

Looking Ahead *Advanced*

Unit 2: Age of Contact

Name:

Date:

Period:

Part I: Transitioning to a new Era

The Age of Contact is an era of Texas history characterized by Spain's search for gold and riches in the Americas. In the 1500s, Spanish conquistadors led expeditions throughout places like modern-day Mexico, Florida, New Mexico, and Texas in the hopes of finding the next great opportunity for extraordinary wealth. This search led to many encounters between Spanish explorers and American Indian tribes.

While conquistadors like Cortés had incredible success seizing the gold and resources of Indigenous people like the Aztecs of modern-day Mexico, other conquistadors failed to find gold or wealth in the lands north of Mexico. As a result, Spain lost interest in places like Texas. The Spanish focused instead on the territory they had colonized in and around Mexico City. That is, until their enemy, the French, arrived on the coast of Texas in 1685.

Unwilling to give up on their claim to Texas, Spain needed to take a new approach to its northern frontier. Spain's quest for gold had failed in Texas, however, that was only one of its goals for exploration.

1. List and explain the "3 G's" of Spanish exploration in the Americas.
2. Since the search for gold failed in Texas, what do you think Spain will focus on next in its attempt to maintain its claim on its northern frontier? Explain your answer.



Part II: A New Approach to Texas

After the French explorer La Salle came to Texas, the Spanish became interested in the area again. They didn't want the French taking over the northern frontier of New Spain. If the French claimed Texas, they would be one step closer to the land and resources like silver that the Spanish really valued in Mexico. The Spanish government needed a relatively cheap, convenient way to hold on to Texas. This came in the form of missions.

The Spanish began establishing religious communities known as missions in Texas. The missions were run by Catholic religious leaders known as friars, or frays. The primary source excerpts below come from a letter written by Fray Francisco Hidalgo to the new Viceroy, or Spanish governor. In his letter, Fray Hidalgo wrote about some of the challenges he faced establishing missions among the Hasinai American Indians of east Texas.

Read the excerpts from the "Description of the Tejas or Asinai Indians, 1691-1722" by Francisco Hidalgo as reported in Volume 31 of the Southwestern Historical Quarterly. Answer the comprehension questions that follow.

Excerpt I: The French Threat

I knew that the French were settling this section as well as that further on when it was known to be the territory of His Majesty bordering on the Mexican Gulf; and [it was also known] that, with great determination, they were encroaching more and more on these frontiers of New Spain.

1. Based on the context of the excerpt, what do you think is the best definition for the word "**encroaching**"?
 - a. Sharing territory with an ally
 - b. Intruding on someone else's land
 - c. Retreating from a given area
 - d. Expanding the known frontier of a region
2. What significant problem was New Spain facing in that region of Texas, according to Fray Hidalgo in the excerpt?

Excerpt II: Insufficient Support

Upon this information ...[the viceroy] determined to make plans for this conversion with the exceedingly small number of twenty-five men. He gave orders for the establishment of four missions—the ministers being furnished by the College of Santa Cruz de Queretaro—but without any arrangements being made for their maintenance.

1. How many people did the viceroy promise to send in order to help Fray Hidalgo establish missions in east Texas? According to the context of the passage, how did Fray Hidalgo feel about this number of people?
2. How many ministers did the viceroy promise to send to help run the missions? What issue did Hidalgo appear to have with the ministers being sent?
3. Based on the title of the excerpt and the information stated by the friar, does it seem to you like the missions were a priority to Spain? Explain your answer.

Excerpt III: American Indian Resistance to Religious Conversion

We have not succeeded in getting [the Hasinai Indians] to put their houses close to the church, although they promised at first to do so. Therefore, there is no Christian doctrine imparted to them, first, because of the great repugnance they have for Christianity, and, second, because of the great distance there is between their houses and because of other motives and reasons they have. Their repugnance to baptism from past times is well known, for they have formed the belief that the water kills them. Some of those who have been baptized have died, both adults and children.

1. The passage states several times that the Hasinai Indians had a “repugnance” to Christianity and baptism. Based on the context of the passage, which answer gives the best definition for the term repugnance?
 - a. Approval of
 - b. Disinterest in
 - c. Curiosity about
 - d. Hatred of
2. Give specific evidence from the passage to support your answer to number one.
3. The title of excerpt III is “American Indian Resistance to Religious Conversion.” Based on the information provided in the passage, which response below best restates this title?
 - a. Indigenous people are not interested in changing to the Spanish religion.
 - b. Indigenous people in east Texas use violence against the missions.
 - c. Indigenous people willingly change their religion to the Catholic faith.
 - d. Indigenous people refuse to accept Spanish missions in the area.
4. If Fray Hidalgo’s experience at his mission is typical of the average Spanish mission in Texas, how successful do you think the Spanish will be at achieving their religious goals in Texas? Explain your answer.