After the students complete the worksheet, poll the class on the last question and discuss their different views on Octavio Paz and Camilla Townsend. Then project the final two images of more modern depictions of La Malinche.

For both images ask the students these three questions and have a class discussion:

1. Is this a heroic portrayal of La Malinche?
2. What has the artist chosen to accentuate about the story of La Malinche?
3. Knowing the story of La Malinche, is this portrayal controversial?



Note: This talavera tile mural by Melchor Peredo is on display in a public park located in La Antigua, Veracruz, considered the first Spanish town in Mexico. It is entitled, "A New Race is Open to the Future." La Antigua was founded by Hernando Cortes and he built a home here as well as the first Christian Church in North America. Today in La Antigua there is not much emphasis on Cortes and the conquest. His old house is covered in roots and in ruins and even the street where Cortes' house stands is not named after him; instead it is named Independence Avenue.



Note: In 1982, this sculpture was erected in Coyoacan which is one of the sixteen boroughs of Mexico City. Coyoacan was Cortes' military headquarters during the Conquest and today it is a thriving upper middle class suburb. Casa Azul, which was the home of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, is located here. There was such an outcry and violent protest regarding this statue that it was ultimately removed and destroyed.<sup>10</sup>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Historiography of La Malinche

Read through the following two excerpts and answer the questions at the end.

### Document A

If the [La Malinche] is a representation of the violated Mother, it is appropriate to associate her with the Conquest, which was also a violation, not only in the historical sense but also in the very flesh of Indian women. The symbol of this violation is Dona Malinche, the mistress of Cortes. It is true that she gave herself voluntarily to the conquistador, but he forgot her as soon as her usefulness was over. Doña Marina becomes a figure representing the Indian women who were fascinated, violated or seduced by the Spaniards. And as a small boy will not forgive his mother if she abandons him to search for his father, the Mexican people have not forgiven La Malinche for her betrayal. She embodies the open,...or our closed, stoic, impassive Indians....This explains the success of the contemptuous adjective malinchista recently put into circulation by newspapers to denounce all those who have been corrupted by foreign influences. The malinchistas are those who want Mexico to open itself to the outside world: the true sons of La Malinche....Once again we see the opposition of the closed and the open.

The strange permanence of Cortés and La Malinche in the Mexican's imagination and sensibilities reveals that they are something more than historical figures: they are symbols of a secret conflict that we have still not resolved.

Source: Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude: Life and Thought in Mexico*, Translated by Lysander Kemp, New York: Grove Press, 1961, pp. 85–87.

### Document B

In attempting to place the woman's [La Malinche's] decisions in context, it is of absolute importance not to commit the usual crime of projecting our own concerns onto Malintzin but, on the contrary, to remain aware of all the old ideas that have led to the motives that have missed the complexity of her situation being assigned to her. In the earliest, paradigms, for good or ill, whether she is considered to be a heroine or the proverbial "bitch," she is certainly powerful, manipulating the situation to suit her own ends. In the latter construct, she is victim, raped and abused. In the most recent paradigm of all, she is someone who succeeds in going about her own business following traditional Native American practices, managing to preserve herself intact and even to increase her ability to maneuver for a number of years. The latter is undoubtedly the most realist portrait, but all three pictures contain a kernel of truth. In a life such as hers, there had to have been moments of triumph or glee, moments of



### **Lesson Three: First Contact: Myth and Reality**

In the study of history, scholars debate frequently. The Spanish conquest is no exception to that, especially the first contact. Nothing could have greater significance or be more charged with meaning than the first contact between the Spanish, represented by Hernando Cortes, and the Mexica Empire, represented by Moctezuma II. On the whole, the meeting was friendly with both sides showing extreme diplomacy. What is hard to realize is that even though this was such a momentous moment, cultural differences intervened and misunderstandings occurred in the historical record. This lesson is designed to explore those cultural misunderstandings and the myths of first contact and then try to unravel why those myths perpetuated.

#### **Objectives:**

- Analyze historical debates surrounding the first contact.
- Recognize cultural misunderstandings.
- Identify myths and realities of the first contact.
- Understand why certain myths have perpetuated in the national history.

#### **Essential Questions:**

What really happened when Hernando Cortes met Moctezuma II for the first time?  
Could actions have been taken by the Mexica or by Moctezuma II to prevent the Spanish conquest?

What really accounts for the Spanish success against the Mexica?

Why have certain myths about that first meeting perpetuated in the historical narrative?

What purpose does historical myth serve in modern life?

#### **Background Information:**

Much of the Spanish conquest of Mexico elicits unanswerable questions. Such as: Why was it so seemingly easy for Cortes to conquer the Mexica empire? Was it because the Mexica were highly primitive? Did the Mexica believe Cortes and his men to be gods? Were the Mexica a simple, childlike and superstitious people? What did they say to each other when they first met? Did the two men embrace? Was Moctezuma II a coward or a traitor who colluded with the Spanish out of fear? How much of a factor were the horses, steel weapons and guns of the Spanish in the defeat of the Mexica warriors? Taking each question separately it is easy to see that there are many different answers to each one and the answers are highly complicated. Even so, usually just one answer has perpetuated in the historical narrative of the conquest. The question becomes, why has one answer been the generally accepted answer?

Cortes landed along the Gulf of Mexico and traveled inland. Along the way he gathered Indian allies and he fought battles. News of Cortes' arrival and battles reached Moctezuma II, especially the news that Cortes had brutally murdered nobles

in the city of Cholula. At first, Moctezuma II refused to meet Cortes but after a period of time, he determined it would be the prudent choice to meet with him as a diplomatic gesture. On November 18, 1519, Cortes entered the city of Tenochtitlan, where he was received by Moctezuma II. This meeting was friendly but later encounters between Cortes and Moctezuma II would lead to slaughter, kidnapping, theft and battles.

**Lesson Instructions:**

Break students into small groups and pass out the image worksheet. Ask each student group to compare the two images and answer the questions. The student groups will want to appoint one student as the scribe and then turn in one worksheet for the group.

After the students have completed this task, talk about how different and how similar the two images were of the very same event. Ask students why that might be the case.

Pass out the “fun” true or false quiz. (Note: If you want, you can provide a prize to whomever gets 100%.) Go over the answers provided together in class. Discuss who would be most interested in keeping certain myths alive.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**First Contact between the Mexica and the Spanish**

Study the two images of the first time Hernando Cortes met Moctezuma II and answer the four questions in complete sentences.

**Image One**



Source: John Ogilby, America 1670

**Image Two**



Source: Kurz & Allison, Entrance of Cortes into Mexico, Date Unknown

**Questions:**

1. Each picture depicts the first meeting. How are the backgrounds similar and how do they differ?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Besides Cortes and Moctezuma II, who else is portrayed in each picture?



TURN OVER



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**First Contact between the Mexica and the Spanish**

This is just a fun quiz to see how much you know about the Spanish Conquest. Indicate true or false for the following statements:

- |   |      |       |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. The Spanish impression of the Mexica was that they were far more primitive than the Europeans.                 | True | False |
| 2. The Mexica practiced human sacrifice and cannibalism.  | True | False |
| 3. The Spanish were able to defeat the entire Mexica empire with a small force of about 500 men.                  | True | False |
| 4. The main reason why the Spanish successfully subdued the Mexica was their superior technology in weaponry.     | True | False |
| 5. The Mexica thought the Spanish were gods.  | True | False |
| 6. Moctezuma II was a weak and ineffectual leader who was naïve about the Spanish.                                | True | False |
| 7. The whole of Mexico was conquered by 1521.   | True | False |
| 8. Although initially they were hesitant, on the whole, the people of Mexico embraced Catholicism wholeheartedly. | True | False |

### Fun Quiz Answers/Explanations:

1. The Spanish impression of the Mexica was that they were far more primitive than the Europeans.

**False:** There is not much to support this assertion, yet this myth has predominated. For instance, even Bernal Diaz, a commentator who accompanied Cortes in the expedition was struck dumb by the beauty and wonder of Tenochtitlan when he first saw it. He said:

And when we saw all those cities and villages built in the water, and other great towns on dry land, and that straight and level causeway leading to Mexico [i.e. Tenochtitlán], we were astounded. These great towns and cues [i.e., temples] and buildings rising from the water, all made of stone, seemed like an enchanted vision from the tale of Amadis. Indeed, some of our soldiers asked whether it was not all a dream. It is not surprising therefore that I should write in this vein. It was all so wonderful that I do not know how to describe this first glimpse of things never heard of, seen or dreamed of before....And when we entered the city of Iztapalapa, the sight of the palaces in which they lodged us! They were very spacious and well built, of magnificent stone, cedar wood, and the wood of other sweet-smelling trees, with great rooms and courts, which were a wonderful sight, and all covered with awnings of woven cotton.<sup>11</sup>

Hernando Cortes also expressed awe of the city of Tenochtitlan in his second letter to Charles V, in which he said:

The city is as large as Seville or Cordova; its streets, I speak of the principal ones, are very wide and straight; some of these, and all the inferior ones, are half land and half water, and are navigated by canoes. All the streets at intervals have openings, through which the water flows, crossing from one street to another; and at these openings, some of which are very wide, there are also very wide bridges, composed of large pieces of timber, of great strength and well put together; on many of these bridges ten horses can go abreast....This city has many public squares, in which are situated the markets and other places for buying and selling. There is one square twice as large as that of the city of Salamanca, surrounded by porticoes, where are daily assembled more than sixty thousand souls, engaged in buying and selling; and where are found all kinds of merchandise that the world affords, embracing the necessaries of life, as for instance articles of food, as well as jewels of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, tin, precious stones, bones, shells, snails, and feathers.<sup>12</sup>

This would not suggest that the Spaniards thought the Mexica were primitive. It was only in later years, as the story of the first contact was re-told that chroniclers de-

emphasized their expertise in architecture, mathematics, urban planning, engineering, craftsmanship and artistry and over-emphasized practices such as human sacrifice.

2. The Mexica practiced human sacrifice and cannibalism.

**True:** Several sources attest to the fact that the Mexica practiced human sacrifice and even ritual cannibalism. Human sacrifice, for the Mexica, had religious importance because they believed certain gods that they worshipped demanded human sacrifice. Human sacrifice, however, also had other meanings. The Mexica used human sacrifice to show political domination of the surrounding subjugated states and to bolster the power of the nobles. Mostly it was war captives who were sacrificed and the clear message was punishment for insubordination and even intimidation so as to avoid possible future uprisings. To be fair, Cortes did something similar when he massacred people at the city of Cholula. Human sacrifice and cannibalism also reinforced the social hierarchy. Only nobles engaged in this and so the message to the lower classes was that they were not as powerful.<sup>13</sup> The myth that Mexica human sacrifice was only religious has perpetuated.

3. The Spanish were able to defeat the entire Mexica empire with a small force of about 500 men.

**False:** The Spanish did not defeat the Mexica with a small force of just 500 men. Although there were only 500 Spanish men they were part of a huge force of Indian allies, especially the Tlaxcalans, who fought alongside them to defeat the Mexica. The Tlaxcalans were a long standing enemy of the Mexicas and the tension between the two city states was ripe for the Spanish to use as the basis for an alliance to defeat the Mexica. The Tlaxcalans provided about 1,000 fighting men to the Spanish warriors as well as more non-fighting personnel. Many other Indian groups also participated in the attack on the Mexica due to the fact that they resented the Mexica demands for tributes, taxes and even people for human sacrifice. The myth that the Spaniards were alone in the fight with the Mexicas has perpetuated.

4. The main reason why the Spanish subdued the Mexica was their superior technology in weaponry.

**False:** The two main reasons the Spaniards successfully defeated the Mexica are the Indian allies and the impact of catastrophic disease. Although the Spanish were more advanced in shipbuilding, navigation and weaponry, that made only a minimal impact. It is true that a man on horseback has a natural advantage over a warrior on foot and muskets and crossbows are more effective than spears and bows and arrows. Nonetheless, Mexica manpower far outweighed any of these advantages. Cortes came ashore with thirty crossbow men, twelve men with the cumbersome and difficult arquebus in tow, fourteen pieces of small artillery and a few cannons. This is hardly a lot of weaponry.<sup>14</sup> It was only when the Spanish had the assistance of their Indian allies that the fight became more even. Then as the months went by and more and more people succumbed to diseases such as smallpox, the Spaniards had a far greater advantage than any of their weaponry would have provided.<sup>15</sup>

5. The Mexica thought the Spanish were gods.

**False:** Although there is a great deal of controversy about this, most recent scholars maintain that the Mexica were probably not operating under any delusion that the Spaniards were some sort of gods. An early historian of the conquest named William Prescott perpetuated this myth that the Mexica thought Cortes and his men were the returning of the god, Quetzalcoatl, or at the very least emissaries of him.<sup>16</sup> The story that was repeated with enthusiasm by the Spanish was that the Mexica god Quetzalcoatl disappeared to the east long ago and vowed to come back at some future date and Moctezuma II believed that Cortes and his men were that long awaited return. One event that would disprove the idea that the Mexica believed that Cortes was Quetzalcoatl or perhaps his men were emissaries of him would be that Cortes destroyed Cholula which was a town that Cortes got word was plotting against the Spanish. Cholula's patron deity was Quetzalcoatl so it would not have made sense to the Mexica for the god Quetzalcoatl to massacre brutally the inhabitants and destroy a town completely dedicated to him.

Another argument was that when Cortes and Moctezuma II first met, Moctezuma II called him a god. In reality Moctezuma II used very polite speech with Cortes appropriate to a high level diplomatic meeting. In translation the word "lord" could have been interpreted incorrectly as "god." In addition, the Spanish blond hair was often commented upon as being like the sun and many Mexica deities were associated with the sun but that does not presuppose equating the Spanish with gods. Finally, the Spanish did not die at the same rate as the Indians from smallpox or other diseases so there could have been some belief that they had supernatural powers but after seeing some Spaniards die, this belief would have dissipated.<sup>17</sup>

6. Moctezuma II was a weak and ineffectual leader who was naïve about the Spanish.

**False:** Cortes came into Tenochtitlan claiming he was an ambassador; what he really meant to do was conquer the city, capture Moctezuma II and subdue the people. We expect Moctezuma II not to be naïve and instead recognize that this was a ploy on the part of Cortes but it is hard to know what Moctezuma II meant to convey to the Spanish. For example, Cortes wrongly interpreted Moctezuma II's bow and later his giving of gifts as gestures of supplication; that was not the Mexica interpretation of these actions, Moctezuma would have treated any ambassador this way.<sup>18</sup> According to Cortes there was an aborted embrace. Cortes says he "stepped forward to embrace [Moctezuma], but the two lords who were with him stopped me with their hands so that I should not touch him."<sup>19</sup> This would suggest that Moctezuma II was maintaining his high rank in his encounter with Cortes.

A Spanish chronicler, however, says that Moctezuma II kowtowed to Cortes saying, "Then he prostrated himself before the captain, doing him great reverence, and then he raised himself face to face with captain very close to him."<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, in

the Nahuatl text of the Florentine Codex, there are no attempted embraces but they do say that Montezuma “bowed deeply to Cortes, “however, their interpretation did not put any undo emphasis on this action, suggesting it was commonplace. These few minutes of communication convey a deep sense of how hard it is to read social situations when you are unfamiliar with the cultural customs of the person you are meeting. Moctezuma II’s politeness and diplomacy was interpreted by the Spanish as deference, whereas Cortes’ warm offer of an embrace was interpreted as undignified by the Mexica. It is highly unlikely, however, that Moctezuma II meant to convey any sense of surrender to the Spanish and instead the Spanish just wanted to see that in the exchange. It is important to remember that Mexica culture was dedicated to a warrior mentality and put a huge emphasis on courage. We also need to interpret Cortes’ understanding of Moctuzuma II’s actions through the lens of a long chain of translators, which could not have possibly been efficient or very accurate.<sup>21</sup>

It could be argued that Moctezuma was naïve to have let the Spanish into Tenochtitlan, the heart of the Mexica empire, but there is evidence to suggest that he lured them in so that he and his military strategists could collect information about these strangers and their weapons and allies.

Later the Spanish reported to their king that they kidnapped Moctezuma II and ransomed him. In reality, the Spaniards themselves were prisoners in one of the palaces and they took Moctezuma into custody as a way to guarantee their safety. In addition, the Spanish reported that Moctezuma was killed by his own people because he was so ineffectual but in reality he was murdered by the Spanish. It is clear that the Spanish chroniclers were more interested in trying to impress their king in their account of what happened rather than in providing an accurate record.

7. The whole of Mexico was conquered by 1521.

**False:** The prevailing myth of the conquest was that it took a mere three years for Hernando Cortes and his few men to defeat the Mexica. It is true that the city of Tenochtitlan and the rest of the Valley of Mexico fell to the Spanish in 1521 and they tended to refer to the area of the Valley of Mexico as “Mexico.” But the larger geographic region that makes up modern day Mexico was not fully conquered by the Spanish until much later. In fact, the Mayans in the Yucatan held out the longest against the Spanish. The Spanish could not claim control over the area until 1550 and even then, there were periodic uprisings that lasted until 1697.<sup>22</sup>

8. Although initially they were hesitant, on the whole the people of Mexico embraced Catholicism wholeheartedly.

**False:** Mexico’s Catholicism, even today, is what anthropologists and ethnographers call syncretic. In other words, their faith synthesizes aspects of Catholicism with other aspects of their pre-Columbian society. The Catholicism being practiced in Mexico for the last 400 years is uniquely Mexican but bears a resemblance to the Catholicism practiced in Spain and other European countries. Through the adoption of Catholicism,



Mexicans not only adopted a new religion but they also held onto their past traditions and culture. One of the most cited examples is the Day of the Dead. The holiday takes place on November 1 and 2 and is in connection with the Catholic All Saints Day but the observance by Mexicans harkens back to the Mexica festival celebrating the goddess of the underworld, called Mictecacihuatl. In this way, the modern Mexican and the Mexican of the Spanish conquest became Catholics but not wholeheartedly.<sup>23</sup>

### **Lesson Four: Mock Trial: *People v. Hernando Cortes and La Malinche***

In this lesson students will examine the death of Cuauhtemoc, a national hero in Mexico, and weigh the evidence in relation to Cortes and La Malinche's actions in his death. The lesson is designed to engage students in a mock trial and also challenge them to build a coherent argument using conflicting sources.

#### **Objectives:**

- Evaluate the actions of Hernando Cortes and La Malinche.
- Examine and question sources and historical accounts for bias.
- Construct a coherent argument using a conflicting historical record.
- Understand Cuauhtemoc's place in modern Mexican history in opposition to the place of Hernando Cortes and La Malinche.

#### **Essential Questions:**

Was Hernando Cortes' decision to execute Cuauhtemoc just and prudent?

How much should La Malinche be held responsible for the actions of the Spanish during the Conquest?

Why does the figure of Cuauhtemoc appeal to the Mexican identity?

Why does the historical record of particular events sometimes differ extensively?

#### **Lesson Instructions:**

This lesson provides teachers with a lot of options. It is highly recommended that the witness statements should be given as outside reading so that the class time can be spent discussing the case. Teachers may want to stage a complete mock trial with opening statements, direct examinations, cross examinations and closing statements. This would mean a minimum of four class days to assign roles, allow students to prepare materials and perform the trial and have a follow up discussion. Another option is to stage a debate with half the class supporting innocence and the other half arguing guilt; this would mean just one class day. Still another option is to discuss the evidence with the students and then have students act as a jury and do a writing exercise on whether they believe Hernando Cortes and La Malinche are guilty or innocent of the charges; this scenario would mean one class period.

## ***People v. Hernando Cortes and La Malinche***

### **Charges:**

Defendant Hernando Cortes:

1. Conspiracy: A criminal conspiracy exists when two or more people agree to commit almost any unlawful act, then take some action toward its completion. The action taken need not itself be a crime, but it must indicate that those involved in the conspiracy knew of the plan and intended to break the law. One person may be charged with and convicted of both conspiracy and the underlying crime based on the same circumstances.
2. Kidnapping: The crime of unlawfully seizing and carrying away a person by force or fraud <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Fraud>, or seizing and detaining a person against his or her will with an intent to carry that person away at a later time.
3. First Degree Murder or lesser charge included: a murder that is committed with premeditation or during the course of a serious felony (such as kidnapping) or that otherwise (as because of extreme cruelty) requires the most serious punishment under the law.

Defendant La Malinche:

1. Conspiracy: A criminal conspiracy exists when two or more people agree to commit almost any unlawful act, then take some action toward its completion. The action taken need not itself be a crime, but it must indicate that those involved in the conspiracy knew of the plan and intended to break the law. One person may be charged with and convicted of both conspiracy and the underlying crime based on the same circumstances.

### **Stipulations:**

Prosecution and defense stipulate to the following:

1. Hernando Cortes and La Malinche must be tried together but verdicts will be rendered separately.
2. The Mexica Empire and the Spanish are at peace. The death of Cuauhtemoc occurred during peacetime.
3. Only the witness statements and facts of the case may be presented at trial.
4. Mexicalcingo (Christoval) is not available for questioning.

### **Facts of the Case**

In 1525 in the Mactun Mayan kingdom of Itzamkanac, Cortes came with La Malinche, 3,000 Nahua warriors and Cuauhtemoc.

Cuauhtemoc was the last Mexica king who had taken power in 1520. He was a cousin of the former emperor Moctezuma II, who was also his father-in-law. The circumstances of his ascension to the throne were difficult because at the time, Tenochtitlan was under attack from the Spanish and the population was devastated

by an epidemic of smallpox brought to the New World by Spanish invaders. Nevertheless, Cuauhtemoc attempted a final attack on the Spanish. He was unsuccessful and was later captured. This ended warfare between the Mexica and the Spanish and their Indian allies.

In captivity, Cuauhtemoc was famously tortured by having his feet put to the fire so that he would tell the location of the famed "Aztec gold." He never told, probably because there was no such "Aztec gold" that the Spanish had not already taken. He was not killed, however, because Cortes kept him alive as a puppet ruler to consolidate his power in the Valley of Mexico.

At this time, Cortes and his entourage went to Honduras to deal with a rebellious Spanish captain who was not following orders. Cortes was afraid to leave Cuauhtemoc behind because he feared Cuauhtemoc might organize an uprising so he took him along.

Along the way, Cortes stopped in Itzamkanac, a Mayan town, to allow his entourage to rest. Although Cortes' large group was not especially welcomed by the Mayan, they had no choice but to accommodate them with food and lodging.

On the night of February 27, 1525, Cortes received information of a plot being hatched by Cuauhtemoc and two other Mexica leaders (whose names are Coanacoch and Tettlepanquetzal) to kill Cortes on the expedition and send word back to Tenochtitlan for the Mexica there to kill all the Spanish in the city. According to the information Cortes received, through this plot, Cuauhtemoc was hoping to regain his entire empire from the Spanish.

Cortes called each Mexica lord in for questioning separately and lied to them, telling them each had confessed about the actions of the others. Throughout the questioning, the Spanish used the translating skills of La Malinche. Cortes called Cuauhtemoc in for questioning and told him that through his magical instruments, which were his compass and ship chart, he was able to discern the secret plot. Cuauhtemoc did not fall for Cortes' lies and said that he was just talking with his friends and there was no real plot planned.

Cortes did not believe the Mexica king and he had the Mexica lords executed.

**Prosecution Witness: Bernal Diaz**<sup>24</sup>

I was with Cortes throughout the expedition to Mexico and I was there when Cuauhtemoc died. I wrote down my recollections in about 1568. I am unique because I was both a conquistador and an historian. Although I am proud that I was part of conquering the Mexica, I did not agree with the killing of Cuauhtemoc.

After a time, Cortes decided to go to Honduras. His first concern was to have the fortifications of Mexico City well mounted with cannon and a good supply of ammunition to be laid by the arsenals for the protection of the city. In order, however, to deprive the discontented of the Indian population in the city and in the provinces of all possibility of choosing any leader for rebellion, should they take it into their heads to rise up in arms during his absence, he took along with him Cuauhtemoc and several others of the distinguished caciques [leaders] of the region.

As Geronimo de Aguilar had died some time previously, he only took Doña Marina with him as interpreters. Cortes thus left Mexico at the head of his army and the splendor with which he was received in every township he came to and the festivities which took place in his honor were really astonishing. On his march he was joined by fifty Spaniards who had recently arrived from Spain, all light-hearted and extravagant young fellows.

The journey started out alright but slowly the route became difficult. I will not go into particulars of the many privations and hardships we had to suffer but our distress was great.

I will now relate the story of Cuauhtemoc on this journey. Cuauhtemoc and the other Mexican chiefs who accompanied our army had, it would appear, spoken among themselves, or secretly determined to put the whole of us to death, then march back to Mexico, and assemble the whole armed power of the country against the few remaining Spaniards and raise an insurrection throughout the whole of New Spain. The circumstance was discovered by Cortes by two distinguished Mexican chiefs one of which had been Cuauhtemoc's captain general in the last battle with our Spanish troops. His testimony was borne out by the investigation which Cortes made into the matter and by the confession of several of the plotters themselves who were implicated in the conspiracy. The men fearlessly declared that seeing how hard our journey was: the numbers of men who were ill from want of food, that many soldiers had died from hunger, the thought struck them that they could not do better than fall suddenly upon us while we were crossing some river or marsh, particularly as they were upwards of 3,000 in number all armed with lances and several of them with swords. Cuauhtemoc did not hesitate to admit that these men had spoken the truth but added that the conspiracy did not emanate with him and that he himself had never for a moment contemplated carrying it into effect but had merely spoken of it with other leaders.

This was sufficient proof for Cortes (although it wasn't for me) and without any further ceremony he sentenced Cuauhtemoc and others to death on the gallows.

Before their death, however, Doña Marina and the Franciscan monks sought to comfort these unfortunate men and commended their souls to God. As he was led to the place of execution, Cuauhtemoc turned to Cortes and said, "I have for a long time perceived from your false words, that you had destined me for such a death, because I did not lay violent hands upon myself when you entered my city of Mexico! Why are you thus going to put me unjustly to death? God will one time ask this of you!"

Previous to being hung these Indians confessed to the Holy Father for they were good Christians. The death of these monarchs grieved me excessively for I had known them in all their glory and on the march they honored me with their friendship. It was the opinion of many on the march that they were innocent of these crimes and they were put to death unjustly.

**Prosecution Witness: Ixtlilxochitl<sup>25</sup>**

I am a Nahua nobleman from Texcoco. I have fought alongside Cortes and the Spanish in the past against the Mexica. I have adopted the Catholic religion and been baptized by Spanish friars. Even though I have fought with Cortes, I think his actions regarding Cuauhtemoc were unfair and unjust.

We were celebrating Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras) with the Spanish. The three Mexica kings were young men and they were enjoying themselves as well, jesting with each other. They were under the mistaken impression that Cortes was not going to go onto Honduras but instead was going to turn back and go to Tenochtitlan. Part of their joking around was to argue over who was going to be dominant when they returned. They were just young men full of boasting, their talk should not have been taken seriously. Some things were said in sarcasm and bitterness that perhaps should not have been said aloud but their comments did not really mean that they intended to pursue violence against the Spanish.

Cortes did not know what they were talking about so he asked his spy to find out what they were saying. The spy didn't lie and told Cortes exactly what they had been saying. Cortes saw an opportunity in this situation to manufacture a plot with Cuauhtemoc at the center. If Cortes could execute Cuauhtemoc, there would be no natural lords in the land.

At dawn the next day, Cortes hanged the lords one at a time. He didn't just kill the three kings, he also killed eight other alleged plotters. When he strung up Coanacoach, he tried to rally his warriors to fight so Cortes cut him down but he died anyway a few days later.

**Prosecution Witness: Lopez de Gomara<sup>26</sup>**

I was secretary in Hernando Cortes' household. I never actually traveled to the New World but I gathered a lot of information about what happened from my employer. I am an academic trained as a professional historian.

When Cortes went to Honduras he brought along Cuauhtemoc and many other Mexican lords, to keep them from causing an uprising in the city and country; likewise, Cortes brought some three thousand Indians for transport and service. Cuauhtemoc resented being kept under guard and, since he still had the spirit of a king and saw that the Spaniards were far from help, weak from their march and in an unknown country, he plotted to kill them, especially Cortes in revenge, and then to return to Mexico, proclaim liberty, and make himself king again. He informed the other lords of his plans and sent word back to the Mexicans [in the city] that they were to kill in a single day all the Spaniards there, who numbered only two hundred and had only fifty horses and who moreover were quarreling among themselves. If he had had the ability to act as he planned, he might have succeeded, for Cortes had few men with him, and those in Mexico were also few and not well organized....The Indians of Mexico had agreed that when they saw the Spaniards off their guard, and received the second order of Cuauhtemoc, they would make a great noise with drums, fifes, conches and horns. Mexicalcinco, a Mexica spy, revealed to Cortes the conspiracy of Cuauhtemoc and showed him a paper with the glyphs and names of the lords who were plotting his death. Cortes could not read this paper but believed his spy. He praised Mexicalcinco, promised him great rewards and arrested ten of the men, none of whom was allowed to communicate with the others. He inquired of them how many were implicated in the conspiracy, and told each of them he had already been informed by the others.

The case, according to Cortes, was so clear that they could not deny [the conspiracy], and so all confessed that Cuauhtemoc, Coanacoch, and Tetlepanquetzal had originated the plot; that the rest, although they were in favor of it, had not really given their consent, nor had they participated in the talks; that it was not a bad thing or a sin for them to desire their liberty; that it seemed to them they would never have a better opportunity, or place in which to kill him, since he had few companions and no Indian friends with him; and they were not afraid of the Spaniards in Mexico, who were new to the country, unskilled in the use of arms and fighting among themselves (this really worried Cortes). Since Cortes had discovered the plot and they believed their gods did not love them, they encouraged Cortes to go ahead and kill them.

After this confession, Cortes tried them and forthwith sentenced Cuauhtemoc, Coanacoch, and Tetlepanquetzal to be hanged, whose sentence was a sufficient lesson to the rest, for they all truly expected to be killed and burned, since even kings were not spared. They further thought that the conspiracy had been revealed to Cortes by a compass and mariners card, not by a man. They firmly believed that their thoughts could not be revealed from it, since it had exposed this affair and indicated the right way to



take throughout the journey. Many of them, therefore, came to Cortes and told him to look in the mirror (which was their name for the compass), where he could see that they wished him well and had no evil intentions. So frightened were they that Cortes and the other Spaniards were convinced they were telling the truth. The execution took place at Iztamcanac during Lent the year of 1525.

Cuauhtemoc, as history tells us, was a valiant man who in every adversity proved his royal heart and courage, in favor of peace at the beginning of the war, and in perseverance during the siege; at the time of his arrest, and when he was hanged or was tortured to reveal the treasure of Montezuma. (His feet were smeared with oil and exposed many times to the fire; but his torturers gained more infamy than gold.) Cortes, indeed, should have preserved his life as a precious jewel for Cuauhtemoc was the triumph and glory of his victories; but Cortes did not wish to keep him alive in such a troubled land and time. It is true that he thought highly of him and the Indians held him in the same honor and reverence as they held Moctezuma; and I believe it was for this reason that Cortes killed him.

**Defendant: Hernando Cortes<sup>27</sup>**

I left the great city of Tenochtitlan on the 12th day of October of the year 1524, followed by a few horses and footmen, chosen among my own retainers and servants, and by some friends and connections of mine. I also took with me the principal leaders among the natives of the land; and left the administration of justice and the government of the country in the hands of Alonso de Estrada, Rodrigo de Albornoz, and Alonso de Zuazo. I provided the city with the necessary artillery, ammunition, and garrison in case anything should happen in my absence.

Having, therefore, fixed on this idea, and regardless of the dangers and costly expense of such a journey, which some of my people did not fail to warn me of, I resolved to go to Honduras.

Before long we made it to Itzamkanac. Itzamkanac is a very fine town. It is situated on the bank of a very large river, and has many advantages which make it a fit abode for Spaniards. Pasture is excellent along the banks of the river: it has good arable land, and its territory is well peopled.

It was in said province an event occurred of which it is well that all should be informed. A good citizen of Tenochtitlan, whose name was Mexicalcingo, but who received on his baptism the name Christoval, came to me one night in great secrecy, bringing with him certain drawings on a sheet of the paper used in that country. Having proceeded to explain to me the meaning of the figures on that paper, he said to me that Cuauhtemoc, formerly lord of Tenochtitlan, and whom ever since the taking of this city I have kept a prisoner in my hands, on account of his rebellious nature and restless disposition — taking him with me wherever I went, as well as all the other chiefs and lords whom I thought cause of insecurity and revolt in this country — was plotting a conspiracy against me. Christoval explained how the Mexica lords had often told him how sad it was to be deprived of their personal estates, and of their power, by the Spaniards, and that they ought to find means of recovering their former possessions. They had planned together during the march the best way to regain their lands, and they had come to the conclusion that the best thing to do was to assassinate me and all the Spaniards who accompanied me. Once I was dead, they believed they would easily persuade the natives of those provinces to rise, and slay all the Spaniards on the trip with me. This being accomplished, they would dispatch their messengers to the city of Tenochtitlan, inciting the people to rise and kill all the Spaniards, a thing which they flattered themselves might be easily achieved, owing to the Spaniards in Tenochtitlan being for the most part newly arrived and untrained to war. After this they would raise the country, and order a general slaughter of the Spaniards throughout the villages and towns, so that none might escape; and they would moreover place strong garrisons at all the seaports, so that no vessel coming from Spain could carry back the news. In this manner they flattered themselves they would again become lords and masters of the country, as they were before our arrival; and they felt so sure of their affair that they had

already divided between them the various provinces of the empire, allotting one of them to the said Mexicalcingo (Christoval), my informer, as his share.

When I heard of this horrible plot framed against my life and that of all Spaniards, I thanked God for having thus revealed it to me through that worthy Indian. Early in the morning of the next day I ordered all those Mexican lords who had come with me to be arrested, and had them placed each in one room, away from one another, so that they might not communicate. I then went to see them one by one, and interrogated them about the plot, pretending that I had been informed by one of the conspirators; and as they were kept in separate rooms, and could not speak to each other, I managed to get out of them the real truth.

They admitted that the principal authors of the conspiracy were Cuauhtemoc and Tetepanguecal, and that the others knew also of the plot, but had refused to enter into it.

Having thus ascertained that the two above-mentioned lords were the guiltiest in this affair, I sentenced them to be hung, and they were immediately executed. The others I set at liberty, considering that their only crime consisted in having listened to their proposals, although this circumstance alone was in my opinion sufficient for them to deserve death. Their case, however, remains open, in order that if ever they relapse they may be punished accordingly; although it is not likely they will, because so frightened were they at the summary manner in which I treated the whole affair, and so puzzled to know how I came to discover the plot—they having never to this day guessed who was my informant—that they firmly believe me in possession of some wonderful art, by means of which I obtain the knowledge of hidden things. Having observed that in order to find out my way in these untrodden regions I from time to time refer to a sea map and compass they imagined that by help of that map and compass I came to discover their secret. So convinced are they of this, that whenever they wished to testify their good will they came to me begging I would consult the mirror and the compass, in order to see whether their intentions were as good as they professed, sure as they all were that through that instrument I acquired the knowledge of the most hidden and secret things. This conviction of theirs I found so useful for the future, that I never tried to dissuade them, but on the contrary, strengthened their belief that the compass and map were the means I had of finding out all things.

**Defendant: La Malinche**<sup>28</sup>

I have served Hernando Cortes as a translator. I was given to the Spaniards as a slave but then it was discovered that I was able to translate and the Spanish were in dire need of translators. At first my master was a Spaniard named Puertocarrero but he left to go back to Spain and I was pleased to be given to Hernando Cortes. At first I would translate Nahuatl into Mayan and then Geronimo de Aguilar would translate Mayan into Spanish, in this way the Spaniards could communicate with the Mexica people. At this point of the excursion to Honduras, Aguilar was no longer Cortes' interpreter because I had learned Spanish. I was able to interpret in both Mayan and Nahuatl and I spoke Spanish so Cortes used me exclusively. I had adopted the Spanish religion and the Spanish called me Doña Marina. I bore Cortes a child named Martin two years before the trip to Honduras. Cortes was attentive toward Martin and he provided for him. I had to leave my son for the trip to Honduras and I missed him terribly.

With Cuauhtemoc it was evident that he was interested in wresting power for himself from Cortes and he wanted to use the expedition to Honduras to do it. The expedition was not going well, many of us were not getting enough food and some Spaniards had died from drowning already and others had died from starvation.

I overheard Cuauhtemoc talking with his friends. He was telling some bitter jokes about Cortes. Some say he was joking around as young men often do, but I didn't think that was the case. I believed he meant every word.

It was I who revealed the conversations of the three Mexica lords to Cortes. I knew it would anger Cortes. By this point, Cortes and I had spent a lot of time together. To be honest, even though I knew Cortes would be angry and may even overreact, I was afraid for the safety of the expedition. More people would have died and the expedition would have been prolonged if Cuauhtemoc attempted an uprising among the Nahuatl warriors we had with us. It is better to make peace with the Spanish than to try and fight them.

I helped Cortes interrogate the three young men and I made them believe that Cortes found out about their plot through magical powers.

Shortly after this expedition, I was married to the Spaniard Juan Jaramillo under Cortes' direction. As part of my marriage my husband and I received an encomienda. As I already mentioned, I bore Cortes a son, Martin. My son, Martin, was one of Cortes' favorites and Cortes promised to take him to the Pope and have him formally recognized. Martin was going to go to Spain with Cortes after our return to Tenochtitlan.

**Defense Witness: Chontal Mayan Mactun<sup>29</sup>**

Our community keeps a history of our dealings with the Spanish and we included this event in our history. We didn't write it down for about 50–75 years after it happened but we kept the story alive through our oral tradition. Here is our version of events.

We got word that Cortes had arrived on the edge of our kingdom. We invited Cortes to come and visit our king, Paxbolonacha. We were hoping to lure him in and then deal with his threat. Cortes refused and so our sovereign was forced to go to Cortes and meet him in Itzamkanac. Cortes assured our king that he was only passing through so we extended our hospitality. They stayed a full twenty days which was very hard on us.

And it happened that Cuauhtemoc said to the ruler Paxbolonacha, "My lord ruler, these Castilian [Spanish] men will one day give you much misery and kill your people. In my opinion we should kill them, for I bring many officers and you also are many." This is what Cuauhtemoc said to Paxbolonacha, ruler of the people of Mactun, who upon hearing this speech of Cuauhtemoc's, replied, that he would first think about what he wished to do about this speech. And in considering his speech fully, he observed that the Castilian men behaved well, that they neither killed a single man, and that they wished only to be given honey, turkey hens, maize and various fruits, day after day. Thus he concluded, "I cannot therefore display two faces, two hearts, to the Castilian men."

But Cuauhtemoc, the ruler from Mexico, continued to press him about it, for he wished to kill the Castilian men. Because of this, the ruler Paxbolonacha told the Capitan del Valle [Cortes], "My lord Capitan del Valle, this ruler Cuauhtemoc who is with you, observe him so that he does not revolt and betray you, for three or four times he talked to me about killing you." Upon hearing these words the Capitan del Valle seized him [Cuauhtemoc] and had him bound in chains. He was in chains for three days. Then they baptized him. It is not known what his baptismal name was; some say he was named don Juan and some say he was named don Hernando. After being named, his head was cut off, and it was impaled on a ceiba tree in front of the pagan temple at Yaxdzan.

## Lesson Five: Comparing the Spanish Colonies and the English Colonies

The Spanish conquest of the Mexica led to the creation of New Spain. New Spain proved to be highly profitable for the Spanish crown and inspired other Spanish conquistadors and later other European countries such as England to conquer and claim a part of the Americas. This led to the creation of the English colonies along the North Atlantic. So while the Spanish were dominating South America (with some small settlements in North America) the English (along with the Dutch and French) were colonizing North America. This lesson is designed to introduce students to the process of historical comparison and synthesizing that is fundamental to success in critical thinking. Students will analyze four sets of two documents at a time for a total of eight documents and then synthesize all the information into a coherent thesis argument.

### Objectives:

- Compare two colonial regions.
- Interpret primary source materials.
- Synthesize a large body of information.
- Identify outside information not included in the documents.
- Craft a coherent thesis statement that compares Spanish and English colonies.

### Essential Questions:

What challenges did the Spanish and English both face in colonizing the western hemisphere?

How similar were Spanish and English attitudes toward the people and the land in the Americas?

To what extent was there religious tolerance in the Spanish colonies and the English colonies?

What made the Spanish and English colonies economically viable?

Which economic system was most successful, the Spanish system or the English system? Why?

### Background Information:

Hernando Cortes established Spanish domination of Mexico in 1521. His success inspired many more Spanish conquistadors to come to the Americas, the most famous of whom were Francisco Pizarro in Peru and Hernando de Soto in the Mississippi Valley. By the end of the seventeenth century, Spain had laid claim to most of South America, except Brazil which was colonized by the Portuguese. Spanish success inspired other European countries such as England to get involved in carving up the continent of North America and claim islands in the Caribbean. The English sent John Cabot in 1497 to explore North America and then the English set up an ill-fated colony in Roanoke in 1587 and later a more successful (in the long run) colony in 1607 at Jamestown. Jamestown was followed in 1620 by the creation of the Plymouth colony in New England and then more colonies later.

The development of the Spanish colonies and the English colonies occurred throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During that time, the settlers in both areas encountered native peoples and were forced to react to those native peoples. The native peoples in South America differed from the native peoples of North America. Additionally, European colonists throughout the Americas were highly interested in garnering a profit from these new colonies. Both the Spanish and English created economic and agricultural systems in order to do this but the two groups encountered very different geographic conditions. Finally, they were religiously different; the English were Protestant and the Spanish were Catholic. This historical situation allows for comparison of the Spanish and English colonies. Students will examine the question, “To what extent were the Spanish and English colonies in the Americas similar in the period from 1550–1650?” using a variety of documents.

**Lesson Instructions:**

Set up the room with four stations that are clearly marked. Make sure each station is far enough away from every other station in order to control the flow around the room and the sound. You may want to decorate your stations with posters or artifacts (if you have them) to make it more fun. The station themes are the following: Native Americans, Agriculture, Economic System and Religion. It would be best if you put up signs for each station. Students can visit the stations in any order.

Break students up into four groups. Have the students go in one direction either clockwise or counter clockwise. Student groups will have 10 minutes at each station to read, analyze and discuss each set of documents. Student groups should move around the room with the worksheets that they will use as a framework for comparing the two documents. Each student should complete their own worksheet but discuss the document interpretation with their group members.

Once the students have finished visiting each station, have each student review the data they collected. Ask them to brainstorm other outside information that they are familiar with due to their textbook reading or class lectures that would address the question. Students should use this outside information to bolster their argument. Once students have reviewed the data and thought of some outside information they should formulate a thesis which answers the question, “To what extent were Spanish colonies and English colonies in the Americas similar in the period from 1550–1650?”

To what extent were the Spanish and English colonies in the Americas similar in the period from 1550–1650?

## NATIVE AMERICAN STATION

### Document A

Source: Christopher Columbus, Letter to Luis De Sant Angel Announcing His Discovery, 1493

The seaports there are incredibly fine, as also the magnificent rivers, most of which bear gold. The trees, fruits and grasses differ widely from those in Juana. There are many spices and vast mines of gold and other metals in this island. They have no iron, nor steel, nor weapons, nor are they fit for them, because although they are well-made men of commanding stature, they appear extraordinarily timid. The only arms they have are sticks of cane, cut when in seed, with a sharpened stick at the end, and they are afraid to use these. Often I have sent two or three men ashore to some town to converse with them, and the natives came out in great numbers, and as soon as they saw our men arrive, fled without a moment's delay although I protected them from all injury. Even should he change his mind and wish to quarrel with my men, neither he nor his subjects know what arms are, nor wear clothes, as I have said. They are the most timid people in the world, so that only the men remaining there could destroy the whole region, and run no risk if they know how to behave themselves properly.

*American Historical Documents, 1000–1904*. Vol. XLIII. The Harvard Classics. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14; Bartleby.com, 2001. [www.bartleby.com/43/](http://www.bartleby.com/43/). August 14, 2011.

### Document B

Source: George Percy, Jamestown Settlement, 1607

At night, when we were going abroad, there came the savages creeping upon all four from the hills like bears, with their bows in their mouths, charged us very desperately in the faces, hurt Captain Gabriel Archer in both his hands, and a sailor in two places of the body very dangerous. After they had spent their arrows, and felt the sharpness of our shot, they retired into the woods with a great noise, and so left us.

George Percy, *Discourse of the Plantation of the Southern Colony in Virginia by the English, 1606*. London: 1608. *American Journeys: Eyewitness Accounts of Early American Exploration and Settlement* (Wisconsin Historical Society), [www.americanjourneys.org](http://www.americanjourneys.org), August 14, 2011.



To what extent were the Spanish and English colonies similar in the Americas in the period from 1550–1650?

## AGRICULTURE STATION

### Document A

Source: Jose de Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590)

The Indies have been better repaid in the matter of plants than in any other kind of merchandise; for those few that have been carried from the Indies into Spain do badly there, whereas the many that have come over from Spain prosper in their new homes. I do not know whether to attribute this to the excellence of the plants that go from here or to the bounty of the soil over there. Nearly every good thing grown in Spain is found there; in some regions they do better than in others. They include wheat, barley, garden produce and greens and vegetables of all kinds, such as lettuce, cabbage, radishes, onions, garlic, parsley, turnips, carrots, eggplants, endive, salt-wort, spinach, chickpeas, beans, and lentils - in short, whatever grows well here, for those who have gone to the Indies have been careful to take with them seeds of every description....

Peaches and apricots also have done well, although the latter have fared better in New Spain.... Apples and pears are grown, but in moderate yields; plums give sparingly; figs are abundant, chiefly in Peru. Quinces are found everywhere, and in New Spain they are so plentiful that we received fifty choice ones for half a real. Pomegranates are found in abundance, but they are all sweet, for the people do not like the sharp variety. The melons are very good in some regions, as in Tierra Firme and Peru. Cherries, both wild and cultivated, have not so far prospered in the Indies.... In conclusion, I find that hardly any of the finer fruits is lacking in those parts.

Jose de Acosta, *The Natural and Moral History of the Indies: The Natural History . . . , Volume I*, Translated by Edward Grimston, Edited by Clements R. Markham, London: Council of the Hakluyt Society, p. 265.

### Document B

Source: William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation, First harvest* (1621)

They began now to gather in the small harvest they had, and to fit up their houses and dwellings against winter, being all well recovered in health and strength and had all things in good plenty. For as some were thus employed in affairs abroad, others were exercised in fishing, about cod and bass and other fish, of which they took good store, of which every family had their portion. All the summer there was no want; and now began to come in store of fowl, as winter approached, of which this place did abound when they came first (but afterward decreased by degrees). And besides waterfowl there was a great store of wild turkeys, of which they took many, besides venison, etc. Besides they had about a peck a meal a week to a person, or now since harvest, Indian corn to the proportion. Which made many afterwards write so largely of their plenty here to their friends in England, which were not feigned but true reports.

William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation*, Edited by Charles Deane, Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1856, p. 105.

To what extent were the Spanish and English colonies in the Americas similar in the period from 1550–1650?

## ECONOMIC STATION

### Document A

Source: Timothy J. Yeager, “Encomienda or Slavery? The Spanish Crown’s Choice of Labor Organization in Sixteenth Century Spanish America,” *The Journal of Economic History*, (1995) p. 851.

TABLE 1  
INTERREGIONAL WEALTH AND POWER, 1550

Region	Tributaries per <i>Encomienda</i> , 1550	Gold and Silver Production, 1500–1550	Tonnage Shipped to Spain, 1550–1550
1. Central Mexico (2,2)	1,506	32,289,850	17,370
2. Peru (1,1)	673	84,350,000	21,400
3. Yucatán (7,7)	470	0	—
4. Popayán (3,5)	356	3,040,500	835
5. Colombia (3,5)	281	3,040,500	835
6. Honduras (6,3)	137	461,717	1,045
7. Nicaragua (5,3)	116	657,599	1,045
8. Tucumán (7,7)	87	0	0
9. Venezuela (7,7)	77.6	0	—
10. Chile (7,7)	—	0	0

### Document B

Source: Alvin Rabushka, *Taxation in Colonial America*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 229.

Tobacco Exports from Virginia to England from 1616 to 1631:

Year	Pounds Shipped
1616	2,500
1617	18,800
1620	119,000
1624	203,000
1631	362,000

To what extent were the Spanish and English colonies in the Americas similar in the period from 1550–1650?

RELIGION STATION

**Document A**

Source: Hernando Cortés: from Second Letter to Charles V, 1520

Three halls are in this grand temple, which contain the principal idols; these are of wonderful extent and height, and admirable workmanship, adorned with figures sculptured in stone and wood; leading from the halls are chapels with very small doors, to which the light is not admitted, nor are any persons except the priests, and not all of them. In these chapels are the images of idols, although, as I have before said, many of them are also found on the outside; the principal ones, in which the people have greatest faith and confidence, I precipitated from their pedestals, and cast them down the steps of the temple, purifying the chapels in which they had stood, as they were all polluted with human blood, shed ill the sacrifices. In the place of these I put images of Our Lady and the Saints, which excited not a little feeling in Moctezuma and the inhabitants, who at first remonstrated, declaring that if my proceedings were known throughout the country, the people would rise against me; for they believed that their idols bestowed on them all temporal good, and if they permitted them to be ill-treated, they would be angry and without their gifts, and by this means the people would be deprived of the fruits of the earth and perish with famine. I answered, through the interpreters, that they were deceived in expecting any favors from idols, the work of their own hands, formed of unclean things; and that they must learn there was but one God, the universal Lord of all, who had created the heavens and earth, and all things else, and had made them and us; that He was without beginning and immortal, and they were bound to adore and believe Him, and no other creature or thing.

Hernando Cortes, *The Five Letters of Relation from Fernando Cortes to the Emperor Charles V*, Volume I, translated and edited by Francis Augustus MacNutt, Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1908, pp.260–261.

**Document B**

Source: William Penn, "The Quaker Ideal of Religious Tolerance" 1675

Your Endeavours for a [religious] Uniformity have been many; Your Acts not a few to Enforce it, but they Consequence, whether you intended it or not, through the Barbarous Practices of those that have had their Execution, hath been the Spoiling of several Thousands of the free inhabitants of this Kingdom of their Unforfeited Rights. Persons have been flung into Jails, Gates and Trunks broke open, Goods destroyed, till a stool hath not been left to sit down on, Flocks of Cattle driven, whole Barns full of Corn seized, Parents left with out Children, Children without their Parents, both without subsistence....

Finding then by Sad Experience, and a long Tract of Time, That the very Remedies applied to cure Dissension increase it; and that the more Vigorously a Uniformity is coercively prosecuted, the Wider Breaches grown, the more Inflamed Persons are, and fixt in their Resolutions to stand by their Principles; which, besides all other Inconveniences to those that give them Trouble, their very Sufferings beget that Compassion in the Multitude...and makes a Preparation for not a few Proselytes....

William Penn, "The Quaker Ideal of Religious Tolerance," 1675, Digital History, Gilder Lehrman Document Number GLC 1672, [www.digitalhistory.uh.edu](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu), August 16, 2011.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

As you travel between stations take notes on the following chart.

	<b>RELIGION</b>	<b>AGRICULTURE</b>	<b>NATIVE AMERICANS</b>	<b>ECONOMICS</b>
What is similar between the Spanish colonies and the English colonies?				
What is different between the Spanish colonies and the English colonies?				

After reviewing the chart, supplement the chart with some outside information. Formulate a thesis to the following question, "To what extent were the Spanish colonies and the English colonies in the Americas similar in the period from 1550–1650?"

Thesis:



## Endnotes:

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this project, the Aztecs will be referred to by their correct name, Mexica.

<sup>2</sup> For purposes of this series of lesson plans, Cortes will be referred to as Hernando. Some textbooks may refer to him as Fernando, Hernan or Hernando. All are equally correct.

<sup>3</sup> For purposes of this series of lesson plans, I will refer to La Malinche and not Doña Marina which was what she was called by the Spanish, or Malintzin, which is what she was called by Nahuatl speakers.

<sup>4</sup> There are many variant spellings of Moctezuma II. For purposes of consistency this will be the spelling in this lesson plan.

<sup>5</sup> Shifra Goldman, *Dimensions of the Americas: Art and Social Change in Latin American and the United States*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

<sup>6</sup> Glen Carman, *Rhetorical Conquests: Cortes, Gomara and Renaissance Imperialism*, West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico 1517–1521*, Translated by Alfred Percival Maudslay, Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Lee Marks, *Cortes: The Great Adventurer and the Fate of Aztec Mexico*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993, pp. 61–62.

<sup>10</sup> Clifford Krauss, “After 500 Years, Cortes’ girlfriend is Not Forgiven,” *Mexico City Journal*, *The New York Times*, March 26, 1997.

<sup>11</sup> Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico 1517–1521*, Translated by Alfred Percival Maudslay, Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 2004, p. 269.

<sup>12</sup> Hernando Cortes, *The Five Letters of Relation from Fernando Cortes to the Emperor Charles V*, Volume I, Translated and edited by Francis Augustus MacNutt, Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1908, pp. 256–257.

<sup>13</sup> John M. Ingham, “Human Sacrifice at Tenochtitlan” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 26, No. 3 (Jul., 1984), pp. 379–400.

<sup>14</sup> Buddy Levy, *Conquistador: Hernando Cortes, King Montezuma, and the Last Stand of the Aztecs*, New York: Bantam Books, 2008, p. 1.



- <sup>15</sup> Robert McCaa, "Spanish and Nahuatl Views on Smallpox and Demographic Catastrophe in Mexico," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Winter, 1995), pp. 397–431.
- <sup>16</sup> William Prescott, *The Conquest of Mexico* [1843], London: Dent, 1909.
- <sup>17</sup> Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- <sup>18</sup> Miguel Leon Portilla, *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1962, p. 61.
- <sup>19</sup> Buddy Levy, *Conquistador: Hernando Cortes, King Montezuma, and the Last Stand of the Aztecs*, New York: Random House, 2008, p. 107.
- <sup>20</sup> Sahagun, fray Bernardino de. Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain [1574-79]. Translated by Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble. Salt Lake City and Santa Fe: University of Utah Press and School of American Research, 1950-1982.
- <sup>21</sup> Inga Clendinnen, "Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty; Cortes and the Conquest of Mexico," University of California Press, *Representations*, No. 33, Special Issue: The New World (Winter, 1991), pp. 70–71.
- <sup>22</sup> Robert S. Chamberlain, "Spanish Methods of Conquest and Colonization in Yucatan, 1527–1550," *The Scientific Monthly* Vol. 49, No. 4 (Oct., 1939), pp. 351–359.
- <sup>23</sup> Stanley Brandes, "Iconography in Mexico's Day of the Dead: Origins and Meaning" *Ethnohistory* Vol. 45, No. 2 (Spring, 1998), pp. 181–218.
- <sup>24</sup> Although this is a fictionalized account it is based on a historical account of the event from Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *Cortes: The Life of the Conqueror by His Secretary*, Translated and Edited by Lesley Byrd Simpson, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964, pp. 355–357.
- <sup>25</sup> Although this is a fictionalized account it is based on a historical record of the event from Ixtlixlxochitl, *Obras 1891–92*, translated by Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, p.152.
- <sup>26</sup> Although this is a fictionalized account, it was taken from the historical record of Francisco Lopez de Gomara, *Cortes The Life of the Conqueror by His Secretary*, [1552], Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964, pp. 355–357.
- <sup>27</sup> Although this is a fictionalized account it is based on Cortes' fifth letter to Charles V, which is found in Hernando Cortes, *The Five Letters of Relation from Fernando Cortes*

*to the Emperor Charles V*, Volume II, translated and edited by Francis Augustus MacNutt, Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1908, pp. 302–306.

<sup>28</sup> Although this is a fictionalized account, it is based on a historical study done from a variety of primary sources by Camilla Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006, pp. 159–160.

<sup>29</sup> Although this is a fictionalized account it is based on a historical record of the event from Chontal Maya which was translated by Matthew Restall, *Maya Conquistador*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1998, pp. 63–64.