

Lesson Plan: A Change of Attitude?

Comparing the Requerimiento and the New Laws of 1542

From 1513, Spanish conquistadores were required by law to read the *Requerimiento* to all Native American people they encountered, especially before the Spanish attacked them. It advised the Native Americans that they were now vassals of the King of Spain, would become Christians, and if they did not, they would be attacked and killed, or enslaved.



Document A

Native American pictograph of a conquistador, Canyon de Chelly, Arizona; part of a procession of mounted Spaniards drawn on the canyon wall.

(Filmed by the makers of *THE WEST*) http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/resources/archives/one/61_21.htm

Document B

This is an excerpt from the *Requerimiento*:

...If, [however], you do not do [what I ask], or you maliciously delay [doing] it, I assure you that with the help of God, I will attack you mightily. I will make war [against] you everywhere and in every way I can. And I will subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and His Majesty. I will take your wives and children, and I will make them slaves. As such, I will sell and dispose of them as His Majesty will order. I will take your property. I will do all the harm and damage to you I can,[treating you] as vassals who do not obey and refuse to accept their lord and resist and oppose him.

I declare that the deaths and injuries that occur as a result of this would be your fault and not His Majesty's, nor ours, not that of the *caballeros* who have come with me.

Flint, Richard and Shirley Cushing. *Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539-1542: "They Were Not Familiar With His Majesty, Nor Did They Wish to Become His Subjects."* University of New Mexico Press: Albuquerque, 2005.

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Name: _____ Class _____ Date _____

After hearing about the mistreatment of Native Americans in many Spanish colonies, King Charles I of Spain wrote a set of laws in 1542 to ensure that they were treated in a fair and humane fashion. The laws were not well received by the Spanish in North or South America, where many Native Americans served as slaves in mines, or as workers in *encomiendas*. Outright revolt weakened the New Laws, and they were not enforced as strictly as King Charles had intended. The *encomienda* system continued.

Document C: **THE NEW LAWS OF THE INDIES, 1542**

Answer the questions on the right. In the left column, highlight the text that supports your answer.

Whereas one of the most important things in which the Audiencias are to serve us is in taking very especial care of the good treatment of the Indians and preservation of them, We command that the said Audiencias enquire continually into the excesses or ill treatment which are or shall be done to them [the Indians] by governors or private persons...

Item, We ordain and command that from henceforward for no cause of war nor any other whatsoever, though it be under title of rebellion, nor by ransom nor in other manner can an Indian be made a slave, and we will that they be treated as our vassals of the Crown of Castile since such they are...

...We ordain and command that the Audiencias ... speedily set the said Indians at liberty unless the persons who hold them for slaves show title why they should hold and possess them legitimately.And in New Spain let it be especially provided as to the Indians held by Joan Infante, Diego de Ordas, the Maestro Roa, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, Francisco Maldonado, Bernardino Vazquez de Tapia, Joan Xaramillo, Martin Vazquez, Gil Gongales de Venavides, and many other persons who are said to hold Indians in very excessive quantity, according to the report made to us...

What is one of the main duties of the Audiencia?

Why does this historical document refer to Native Americans as "Indians"?

What continual duty does King Charles give the Audiencia?

Can an Indian be made a slave after 1542?

How shall Indians be treated?

If Indians are held as slaves, what is the Audiencia commanded to do?

What does King Charles ask the Audiencia to do about the Indians held by Francisco Vasquez de Coronado?

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<p>So also, the said Audiencias are to inform themselves how the Indians have been treated by the persons who have held them in encomienda, and if it be clear that in justice they ought to be deprived of the said Indians for their excesses and the ill-usage to which they have subjected them, We ordain that they take away and place such Indians under our Royal Crown. ...</p> <p>Item, We ordain and command that our said Presidents and Auditors take great care that the Indians who in any of the ways above mentioned are taken away, and those who may become vacant be very well treated and instructed in the matters of our holy Catholic faith, and as our free vassals.....</p>	<p><i>In this paragraph, the Audiencia is asked to check on the welfare of Indians held in encomienda to see if they should be freed. Does this make it sound like some encomiendas will continue?</i></p> <p><i>What will happen to those Indians who are freed from encomiendas?</i></p>
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VOCABULARY

<p>Audiencia</p>	<p><i>In sixteenth century Spain, the Audiencia was a court responsible for administering justice and carrying out the King's laws. It was one of the most important parts of Spanish colonial government.</i></p>
<p>Encomienda</p>	<p><i>Established in 1512, the encomienda was a grant by the Spanish crown which gave the holder tribute and/or forced labor from the Native Americans who lived on that land. With it came the expectation that these Native Americans would become Christians.</i></p>
<p>Vassal</p>	<p><i>In feudal societies, vassals held their land at the pleasure of the ruler, and owe the ruler tribute in exchange for protection.</i></p>
<p>Ordain</p>	<p><i>To officially decree or demand that this law be carried out.</i></p>

Source:

From The New Laws of the Indies, ed. Henry Stevens (London: The Chiswick Press, 1893), pp. iii-xvii, passim.

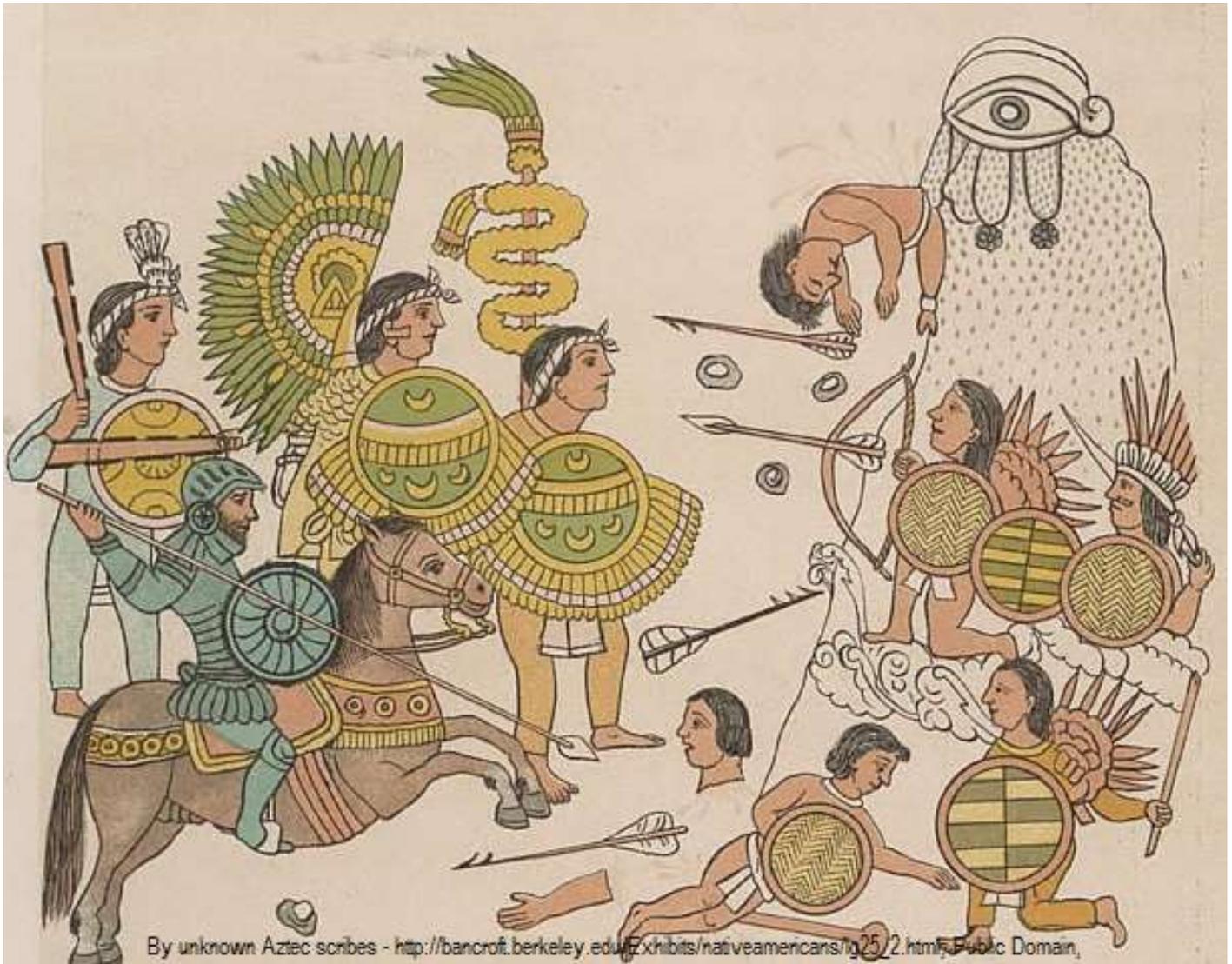
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Document D: "Jal-ixco"

PowerPoint Slide #17 uses this primary source picture to ask students to list what is revealed as they examine it by quadrants.

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Setting the Stage

Background:

- Review to make sure students have background knowledge of the feudal system and the concept of tribute;
- Students should have knowledge of the conquest of Mexico by Cortés, as well as the stories of Cíbola told by Fray Marcos.



Essential Question: Did the New Laws of 1542 indicate a change of attitude by the Spanish king towards Native Americans?

Introduction to New Material

Introduce vocabulary so these terms will be familiar as students encounter them in reading and discussion.

Use the PowerPoint on the Teacher Resources page to accompany the Act-It-Out of the Requerimiento:

- Split the class into three groups. One third of the class will be the Pueblo people, one third will be the Spanish and the last third will be their Native American allies.
- Students should remain separate into the two groups.
- Pass out the Requerimiento, both in English and in Spanish, to the Spaniards.
- Pass out the “Translation” in English to the Indios Amigos.
- Pass out the Pueblo response, both in English and in Latin, to the Native Americans.
- Set up classroom and students as the characters are standing in Slide 7. Follow the PowerPoint.
- Use a row of desks or tables to represent the pueblo, and have Pueblo students stand behind or (if you are brave!) on top of them.
- The Spaniards approach aggressively. If you have any props available, they will carry swords, crossbows, and muskets. They are riding horses and wearing armor.
- The Spaniard spokesman should read Document A- the Requerimiento, in Spanish.
- The Indios Amigos should read Document B – “Translation”
- The Pueblo spokesman should read the Document C-the Pueblo Response, in Latin. As he is reading, the other Pueblos draw an imaginary line in front of the Spaniards.

Whole Group Discussion

At Slide 14 – Is There A Problem Here? – have groups return to their seats, and as a whole group, discuss what occurred. Then have an individual from each group read the English version of what their statement meant, and discuss. Points and questions to bring out:

- There was often communication through the Aztec language, Nahuatl, which had been used for trading. This meant that both sides were relying on the warlike Aztecs, who had their own agenda, to understand one another.

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- If the Spaniards understood the meaning of the religious ceremonies that the Pueblos were engaged in, would it have made any difference to them, as they were told to bring the Native Americans into the Catholic Church?
- Is there any way that this situation could have been resolved without bloodshed?

Explain to the class that in this case, Latin was used in place of the Pueblo languages that different Pueblo groups would have used (Zuni, Tiwa, and Keres, to name a few). Pueblos also may have had some knowledge of Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs of Mexico, which was historically used in trade. They would have no concept of Spanish at this time.

Have students journal about the experience of their group and what they remember or could understand from the reading of the two documents. What would their reactions be as a Pueblo or as a Spaniard to the other side's statements and actions? Did they understand what the other group was doing, or why? Did they understand what they were saying? How did body language contribute to understanding or misunderstanding?

Ask students to volunteer to read the most enlightening sentence from their writing, and discuss as a group.

Individual Practice

Project PowerPoint slide #17, *The Result*. This is a primary source picture from the private domain by an unknown Aztec artist. With each click of your mouse, as you show the PowerPoint in "Slideshow" mode, one of the blue squares will disappear, revealing more of the picture beneath. This is a strategy to encourage students to look more carefully at a piece of art or photograph.

- Ask students to list what they see as each quadrant is revealed.
- Discuss which groups of people are portrayed.
- Discuss what students think the final outcome might have been for each.
- Examine the weapons used by each group, and what advantages or disadvantages they might have had.

Partners - Practice

Pass out the New Laws handout, one to each student, and read the introduction and instructions out loud together. Allow students to partner up as they go through the readings again together, answer the questions on the right, and highlight the facts in the article which support their answer.

Whole Group Discussion

As a class, discuss the answers and supporting evidence in the article. Focus on the differences in attitude between this writing and the Requerimiento. Discuss what the purpose of each document might have been.

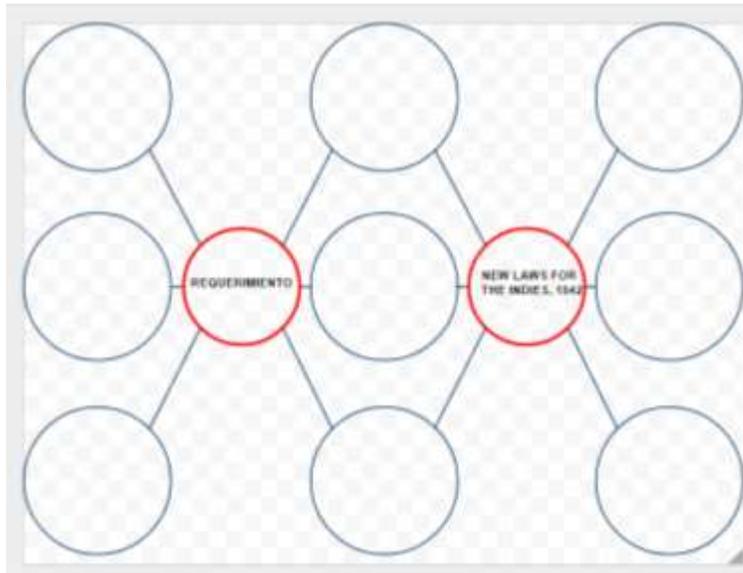


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Assessment

Graphic Organizer:



Either individually or with a partner, have students complete a compare / contrast bubble graphic organizer, comparing the attitudes reflected in the Requerimiento and the attitudes reflected in the New Laws of 1542. There are many websites which make graphic organizers available; this one is in Google Documents.

- The column in the center between the two terms should be filled with anything that seems to be the same in the two documents.
- The columns on the far left and far right should be differences which are specific to that document. After the class

completes their graphic organizer, discuss results as a class and allow students to add new ideas to their graphic organizers.

Four Corner Discussion:

Students will participate in a vote-with-your-feet activity in which they have to choose an answer to the essential question: Did the New Laws of 1542 indicate a change of attitude by the Spanish king towards Native Americans?

1. Label the corners of your classroom with large signs that read: Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Disagree, and Somewhat Disagree.
2. Ask students to quickly choose a corner.
3. In their corner groups, students should discuss their opinions about the essential question and come up with a statement that indicates their position to present to the class as a whole.
4. Share statements and debate between the four groups – encourage students to ask questions of the other groups, share opinions.
5. Give students a chance to change groups. After that, students should share what facts influenced their decisions the most.
6. Upon returning to their seats, students should use the back of their graphic organizers to write a reflection about the four corner discussion.

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Letter to King Charles I: Students will use the graphic organizers and reflections, as well as the original primary source documents, to write a persuasive letter to King Charles in which they explain how they agree or disagree with the New Laws of the Indies, 1542.

Their persuasive letter should include an introductory paragraph which explains their position, be supported by three reasons, including quotes from the original documents, and end in a conclusion.

Students should follow a business letter format. Review the evaluation rubric you will use with the class before they begin to write. A great persuasive letter rubric can be found at www.ReadWriteThink.com. If there is time, allow students to do peer editing, with the focus on content more than on writing conventions. If this is allowed, then students should be able to make a final draft which will be submitted for evaluation.

Resources

Curley, Cara. By permission of the artist, cartoon images of conquistadors and Aztecs.

"Jal-ixco" by unknown Aztec scribes - Licensed under Public domain via Wikimedia Commons.

http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/Exhibits/nativeamericans/lg25_2.html

James, Betsy. By permission of the artist, drawings of Kuaua Pueblo and the Tiwa people.

Martin, Phillip. – By permission of the artist, free educational clip art of archaeologists, Native Americans, and conquistador.

"New Laws of the Indies, 1542." *From The New Laws of the Indies, ed. Henry Stevens (London: The Chiswick Press, 1893), pp. iii-xvii, passim.*

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