

**Essential Question**

How did Spain's conquests affect the economic and social development of the Americas?

**Reading Guide****Content Vocabulary**

conquistador (p. 43) *encomienda* (p. 47)

pueblo (p. 46) *plantation* (p. 47)

mission (p. 46)

**Academic Vocabulary**

grant (p. 43) *found* (p. 46)

**Key People**

Hernán Cortés (p. 43)

Montezuma (p. 43)

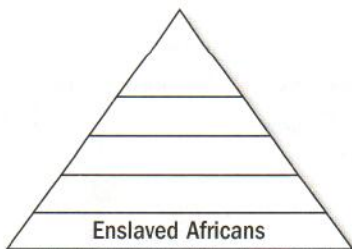
Francisco Pizarro (p. 44)

Atahualpa (p. 44)

Hernando de Soto (p. 46)

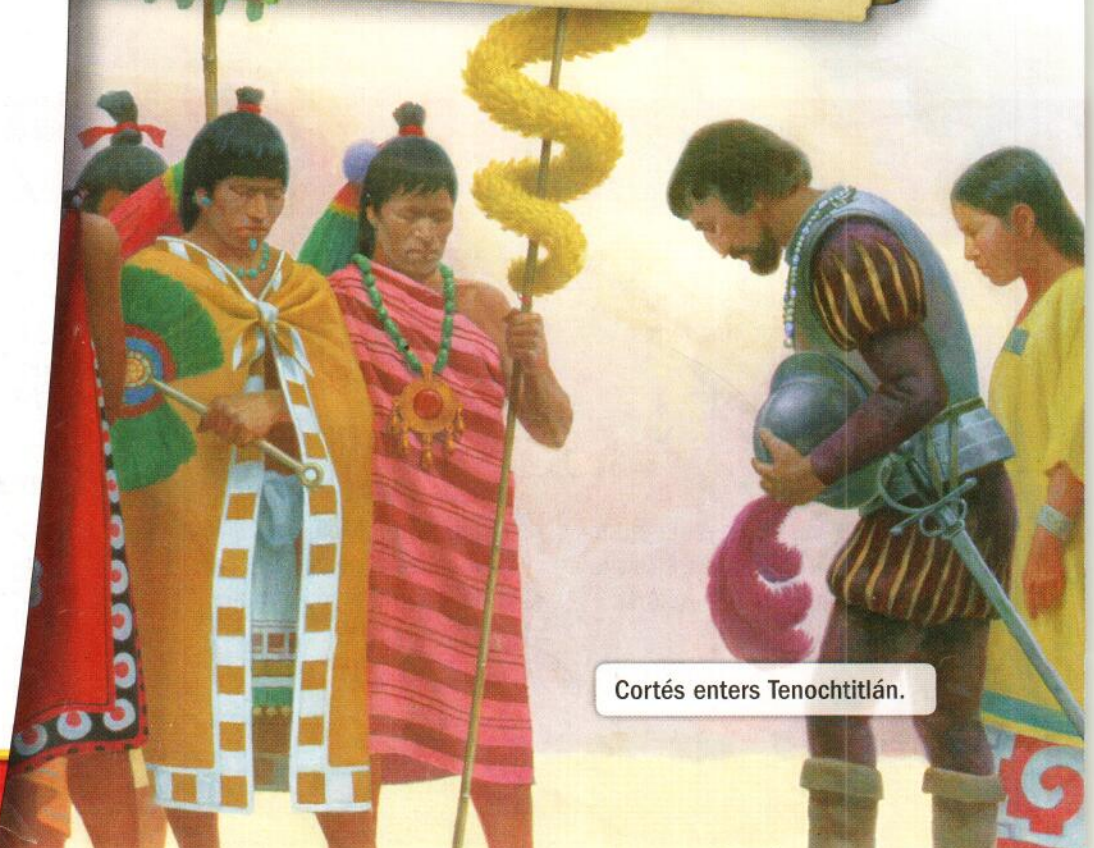
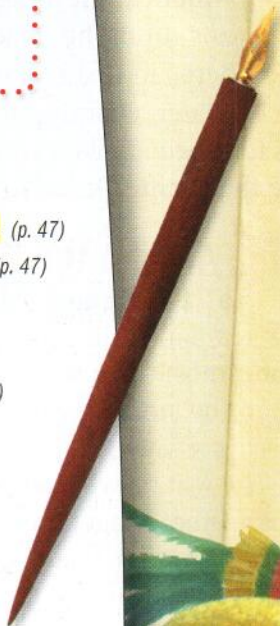
**Reading Strategy**

**Taking Notes** As you read, use a diagram like the one below to rank the social classes in the Spanish colonies.

**American Diary**

In 1519 Hernán Cortés prepared to leave Cuba for Mexico with 11 ships carrying about 550 Spanish soldiers and 16 horses. Before setting off, Cortés said to his men: "I know in my heart that we shall take vast and wealthy lands, peoples such as have never before been seen. . . . If you do not abandon me, as I shall not abandon you, I shall make you in a very short time the richest of all men who have crossed the seas."

—from Cortés: The Life of the Conqueror by His Secretary



Cortés enters Tenochtitlán.

## Explorers and Conquests

**Main Idea** Spanish explorers conquered Native American empires and found new lands.

**History and You** What would you look for as you hike along a nature trail? Read to learn what some Spanish explorers looked for as they traveled on foot through the Americas.

Stories of gold, silver, and kingdoms wealthy beyond belief greeted the early Spanish explorers in the Americas. The reports led them far and wide in search of fabulous riches.

These explorers, known as **conquistadors** (kahn•KEES•tuh•dawrs), received **grants**, or special privileges, from the Spanish rulers. These grants gave them the right to explore and establish settlements in the Americas. In exchange, they agreed to give the Spanish crown one-fifth of any gold or other treasure discovered. This arrangement allowed Spanish rulers to launch expeditions with little risk. If a conquistador failed, he lost his own fortune. If he succeeded, both he and Spain gained wealth and glory.

## Cortés Conquers the Aztec

When **Hernán Cortés** landed on the east coast of present-day Mexico in 1519, he was looking for gold and glory. He came with more than 500 soldiers, some horses, and a few cannons. Cortés soon learned about the great Aztec Empire and its capital of Tenochtitlán (tay•NAWCH•teet•LAHN).

The Aztec conquered many cities in Mexico to build their empire. These cities were forced to give crops, clothing, gold, and precious stones to the Aztec as tribute, or money paid for protection. Cortés formed alliances with a number of these conquered people against the Aztec. Then he marched into Tenochtitlán with his small army and his Native American allies.

The Aztec emperor, **Montezuma** (MAHN•tuh•ZOO•muh)—also spelled Moctezuma—welcomed Cortés and his soldiers and provided them with food and a fine palace. However, Cortés took advantage of the hospitality and made Montezuma his prisoner. The Aztec rebelled in the spring of 1520. During the fighting, which lasted for days, Montezuma was killed.

### Primary Source The Aztec and the Spanish

**An Aztec View** Hernán Cortés and his soldiers arrived on the Mexican coast in April 1519. The people of eastern Mexico felt fear and awe as they watched the soldiers. One Aztec later recalled:

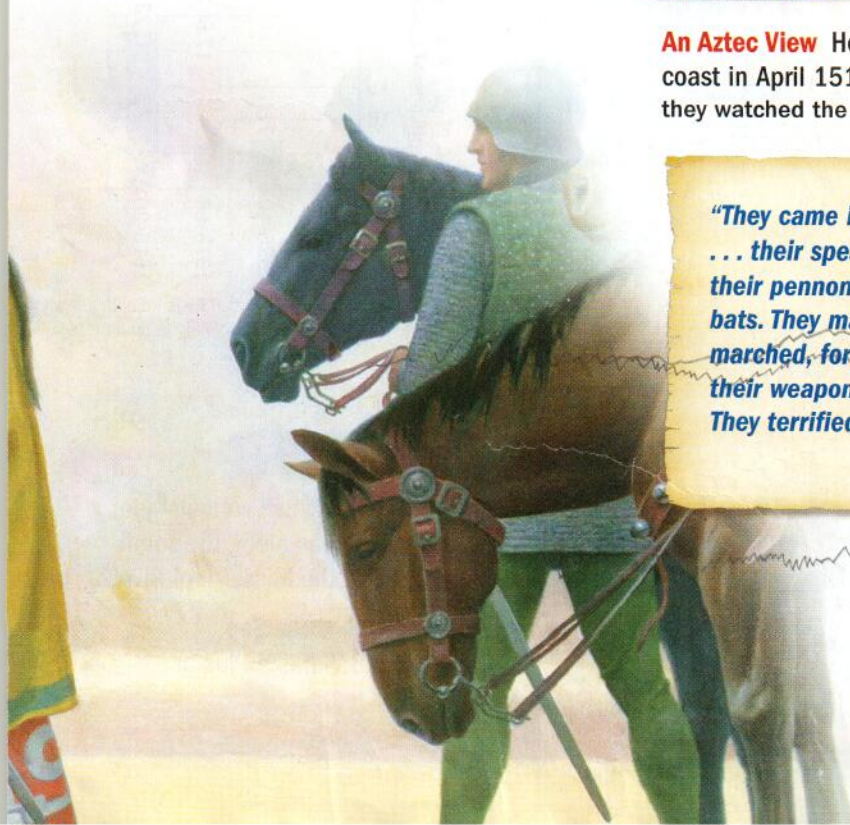
*“They came in battle array, as conquerors . . . their spears glistened in the sun, and their pennons [banners] fluttered like bats. They made a loud clamor as they marched, for their coats of mail and their weapons clashed and rattled. . . . They terrified everyone who saw them.”*

—from *The Broken Spears*



### Critical Thinking

**Comparing and Contrasting** How do you think the Aztec's report differs from Cortés's speech?



Eventually, the Spanish were forced to leave Tenochtitlán. Cortés, however, was determined to retake the city. He waited until more Spanish troops arrived, and then he attacked and destroyed the Aztec capital in 1521. An Aztec poem describes the scene:

**PRIMARY SOURCE**

“Without roofs are the houses,  
And red are their walls with blood.  
.....

Weep, my friends,  
Know that with these disasters  
We have lost our Mexican nation.”

—from *Stolen Continents*

The Aztec Empire disintegrated, and Spain seized control of the region.

**Pizarro Conquers the Inca**

The conquistador **Francisco Pizarro** sailed down the Pacific coast of South America with about 180 Spanish soldiers. Pizarro had heard

tales of the incredibly wealthy Inca Empire in what is now Peru. In 1532 Pizarro captured the Inca ruler, **Atahualpa** (AH•tah•WAHL•pah), and destroyed much of the Inca army.

The following year, the Spanish falsely accused Atahualpa of crimes and executed him. Without their leader, the Inca were not able to fight effectively. Pizarro soon gained control of most of the vast Inca Empire.

**Why Spain Succeeded**

The conquistadors’ victories over the Aztec and Inca were quick and lasting. How could Cortés and Pizarro, with only their small armies, conquer such mighty empires?

First, the Spanish arrived with weapons—guns and cannons—and animals that the Aztec and Inca had never seen. The Spanish rode horses and had huge, ferocious dogs. To the Native Americans, the Spanish seemed almost like gods. Second, some Native Americans in the region disliked their Aztec overlords.

Spanish Explorers, 1513–1598

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

### By the Numbers

#### American Wealth Sent to Spain

Period	Value (millions of pesos)
1503–05	1
1536–40	7
1576–80	17.5
1616–20	23

Source: *American Treasure and the Price of Revolution in Spain*

### Map Skills

Movement Which conquistador explored areas along the southern half of the Mississippi River?

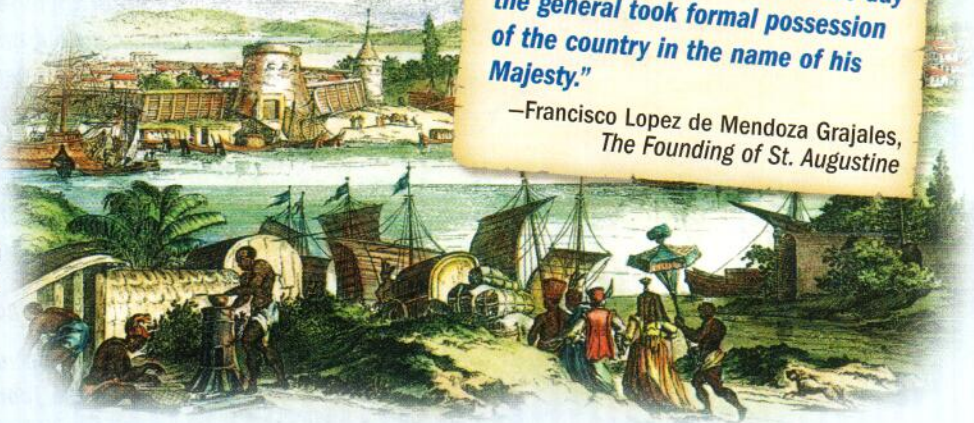
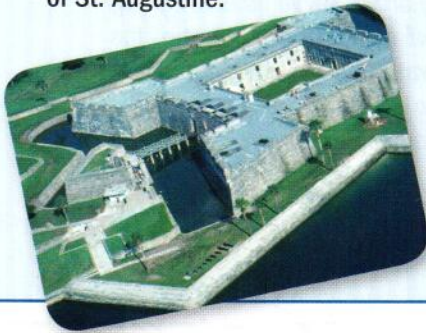
Maps in Motion See StudentWorks™ Plus or [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).

## Primary Source St. Augustine



The city of St. Augustine was founded by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés on September 8, 1565. ▼

▲ Juan Ponce de León discovered Florida in 1513, while looking for the mythical Fountain of Youth. He was the first European to visit the site of St. Augustine.



*"On Saturday, the 8th, the general landed with many banners spread, to the sound of trumpets and salutes of artillery. . . . The same day the general took formal possession of the country in the name of his Majesty."*

—Francisco Lopez de Mendoza Grajales,  
*The Founding of St. Augustine*

◀ Spanish explorers built the Castillo San Marcos at St. Augustine between 1672 and 1695. They wanted to protect their holdings in Florida because of the growth of English settlements along the east coast of North America.

### Critical Thinking

**Explaining** Why did the Spanish fortify St. Augustine?

These peoples assisted the conquistadors in overthrowing the Aztec. Finally, disease played an extremely large role in the Spanish conquest. With no immunity to European diseases, the Aztec and the Inca quickly fell victim to epidemics of smallpox and other diseases. This situation weakened their resistance to the invaders.

### Spain in North America

Mexico and Peru were rich in silver and gold. Hoping to find similar wealth to the north, conquistadors explored the southeastern and southwestern parts of North America.

Juan Ponce de León made the first Spanish landing on the North American mainland, arriving on the east coast of present-day Florida in 1513. According to legend, Ponce de León hoped to find not only gold but also the legendary fountain of youth, "a spring of running water of such marvelous virtue" that drinking it "makes old men young again." Ponce de León's exploration led to the first Spanish settlement in what is now the United

States. In 1565, the Spanish built a fort at St. Augustine, Florida.

### The Seven Cities of Cibola

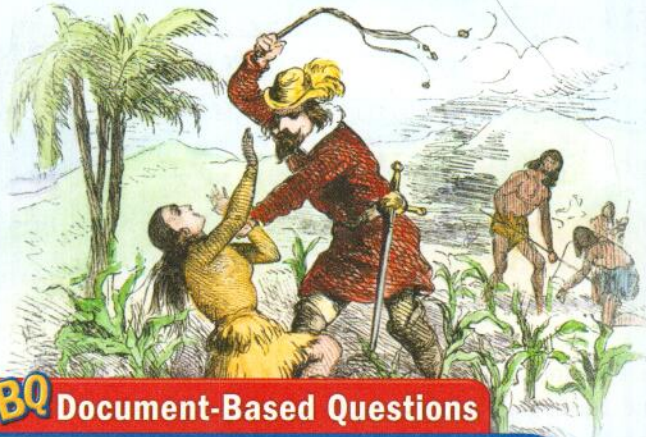
Many other conquistadors searched for quick riches and several lost their lives trying. Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (cah•BAY•sah day VAH•cah) was part of a Spanish expedition to Florida in 1528.

After encountering troubles in Florida, the expedition, led by Pánfilo de Narváez, sailed south toward Mexico. However, in November 1528, three of the five boats were lost in a storm. The two boats that survived went aground on an island near what is now the state of Texas. Within a few months, only a handful of the Spaniards were still alive.

To survive among the Native Americans, de Vaca and an enslaved African named Estevanico became medicine men. Cabeza de Vaca later wrote that their method of healing was "to bless the sick, breathing on them," and to recite Latin prayers.

## Primary Source Spanish Treatment of Native Peoples

**Native Americans in Slavery** Mistreatment of the native peoples by the Spanish led the missionary Father Bartolomé de Las Casas to come to the native peoples' defense. His account led Spanish officials to prohibit the enslavement of local peoples.



### DBQ Document-Based Questions

**Analyzing** According to Las Casas, what effect did Spanish treatment have on the Native American population?

*"[T]he Spaniards still do nothing save tear the natives to shreds, murder them and inflict upon them untold misery, suffering and distress, tormenting, harrying and persecuting them mercilessly. . . . When the Spanish first journeyed there, the indigenous population of the island of Hispaniola stood at some three million; today only two hundred survive."*

—Bartolomé de Las Casas,  
*A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*

*"[O]ne of the most important things in which the Audiencias [courts] are to serve us is in taking very especial care of the good treatment of the Indians and preservation of them. . . . We have ordered provision to be made that from henceforward the Indians in no way be made slaves."*

—from *Colonialism*



In 1533 the Spaniards set off on a long trip across the Southwest. Reaching Mexico in 1536, Cabeza de Vaca related tales about seven cities of gold.

Inspired by these stories, **Hernando de Soto** led an expedition to the west. For three years they wandered throughout the present-day southeastern United States, seizing food and supplies from Native Americans. In 1541 De Soto crossed the Mississippi River. After reaching what is today Oklahoma, de Soto died of fever.

Francisco Vásquez de Coronado also wanted to find the "Seven Cities of Cibola." Traveling through northern Mexico and present-day Arizona and New Mexico, his expedition reached a Zuni settlement in 1540. They realized at once that there was no gold. Members of the expedition traveled west to the Colorado River and east into what is now Kansas. They found nothing but "windswept plains" and strange "shaggy cows" (buffalo).

**✓ Reading Check Analyzing** How were Spaniards able to defeat Native American empires?

## Spanish Rule

**Main Idea** As the Spanish settled their colonies in the Americas, a strict social class structure formed.

**History and You** Have you ever visited or seen pictures of old Spanish missions in the American Southwest? Read to learn how the Spanish settled the Americas.

**S**panish law called for three kinds of settlements in the Americas—pueblos, missions, and presidios. **Pueblos**, or towns, were established as centers of trade. **Missions** were religious communities that usually included a small town, surrounding farmland, and a church. A presidio, or fort, was usually built near a mission.

The Spanish sent Juan de Oñate (day ohn•YAH•tay) from Mexico to gain control over frontier lands to the north and to convert the inhabitants to Christianity. In 1598 Oñate **founded**, or established, the province of New Mexico and introduced cattle and horses to the Pueblo people there.

## Social Classes

A class system developed in Spain's empire. At the top were people who were born in Spain, called *peninsulares*. The *peninsulares* owned the land, served in the Catholic Church, and ran the local government. Below them were the *creoles*, people who were born in the Americas to Spanish parents. Lower in order were the *mestizos* (meh•STEE•zohs), people with Spanish and Native American parents. Still lower were the Native Americans, most of whom lived in great poverty. At the bottom were enslaved Africans.

In the 1500s, the Spanish government granted conquistadors who settled in the Americas an *encomienda*, the right to demand taxes or labor from Native Americans living on the land. This system turned the Native Americans into slaves. Grueling labor took its toll. Many Native Americans died from malnutrition and disease.

A Spanish priest, Bartolomé de Las Casas, condemned the cruel treatment of the Native Americans. He pleaded for laws to protect them. Las Casas claimed that millions had died because the Spanish "made gold their ultimate aim, seeking to load themselves with riches in the shortest possible time."

Las Casas's reports influenced the Spanish government to pass the New Laws in 1542. These laws forbade making slaves of Native Americans. Although not always enforced, these laws did correct the worst abuses.

## The Plantation System

Some Spanish settlers made large profits by exporting crops and raw materials to Spain. In the West Indies, the main exports were tobacco and sugarcane. To raise these crops, the Spanish developed the plantation system. A **plantation** is a large farm.

The Spanish used Native Americans to work their plantations. Las Casas suggested replacing them with enslaved Africans—a suggestion he bitterly regretted later. He thought the Africans could endure the labor better than the Native Americans. As a result, thousands of Africans from West Africa were brought to the Americas. The Africans who survived the brutal ocean voyage were sold to plantation owners. By the late 1500s, plantation slave labor was an essential part of the economy of the colonies.

 **Reading Check** **Identifying** Whom did Las Casas try to protect?

## Section 3 Review

**History ONLINE**

**Study Central™** To review this section, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).

### Vocabulary

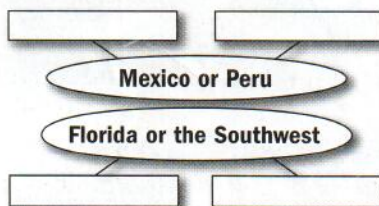
1. Write sentences or short paragraphs in which you define the following terms:  
*conquistador, grant, pueblo, mission, found, encomienda, plantation.*

### Main Ideas

2. **Explaining** What were the first adventurers to explore North America looking for?
3. **Discussing** How did slavery begin in the Americas?

### Critical Thinking

4. **Analyzing** Why were some Native Americans willing to form alliances with Cortés?
5. **Categorizing** Use a diagram like the one below to identify the explorers who went to each region.



6. **Expository Writing** Write a short essay describing the Spanish exploration and settlement of the Americas.

7. **Answer the Essential Question**  
How did Spain's conquests affect the economic and social development of the Americas?