

# How do we know what we know? *Advanced*

## Unit 3: The Spanish Colonial Era

Name:  Date:  Period:

### Part I: Reading Guide & Introductory Passage

Pre-Reading Response	Post-Reading Response	Statement <i>Before you read the passage, read each statement and predict the correct answer. After you read, return to this chart to record the correct answer.</i>	Justification <i>Provide evidence from the reading to support your answer.</i>
T / F	T / F	1. Spain's primary goal for the Mission Presidio System was to settle the majority of its population in Texas.	
T / F	T / F	2. Texas Indians had their own plans for missions that did not follow the Spanish goals.	
T / F	T / F	3. There are many primary sources available to help us understand what happened at the Spanish missions.	

The Spanish began establishing missions and presidios in Texas in the 1690s after they learned of the arrival of Robert La Salle. They hoped that their increased presence in the region would discourage further French encroachment in their northern frontier. They also hoped to assimilate Texas Indians into Spanish culture, transforming them from their Caddo, or Karankawa, or Apache identities into Spanish subjects.

From the very beginning, however, the missions and presidios faced a number of problems. The Spanish government typically did not provide them with the manpower, support, or supplies they needed to be successful. Additionally, Texas Indians were not interested in becoming Spanish. Texas Indian tribes, instead, wanted to continue living their own lives according to their own cultures. As a result, this often led to conflict between the Spaniards and Indians in the region. This was especially evident at one particular mission called San Sabá.

How do we know what we know about the San Sabá mission? There are surviving eyewitness accounts, official interviews, journal entries, and letters to the Spanish government describing what happened there on March 16, 1758. Sources like these exist for many different missions that operated throughout Texas in the 1700s. Today, these primary source accounts can provide a glimpse into what life was like in the Spanish missions of Texas.

## Part II: Primary Source Activity

**Directions:** Use the excerpts to answer the accompanying questions.

**Excerpt 1:** A letter from Father Terreros, a religious leader at the San Sabá mission, to the Viceroy of New Spain dated February 13, 1758.

[The Apache] continue their good cooperation, but their promises of submission are sometimes pretexts for delay, some alleging illnesses and disagreements among them, while others in their perplexity make frivolous proposals and lack the unity to settle in the towns. But it is true that some evidences of particular friendliness continue to indicate favorable response to our efforts.

1. According to the author, do the Apache seem interested in assimilating into Spanish culture? Provide evidence to support your claim.

**Excerpt 2:** A letter from Don Toribio de Urrutia, the military leader of a presidio in San Antonio, approximately 125 miles from San Sabá to the Governor of Coahuila y Tejas, dated March 20, 1758.

Your Worship is hereby apprised of a letter, dated the sixteenth of the current month of March, from Colonel Don Diego Ortiz Parrilla, informing me that he is under attack by more than 2,000 Comanche Indians and other allied nations, all equipped with firearms. At the same time they attacked the Mission that is in his charge. He believes it to have been demolished and all the religious and other inhabitants killed, for it was impossible for the said Colonel to supply sufficient reinforcements.

1. According to this source, what was happening at the San Sabá mission?
2. Was the presidio able to protect the mission? Why or why not?

**Excerpt 3:** Excerpts from the official interview of Joseph Gutierrez, a 22-year-old Spanish shepherd living near San Sabá at the time of the conflict.

[Gutierrez] was then asked his reason for hurrying to this Presidio on the morning of the sixteenth of this current month of March. He replied that he was ordered to do so by the steward of the Mission for the purpose of warning me that a large and increasing number of Indians had surrounded the place since sunrise.

He further testified that he heard many of them say that they had come with the intention of killing the Apache. Many of the Indian chieftains, he said, talked with the Reverend Fathers and with some of the soldiers. The Reverend Father President gave them presents of bundles of tobacco and other things. The Indians then said that they did not want to fight the Spaniards but were looking for the Apache.

Gutierrez was asked what kind of weapons they had. He replied: French firearms, bullet pouches, and very large powder horns. Others had pikes, and still others, bows and arrows; but most of them had muskets and cutlasses, and all wore the costumes that the Indians wear for wars and raids.

1. Why did Gutierrez say that he went to the presidio?
2. According to Gutierrez, why did the Comanche and their allies come the mission?
3. Based on Gutierrez's testimony about the Comanche's clothes and items they brought, what can you infer about their intentions in going to the San Sabá mission?

## Part III: Analyze and Infer

1. Whose point of view is presented in these excerpts? Whose point of view is absent? Why do you think that is?
2. If the Apache were not interested in assimilating into Spanish culture through the mission system, what other possible motivation might they have had in forming a friendly relationship with the Spanish at the San Sabá mission and presidio?
3. Based on the excerpts, does it seem like the Texas missions were a priority to the Spanish government? Provide evidence from the texts to support your answer.