The Spanish Empire

Grade Level
7-12 grade

Time Requirement
45-60 minutes

Introduction

Motivated by rivalry with Portugal near the end of the 15th century, the Spanish monarchy began sending explorers westward across the Atlantic to discover trade routes and expand Spain's power and influence. After Christopher Columbus landed in what is now the Caribbean and claimed the region for Spain, tensions between Spain and Portugal intensified. To prevent further escalation and possible war between the two major European powers, Pope Alexander VI issued the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas. This treaty, signed by both nations, drew a line in the Atlantic Ocean from the North Pole to the South Pole. It stated that Spain would have the right to rule over any lands discovered to the west of the demarcation line, while Portugal would have the right to rule over any lands found to the east. The only exception to each country's right to control new territories was if a Christian ruler already governed the area.

Columbus's arrival in the Americas in 1492 marked the beginning of the Golden Age of Spain. In the centuries that followed, the Spanish Empire grew to become one of the largest in history. At its height, it covered over five million square miles with settlements on nearly every continent. The empire lasted almost 500 years, with the last Spanish territory of Equatorial Guinea gaining independence in 1968.

The purpose and methods of establishing Spanish footholds varied by region and over time, but they also shared many similarities. In this lesson, students will infer the purpose and means of Spain's expansion from primary documents written by monarchs, *conquistadores*, clerics, and others as they chronicle the rise and fall of the Spanish Empire.

Materials
- Instructional Slides
- Document Excerpts
- Regions Graphic Organizer and Reflection Questions

Objectives
- Students will identify regions of the Spanish Empire.
- Students will outline and describe the expansion and decline of the Spanish Empire.
- Students will compare and contrast the purpose and methods of establishing settlements in different regions of the Spanish Empire.

Focus Question
- How did the Spanish Empire's purpose and strategies for expansion change over time and differ across regions?

Standards

Social Studies
6.1(A)* trace characteristics of various contemporary societies in regions that resulted from historical events or factors such as colonization, immigration, and trade

6.15(D)* identify the impact of cultural diffusion on individuals and world societies

6.2(A) identify and describe the historical influence of individuals or groups on various contemporary societies

7.1(A)^ identify the major eras in Texas history, describe their defining characteristics, and explain the purpose of dividing the past into eras, including … Age of Contact; Spanish Colonial …

7.1(B)^ explain the significance of the following dates: 1519, mapping of the Texas coast and first mainland Spanish settlement; 1718, founding of San Antonio …

WH.22(B)^ describe the … spread of major religious and philosophical traditions, including … Christianity,

WH.1(D) identify major causes and describe the major effects of the following important turning points in world history from 1450 to 1750: … European exploration and the Columbian Exchange, European expansion, …

Procedures

Part 1: Introduction

1. Begin by displaying the painting of Charles V by Peter Paul Rubens and/or the poem by Samuel Johnson for students. Follow the protocols below to discuss with students what they think is being communicated in these works.
2. <u>Painting Analysis</u>: *Allegory of Charles V as Ruler of the World*, ca. 1604
    a. Introduce the painting as a work by the artist Peter Paul Rubens, completed in the early 1600s. The subject of the painting is Charles V, who lived from 1500 to 1558. He was the king of Spain, Germany, Italy, the Archduke of Austria, the Lord of the Netherlands, the Duke of Burgundy, and the Holy Roman Emperor. Charles V oversaw the continuation of colonization in the Americas. His grandmother, Queen Isabella I of Castile, funded Christopher Columbus's first voyage.
    b. Display the painting and ask students to list everything they can see in the painting. They can list things individually, in small groups, or as a whole class.
        i. *Examples: Globe, man with beard, armor, scepter, crown, sword, cape, cherub*
    c. Ask students to create groups or categories for the components identified in the previous step and determine what they could represent.
        i. *Examples: royalty, military, power, dominance, wealth*
    d. Explain to students that this painting is an allegory, meaning that the picture shows an idea or meaning rather than an event that really happened. What could be the meaning or message of this painting?
3. <u>Poetry Analysis</u>: Excerpt from *London*, a poem by Samuel Johnson, 1738
    a. Present the work as an excerpt from English writer Samuel Johnson's poem *London*, published in 1738. Originally published anonymously, the poem criticizes England's government and laments the conditions of London's poor, while also reflecting the widespread negative views many English people held toward Spain. By 1738, the Spanish Empire encompassed large parts of South America, North America, and the Caribbean, while the British Empire included much of the modern-day East Coast of the United States, as well as parts of the Caribbean and India. The expansion of the two empires heightened tensions through colonial rivalry, trade conflicts, and territorial disputes.
    b. Post or print the poem, then have students read it independently or in small groups and determine the excerpt's tone or mood. Happy? Melancholy? Angry?
    c. Have students identify the speaker in the excerpt and the intended audience. Remind students that this excerpt was published in a longer poem in London in 1738.
    d. Ask students to write one or two sentences paraphrasing or rewriting the excerpt.
    e. Have students determine the excerpt's message or purpose. How does the speaker feel about the subject? What is the speaker trying to convey to the audience?

Excerpt from *London*, a poem by Samuel Johnson, 1738	***Allegory of Charles V as Ruler of the World***
Johnson, Samuel, 1709-1784. *London: a Poem, in Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal.* [London]: [publisher not identified], 17401749.	Peter Paul Rubens, *Allegory of Charles V as Ruler of the World* (Copy after Francesco Mazzola, called Parmigianino (1503–1540), "Allegory of Charles V as Ruler of the World," 1530), c 1604. Oil/canvas, 166.5 x 141 cm. Residenzgalerie Salzburg, Inv.-Nr. 303 © Residenzgalerie Salzburg, Illustration Fotostudio Ulrich Ghezzi Oberalm
Has heaven reserv'd, in pity to the poor, *No pathless waste, or undiscover'd shore;* *No secret island in the boundless main?* *No peaceful [desert] yet unclaim'd by Spain?* Samuel Johnson	

Part 2: Document Analysis

1. Provide students with background on the initial expansion of the Spanish Empire. Explain to students that Spain's expansion is often attributed to the three G's: God, gold, and glory. In this lesson, they will analyze primary and secondary documents that showcase the motivations and actions of those involved in Spain's expansion across six regions.
2. Break students into at least six groups, and assign each group a different region:
   a. The Philippines
   b. Peru
   c. Caribbean
   d. Mexico
   e. North Africa
   f. United States (Texas, Florida, and New Mexico)
3. In their groups, students will read excerpts from their region's documents and annotate:
   a. Evidence of purpose. Students should highlight phrases that explain why Spain established settlements in that region. They can color-code according to the three G's or another preferred method.
   b. Evidence of methods. Students should highlight phrases that describe how Spain entered the region and established settlements there.
4. After annotating, students discuss in their small groups and decide on two or three highlighted phrases that best demonstrate both the purpose and the methods of Spanish expansion.
5. Once identified, students then write these phrases for their respective region in the Regions Graphic Organizer.
6. After each group is done, have a representative share their main takeaways and their responses to the questions. Have a class scribe take notes for each region on the whiteboard or chart paper.
   a. Alternatively, have each student act as the "EXPERT" of their region. Put students in groups of 6 (one from each region). Each will teach the rest in their respective regions while the others fill in their charts.
7. To conclude the lesson, discuss as a class or in small groups the Reflection Questions side of the student sheet.

Assessment

- Assess based on the overarching statement created at the end of the student worksheet.
- Choose two regions and, in paragraph form, compare and contrast the reasons why Spain established settlements and how they did so. Explain potential reasons for any similarities and differences.