Part A: Using Source Materials

HISTORICAL CONTEXT  By the late 1400s Europeans had grown accustomed to having access to the riches and luxuries of China, India, and the islands of Southeast Asia. Traveling to and from these distant lands was difficult, and European explorers became determined to find sea routes to the East. Increasing European exploration led to many changes around the world.

TASK  Using information from the documents and your knowledge of world history, answer the questions that follow each document in Part A. Your answers to the questions will help you write the Part B essay.

DIRECTIONS  Examine the following documents and answer the questions that follow each document.

DOCUMENT 1

Most High and Mighty Sovereigns, In obedience to your Highnesses’ commands, and with submission to superior judgment, I will say whatever occurs to me in reference to the colonization and commerce of the Island of Espanola, and of the other islands, both those already discovered and those that may be discovered hereafter.

In the first place, as regards the Island of Espanola: . . . the number of colonists who desire to go thither amounts to two thousand, owing to the land being safer and better for farming and trading, and . . . it will serve as a place to which they can return and from which they can carry on trade with the neighboring islands.

—Christopher Columbus, letter to the king and queen of Spain, 1494

1. What was the island that was colonized?

2. How many colonized the island, and why?
When the Portuguese began to import Asian spices by the sea route around Africa, this trade and the Spanish trade with America, were easily absorbed into the existing European pattern.

Antwerp, in the Netherlands, became the richest trading city in Europe and the first great centre of world trade—in terms of the still very restricted volume of this trade, probably the greatest single centre of world trade in history. Its transoceanic trade was channelled through Spain and Portugal, and in the mid-sixteenth century the value of this trade amounted to about a fifth of Antwerp’s total trade. England, Italy and the Baltic accounted for roughly an equal part and the remaining fifth was fairly evenly divided between trade with France and trade with Germany.

—H. G. Koenigsberger, Early Modern Europe 1500–1789

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3. What did the Portuguese import by the sea route?

4. What city became the richest trading city in Europe?
DOCUMENT 3

Then [Montezuma] stood up to welcome Cortés; he came forward, bowed his head low and addressed him in these words: “Our lord, you are weary. The journey has tired you, but now you have arrived on the earth. You have come to your city, Mexico. You have come here to sit on your throne, to sit under its canopy . . .

“This was foretold by the kings who governed your city, and now it has taken place. You have come back to us; you have come down from the sky. Rest now, and take possession of your royal houses. Welcome to your land, my lords!”

When Motecuhzoma [Montezuma] had finished, La Malinche translated his address into Spanish so that the Captain could understand it. Cortés replied in his strange and savage tongue, speaking first to La Malinche: “Tell Motecuhzoma that we are his friends. There is nothing to fear. We have wanted to see him for a long time, and now we have seen his face and heard his words. Tell him that we love him well and that our hearts are contented.” . . .

When this had been done, the celebrants began to sing their songs. That is how they celebrated the first day of the fiesta. On the second day they began to sing again, but without warning they were all put to death . . .

The Spaniards attacked the musicians first, slashing at their hands and faces until they had killed all of them . . . This slaughter in the Sacred Patio went on for three hours.

An Aztec account of the conquest of Mexico, c. 1519


5. How did Montezuma receive the Spanish?

6. What factor helped the Spanish conquer the powerful Aztec Empire?
 DOCUMENT 4

**Before You Read** The following words in the document below may be new to you: *loathsome, pestilential, scarcely.* You may want to look them up in a dictionary.

The stench of the hold [where the slaves were kept below deck] while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for fresh air; but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us ... This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole scene of horror almost inconceivable.”

—Olaudah Equiano, a former slave, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, 1789*

7. What does Olaudah Equiano describe in this account?

__________________________________________________________________________

8. What were some of the conditions that slaves endured?

__________________________________________________________________________
9. Look closely at this image. What does it show?


10. How does this image illustrate the Columbian Exchange?


Sir, Believing that you will take pleasure in hearing of the great success which our Lord has granted me in my voyage, I write you this letter, whereby you will learn how in thirty-seven days' time I reached the Indies with the fleet which the most illustrious King and Queen, our sovereigns, gave to me, where I found very many islands thickly peopled, of all which I took possession without resistance for their Highnesses by proclamation made and with the royal standard unfurled . . . When I reached Juana [Cuba], I followed its coast to the westward, and found it so large that I thought it must be the mainland,—the province of Cathay [China]; and, as I found neither towns nor villages on the sea-coast, but only a few hamlets, with the inhabitants of which I could not hold a conversation because they all immediately fled, I kept on the same route, thinking that I could not fail to light upon some large cities and towns . . .

On my reaching the Indies, I took by force, in the first island that I discovered, some of these natives that they might learn our language and give me information in regard to what existed in these parts; and it so happened that they soon understood us and we them, either by words or signs, and they have been very serviceable to us. They are still with me, and from repeated conversations that I have had with them, I find that they still believe that I came from heaven.

—Christopher Columbus, letter to the secretary of the Spanish treasury, February 1493


11. Where did Columbus think he had landed when he reached Cuba?

____________________________________________________________________________________

12. How did Columbus communicate with the people of the islands?

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Activity 7  Document-Based Activity
The Age of Exploration

DOCUMENT 7

**Before You Read**  The following words in the document below may be new to you: commerce, inured [also spelled incurred], procure. You may want to look them up in a dictionary.

Kairouan, the largest town of the Maghrib, surpasses all others in its commerce, its riches, and the beauty of its buildings and bazaars. It is the seat of government of the whole Maghrib, the center to which flows the wealth of the land, and the residence of the sultan of that country. I heard from Abu al-Hasan head of the [public] treasury [in AD 947–48], that the income of all provinces and localities of the Maghrib . . . was between seven hundred and eight hundred million dinars . . .

The exports from the Maghrib to the East are . . . European slaves, amber, silks, suits of very fine woolen, fineries, woolen skirts, carpets, iron, lead, mercury . . . People there possess excellent draft horses and camels inured to fatigue, which they procure from the Berbers.

—A description of Muslim towns and trade in North Africa, c. 948


13. What were the chief exports of the Maghrib region?

________________________________________________________________________

14. In what three areas did Kairouan surpass all the other towns?

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