

Readings and Assessments
for
World Studies
Grade 6

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Glen Blankenship

Clairmont Press
Atlanta, Georgia

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Editor: Mary Anne Barlowe

Design: New Diameter Creative Services, Inc.

Production: New Diameter Creative Services Inc.

Maps: New Diameter Creative Services Inc.

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ISBN: 978-1-56733-147-9

Printed in the U.S.A.

First Printing

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LATIN AMERICA AND CANADA

HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDINGS

SS6H1 Examine conflict and change in Latin America.

- a. Explain the influence of African slavery on the development of the Americas.

THE INFLUENCE OF AFRICAN SLAVERY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAS

Finding cheap labor was a goal of the Europeans in America in the 1500s. Gold and silver found by conquistadors made Spain and Portugal wealthy. The wealth also made them powerful countries. At first, these metals could be taken from the native people. As these supplies were used up, the Europeans decided to try to set up mines to get more. As more Europeans came to the Americas, some tried to find ways to grow crops that could be sold in Europe. Sugar cane grew well in the Caribbean and in the tropics of Central and South America. The sugar cane was used to make sugar, molasses, and rum. Both of these projects required a large and cheap labor force.

The native people were not a good choice for labor. Millions died from diseases brought by the Europeans. More died because of violence with the Europeans. Natives that were forced to farm or work in mines faced harsh conditions. Many of them died as well. Many of the indigenous people simply retreated into the mountains or into the jungles. The Europeans then looked to Africa for labor.

Africans were brought to the Americas by ship. For many, the difficult journey ended in death by starvation or disease. Once they arrived in the New World, the Africans were forced to work on plantations or in mines. Long working hours, poor housing, and poor nutrition made life difficult. Children born to the Africans were considered slaves too. They faced a lifetime of work with no chance of freedom.

For about three hundred years, businesses that depended on slavery grew. The laborers—slaves—grew in numbers as the plantations expanded. Most of them lived in the tropical areas near the coast where large farms could be built.

This labor force helped to build many of the countries of Latin America, but most of the wealth was sent back to Europe. As different countries gained freedom from Europe in the 1800s, they ended slavery.

Today, the descendants of the African slaves are a part of the culture of Latin America. Most of the descendants live in the areas where plantation farming was important. Inter-marriage of people from different continents has produced a diverse culture. People with only African ancestors or people with both African and European ancestors (mulattoes) live in large numbers in these countries. For instance, about 60 percent of Cubans and nearly 50 percent of Brazilians are in these groups.

1. Where did Europeans in the sixteenth century find a cheap labor source for work in the New World?

- A. slaves from Africa
- B. settlers that came from Europe
- C. peasants from Spain and Portugal
- D. indigenous people of Central and South America

- _____ 2. **Which is one reason Europeans chose slaves from Africa as a labor source in the New World?**
- A. The New World had diseases that did not affect African workers.
 - B. European workers did not know how to do farm and mining work.
 - C. Indigenous people were in short supply due to warfare and diseases.
 - D. Settlers from Europe did not know how to operate large plantations.
- _____ 3. **When did slavery end for most parts of Latin America?**
- A. after the slaves revolted
 - B. as countries got independence from Europe
 - C. after the kings of Spain and Portugal outlawed slavery
 - D. when the people of the country voted to free the slaves
- _____ 4. **What is one effect of slavery that influences Latin America today?**
- A. Slavery exists in few Latin American countries.
 - B. Many Latin Americans have ancestors from Africa.
 - C. Latin America has no people with ancestors from Africa.
 - D. The people of Latin America accept slavery as part of their lives.
- _____ 5. **Slavery helped to build the countries of Latin America, but much of the wealth was shipped to Europe. Today, one effect of that situation is**
- A. many Latin American countries are very poor.
 - B. Latin American countries do not have good workers.
 - C. people in Latin America are trying to move to Europe.
 - D. there are few people in Latin America with African ancestors.

SS6H1 Examine conflict and change in Latin America.

- b. Explain the influence of the Spanish and the Portuguese on the language and religions of Latin America.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPANISH AND THE PORTUGUESE ON LANGUAGE AND RELIGION IN LATIN AMERICA**Languages in Latin America**

As the Spanish and Portuguese conquered the indigenous people, they spread their language and religion. The Spanish language is still in use in the lands claimed and ruled by Spain. This includes most of Central and South America and the Caribbean Islands. The Portuguese language is the official language of Brazil. Portugal ruled Brazil from the 1500s until 1822. Because Portugal is such a large country in area and population, almost as many people in Latin America speak Portuguese as Spanish.

The Europeans spread their language across Latin America. Spanish and Portuguese were the official languages. They were the languages of government, business, and power. To be successful, people in these regions had to know these languages. Other languages did not die, however. The indigenous people of Central and South America moved into the mountains and into the jungles. Many of their languages were preserved. Quechua, language of the Incas, still is spoken by 10 million people in western South America. Almost 2 million Aymara people of the Andes Mountains and Altiplano region speak the Aymara language. It is even an official language of Bolivia. African languages survived in some places. Haitian Creole, for instance, is a blend of French and African

languages. Still, for the millions of people living in Latin America in the twenty-first century, Spanish and Portuguese are the most important languages for business, government, and culture.

Religion in Latin America

The religion of South America is mostly Roman Catholic. During the colonial period, the governments of Spain and Portugal, whose official religion was Roman Catholic, paid for missionaries to go to the New World. Priests, friars, and monks set up missions all over Latin America. Their job was to convert the indigenous people to Christianity. They also ministered to the Europeans who moved to the area. The governments of Spain and Portugal supported the missionaries with money to build missions and churches. They sometimes supported them with protection by the army.

Indigenous people were often forced to say they were accepting Christianity. However, they often continued to practice their traditional beliefs. Some people mixed their traditional beliefs with beliefs of the Catholic Church.

- _____ **6. Which two European countries contributed most to the languages of Latin America?**
- A. England and Spain
 - B. Spain and Portugal
 - C. France and Portugal
 - D. England and Portugal
- _____ **7. Spanish and Portuguese are important in Latin America because they are**
- A. the only official languages.
 - B. the two main spoken languages.
 - C. spoken by everyone in Latin America.
 - D. understood by government workers and businessmen.
- _____ **8. What is the most common religion of Latin America?**
- A. Creole
 - B. Aymara
 - C. Quechua
 - D. Roman Catholic
- _____ **9. How did the Spanish government have an influence on the spread of the Roman Catholic Church in the New World?**
- A. The Catholic Church controlled Spain.
 - B. Spanish royalty did not support the Catholic Church.
 - C. It paid to build missions to bring Christianity to the native population.
 - D. Churches from other parts of the world did not send missionaries to the New World.

10. What was the main job of the priests, friars, and monks sent by Spain to the New World?

- A. find food and shelter for the poor
- B. convert the Indians to Christianity
- C. build missions to serve the settlers
- D. minister to the armies of the Spanish king

Use the following table to answer questions 11-13.

Percent of Population that is Roman Catholic in Select Latin American Countries (1910 & 2005)

	1910	2005
Brazil	96	85
Cuba	90	56
Mexico	99	92
Venezuela	96	87

Source: International Bulletin of Missionary Research

11. Which question could be answered using the table?

- A. What percent of Mexico is Roman Catholic today?
- B. What is the most common religion in Latin America?
- C. Which Latin American country has the greatest number of Roman Catholics?
- D. Which of the four countries had the highest percent of Roman Catholics in 1910?

12. Which country had the largest decline in percent of people that were Roman Catholic?

- A. Cuba
- B. Brazil
- C. Mexico
- D. Venezuela

13. Which statement best summarizes the information in the table?

- A. Each country shown has had a decrease in the percent of population that is Roman Catholic.
- B. Each country shown has had an increase in the percent of population that is Roman Catholic.
- C. The four countries listed have about the same percentage of their population that were Roman Catholics.
- D. The number of Roman Catholics in Latin America has gone down over the 95- year period that this information covers.

SS6H1 Examine conflict and change in Latin America.

c. Explain the impact of the Cuban Revolution and the current relationship between Cuba and the United States.

THE IMPACT OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

Cuba is an island nation located ninety miles south of Florida. For most of the twentieth century, it had political problems. Leaders came to power and then were thrown out by others. At the same time, American businesses were trading with Cuba. American companies owned a large amount of land in the country. Most of Cuba's sugar cane crop was sold to America. In the late 1950s, a change in leadership took place there. Fidel Castro became dictator, creating the only communist country in the western hemisphere. Castro's power was such that he ruled for nearly fifty years.

In the late 1950s, Fulgencio Batista was ruler of Cuba. He had been elected president at one time, but he later made himself dictator. That meant that he ruled without any controls on his power. Many people in Cuba were unhappy with his rule. There was much poverty. Education and health care were not good for most Cubans. Fidel Castro led a group of rebels against Batista. Because Batista was so unpopular, many followed Castro. Castro defeated the Batista government and made himself dictator in 1959.

Castro began right away to organize a communist government. He declared that all the property belonging to Americans now belonged to the government. All farms, factories, and businesses owned by Cubans also became government property. Castro had people who supported Batista arrested. Most were executed by firing squad. Some spent decades in prison. Cubans no longer had the right to protest against the government. Cuban newspapers, radio, and television were shut down. The government became the only source for news. Churches were closed, and all church property was taken by the government.

Because of these harsh events, the United States placed an embargo on Cuban goods. That meant that Cuba's sugar cane crop could not be sold to the United States. The **Soviet Union** became friends with Cuba. They bought the country's sugar cane each year. They also supplied weapons and other goods to the Cubans. The Soviets helped to educate young Cubans and trained their military.

Under Castro's rule, the Cuban people had some benefits. Hospitals and schools were improved. Women and blacks became better educated and had better jobs. However, most parts of people's lives were controlled by the government. People who practiced their Christian religion were discriminated against. Although everyone was guaranteed a wage, the income of most Cubans was low. The country was one of the poorest in the region. Its people lived in one of the least free countries in the world.

Castro's government and the U.S. government did not get along well. The United States did not like having a communist country so close to Florida. Americans who owned land and businesses in Cuba did not like the loss of their property. The United States decided to keep the pressure on Cuba. It did not allow travel by Americans to or from Cuba. It also tried to keep other countries from trading with the Cubans.

Cuba tried to spread communism into Latin America. It supported revolutionary ideas in many countries by providing military training, money, and weapons. One event, the **Cuban Missile Crisis**, almost started a nuclear war. In 1962, Cuba gave the Soviet Union permission to build a missile launching complex. Missiles launched from the site could reach U.S. cities. U.S. President John F. Kennedy demanded the missiles be removed. A tense time followed. Finally, the Soviets agreed to remove the missiles, and the United States said it would not invade Cuba.

Relations between the United States and Cuba have not improved much in the past fifty years. There is still an embargo on goods from Cuba. Americans, however, can send money to their families in Cuba. In the early 1980s and again in the 1990s, there were periods in which large numbers of Cubans escaped their island for America. The United States had been accepting Cubans who escaped. However, thousands were being "allowed" to escape. This caused a strain on relations between the two countries. In 1994, the United States agreed to allow 20,000 Cubans a year to enter the United States. The Cubans agreed to stop allowing so many Cubans to "escape."

- _____ **14. Who took over as dictator of Cuba in 1959?**
- A. Fidel Castro
 - B. Raul Castro
 - C. John F. Kennedy
 - D. Fulgencio Batista
- _____ **15. What type of government did Castro create in Cuba?**
- A. oligarchy
 - B. communist
 - C. democratic
 - D. confederacy
- _____ **16. What was one reaction the United States had to Cuba taking over property owned by Americans?**
- A. The United States threatened a nuclear attack.
 - B. The United States put an embargo on Cuban goods.
 - C. The United States wanted Cuba to trade with other countries.
 - D. An agreement was reached to limit the number of Cubans entering the United States.
- _____ **17. Which country helped Castro build Cuba into a communist country?**
- A. Mexico
 - B. Venezuela
 - C. Soviet Union
 - D. United States
- _____ **18. What almost caused a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union?**
- A. Kennedy did not like the leader of the Soviet Union.
 - B. The Soviet Union wanted to show the Cubans that they were strong friends.
 - C. Castro allowed the Soviet Union to build a nuclear missile launch complex in Cuba.
 - D. The United States wanted the sugar cane crop that the Soviet Union was buying from Cuba.

SS6H1 Examine conflict and change in Latin America.

d. Describe the impact of poverty, the war on drugs, and migration to the United States on Latin America.

At the start of the 21st century, about half of Latin Americans were living in poverty. That is, they survived on less than \$4 per day. Efforts to reduce poverty had improved that number so that by 2016, only one in four Latin Americans were in poverty. There is a large income gap in the region with some having great wealth and many more who are extremely poor. Decreasing poverty is important to the region. Those in poverty often lack not only food, clothing, and adequate shelter, but basic health services, safe water to drink, sanitation, education, and economic opportunity.

Decreasing poverty has been shown to increase the lifespan of Latin Americans. Decreased poverty has improved the mortality (death) rate of children in Latin America. In 1970, on average 118 of every 1,000 Latin American children would have died by the age of five. By 2010, that number had dropped to 23 for every 1,000 children. That compares to a rate of 6 of every 1,000 children in the United States. The typical man in Latin America can expect to live to age 72 while the average woman can expect to live to age 79. That compares to age 76 for men and age 81 for women in the United States.

Latin America's poverty and its location make it convenient for production and trafficking of illegal drugs. Countries in Latin America have been affected negatively by drug trafficking groups and their leaders, as well as by the war on drugs. There has been an increase in violence in communities, corruption in government, and fear in the region. It is estimated that one-half of the violent deaths in these countries are drug-related.

Since 1971, the United States has been fighting a "war on drugs." This was an effort to reduce the use of illegal drugs in the country. U.S. efforts focused on education of the young, putting violators in jail, and assisting the police and military in Latin America to stop drug production in their region. After more than 40 years of conflict, some Latin American countries have seen the growth of drug cartels – groups of criminals who rule communities and control small, well-armed militias to defend their illegal drug businesses. Results include countries with high murder rates, such as in El Salvador with over 108 murders per 100,000 people in 2015. Seven of the top ten countries with the highest murder rates are in Latin America. Most of these crimes are related to drug trafficking.

In order to find a safer place for their families, better jobs, or more opportunities for their children, many Latin Americans have migrated to the United States. Although some of the people have come legally, many more have entered the United States illegally. This has caused tension in some areas of the country with a high immigrant population. States that border Mexico and the Caribbean, such as California, Arizona, Texas, and Florida, have been challenged to deal with the migrants humanely. The U.S. Census estimated that nearly 3 million immigrants from Latin America were living in the United States in 2014. New York, Miami, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles have the highest number of Latin American immigrants.

Some people in the United States have been concerned that the immigrants from Latin America have taken jobs that U.S. citizens need. They are also concerned that the immigrants bring crime and strain education and healthcare services. Others view the immigrants as providing a valuable labor source and positive contributor to their communities.

_____ 19. **Why are Latin Americans migrating to the United States?**

- A. The beauty of the country attracts them.
- B. There is more room to build houses.
- C. There is hope for less violence and poverty.
- D. Houses are cheaper to build

_____ 20. **Other than location, what makes Latin America convenient for drug trafficking?**

- A. multiple forests for hiding drugs
- B. poverty of people
- C. wealth of people
- D. advanced interstate highway system

_____ 21. **Why was the United States involved in the war on drugs in Latin America?**

- A. The US is part of NAFTA.
- B. The US benefitted from the sale of drugs.
- C. The US desired to expedite the sale of drugs.
- D. The US desired to reduce the use of drugs in the US.

_____ 22. **What are drug cartels?**

- A. official police fighting the war on drugs
- B. criminals who rule communities to sell illegal drugs
- C. criminals in jail for selling illegal drugs
- D. vehicles used to transport illegal drugs