

Looking Ahead *Grade Level*

Unit 2: Age of Contact

Name:

Date:

Period:

Part I: Transitioning to a new Era

The Age of Contact was an era in Texas history when Spain was searching for gold and riches in the Americas. In the 1500s, Spanish conquistadors explored places like Mexico, Florida, New Mexico, and Texas. They hoped to find great wealth. These trips led to many encounters between Spanish explorers and American Indian tribes.

Some conquistadors, like Cortés, were very successful in seizing gold and resources from American Indians like the Aztecs in Mexico. Other conquistadors failed to find gold or wealth in the lands north of Mexico. Because of this, Spain lost interest in places like Texas. The Spanish focused instead on the area they had colonized around Mexico City. This changed when their enemy, the French, came to the coast of Texas in 1685.

Spain didn't want to give up their claim to Texas, so they needed to try something new in the northern areas. Their search for gold in Texas had failed, but that was only one of the reasons they had explored the area.

Match the reason for exploration on the left with its correct description on the right.

___ 1) God	A) Gain fame and power for themselves and their country.
___ 2) Gold	B) Spread their Catholic faith to others around the globe.
___ 3) Glory	C) Become wealthy by claiming resources from other places.

4) 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 called friars, or frays. One of these friars, named Fray Francisco Hidalgo, wrote a letter to the new Spanish viceroy, or governor. In his letter, Fray Hidalgo wrote about some of the problems he had when trying to set up missions among the Hasinai American Indians in 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**”?

- Sharing territory with an ally.
- Intruding on someone else's land.
- Retreating from a given area.
- 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?

- The French were leading attacks against Spanish missions and settlements.
- The French refused to form a peaceful alliance with Spanish settlers.
- The French were slowly taking more and more land that Spain had claimed.
- The French were attempting to build their own missions in the region.

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) The viceroy promised to send 25 men to help establish the missions. According to the context of the passage, how did Fray Hidalgo feel about this number of people?

- He felt it was not enough people.
- He felt the people who came were not qualified.
- He felt it was too many people.
- All answers are correct.

___ 2) What was the problem with the ministers the viceroy was sending to help lead the missions?

- They were not qualified to lead religious services.
- The viceroy wasn't sending any way to provide for their needs.
- The ministers had their own opinions about how the missions should run.
- All answers are correct.

___ 3) Based on the information in this excerpt, does it seem to you like the missions were very important to Spain?

- Yes, because Spain made sure to provide a lot of support and supplies.
- No, because the friars didn't seem to care about running the missions.
- Yes, because the friars forced Spain to provide supplies and resources.
- No, because Spain didn't even provide enough support or supplies.

4) Write a five to seven-word summary of the excerpt above.

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?

- Approval of
- Disinterest in
- Curiosity about
- Hatred of

___ 2) What evidence from the passage supports your answer to number one?

- Fray Hidalgo claims the Indians won’t live near the church even though they promised to do so.
- Hidalgo states that the Indians believe baptism will kill them because several have died after being baptized.
- Hidalgo says that the ministers can’t teach the Indians about the Catholic faith because they refuse to move closer to the church.
- All answers are correct.

3) If Fray Hidalgo’s experience is typical for Spanish missionaries in Texas, do you predict Spain will succeed in its religious goals in Texas? Why or why not?