

Spanish Imperialism

What is Spanish Imperialism?

Spanish imperialism was a time in history when Spain, a powerful country in Europe, sent explorers and settlers to different parts of the world. They wanted to find new lands, resources, and people to trade with. This period began in the late 15th century and lasted until the early 19th century.



Explorers and Their Discoveries

Spain sent famous explorers like Christopher Columbus, Hernán Cortés, and Francisco Pizarro on long journeys across the ocean. Columbus discovered America in 1492, and his journey opened the door for more Spanish explorers. Cortés conquered the Aztec Empire in Mexico, and Pizarro took control of the Inca Empire in South America. These discoveries led to the Spanish Empire becoming one of the largest and most powerful in history.

Spanish Colonialism

Colonialism is when one country takes control of another country or area and uses it for its own benefit. Spain did this in the Americas by creating colonies, where they brought their language, religion, and ways of life. They made the native people work for them and learn their customs. This changed the Americas a lot, making Spanish a common language and spreading the Catholic religion.

Impact on Indigenous People and Cultures

Spanish imperialism had both positive and negative effects on the people they met. On one hand, they introduced new technologies, animals, and foods to the indigenous people.

On the other hand, they often treated them harshly and forced them to change their way of life. Many indigenous people died from diseases brought by the Spanish, like smallpox, because they had never been exposed to them before.

The End of Spanish Imperialism

Over time, the people living in Spanish colonies started to fight for their independence. They wanted to be free from Spanish control and make their own decisions. The first successful revolution happened in Haiti in 1804, and others followed in countries like Mexico, Colombia, and Peru. By the early 19th century, most of the Spanish colonies had become independent countries.

Lasting Effects of Spanish Imperialism

Even after Spanish imperialism was over, its impact can still be seen today. In many countries in Central and South America and parts of the United States, people speak Spanish and follow the Catholic religion, which the Spanish brought with them. The mix of Spanish and local cultures created special art, buildings, music, and food in these areas.

Name: _____

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Curriculum Connection
8.4

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Questions

Use information from the text to support your answer

1) What is Spanish Imperialism? Which countries did it affect?

2) When did Spanish Imperialism end? What lasting effects did it have?

True or False

Circle whether the statement is true or false

1) Spanish imperialism began in the early 16th century	True	False
2) Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492.	True	False
3) Hernán Cortés conquered the Inca Empire in South America.	True	False
4) Spanish imperialism only had positive effects on indigenous people.	True	False
5) The first successful revolution against Spanish rule happened in Haiti.	True	False

Making Connections

Canada was a British colony, but is now an independent country. How is this similar to Spanish imperialism?
