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Introduction

Miles And Duines and Commerce Incomentarity	
Why Are Primary Sources Important?	
Research on Using Primary Sources	
Analyzing Primary Sources with Students	
Components of This Resource	
How to Use This Resource	
Standards Correlation	
Creating Strong Questions	28
Primary Source Card Activities	
Spanish Armor	
Casta Painting	
Toussaint Louverture on Horseback	
Contrasting Heroes for Mexican Independence	
Manuela Sáenz	
The Man Who Can Make the Dirt Fly	
Chiquita Banana	
Ronald Reagan	59
Primary Source Reproduction Activities	
The History of the New World	63
Slavery in Latin America	69
Map of New Spain	75
Napoleon Political Cartoon	81
Letter from Jamaica	87
1891 Map of South America	93
Monroe Doctrine Cartoon	99
Mexican Revolution Broadside	105
Culminating Activities	
Project-Based Learning Activity	111
Document-Based Questions	114
Making Connections	
Technology Connections	119
Young-Adult Literature Connections	
Appendix	
References Cited	100
Answer Key	
Digital Resources	
DIKITAL UKON TENENTE PROPERTY	128

Why Are Primary Sources Important?

by James A. Percoco

"My Darling Sheik ..."

So opens a letter dated August 31, 1927, from Catherine Borup to her paramour, Anthony DiLieto. A native of the Bronx, 24-year-old Borup was the daughter of Irish and Danish immigrants, while trolley-car driver DiLieto, aged 27 and also from New York, was a first-generation American of Italian stock. Borup was away from her "Darling Sheik" and used pen and paper to express her feelings of loneliness at their separation.

The sentiment of the letter from Borup to DiLieto evokes a kind of vintage language from the time period. The reference to the "Sheik" refers to silent-screen star Rudolph Valentino, a popular young star of his day. There is a discussion about train schedules and a potential rendezvous. But so what? What's the big deal about a letter between two anonymous lovers of the Roaring 20s? Well, they were my maternal grandparents, and upon the 1986 death of my grandfather, Anthony DiLieto, their letters were turned over to me for my care. Since then, I have occasionally shared these letters with my students when we are studying the 1920s. When I read the aforementioned letters to my students, I gently slip each one out of its original envelope, complete with its two-cent stamp, and the 1920s speak to us across a chasm of almost 100 years.



Rudolph Valentino

Primary sources are powerful learning and teaching devices that provide students, teachers, and scholars with a window into the past unlike any other kind of resource. In some ways, just about everything around us can be deemed a primary source. A primary source is any documentation of an event from a person who actually participated in the event. Such sources give us firsthand views of the past.

With an array of primary sources at your disposal, you can help connect students to the past in ways that are unimaginable. William Faulkner once wrote, "The past is never dead. It's not even past." Teaching through the use of primary source materials will not only enrich your students' understandings and give the past meaning; it will also enrich your repertoire of teaching tools by providing relevance. With primary sources at your side, you can easily answer the oft-heard query "So what?" that comes from those students chasing away the "I hate history" blues.

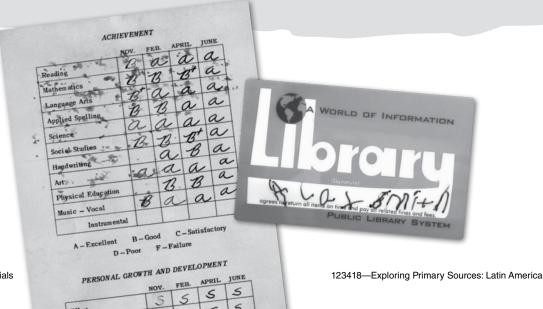
No matter how you use primary sources, you will find that they will invigorate your classroom, engage your students, and promote inquiry into the past. Effective use of primary sources can help you challenge your students to question their assumptions about the past. Primary sources breathe life into one of the most exciting disciplines of all—history—because they reflect individual human spirit through the ages.

Primary Source Introduction Activity

To get your students warmed up to the idea of using primary source materials, consider doing the following exercise with your class shortly after the school year begins.

- 1. As a homework assignment, have students, with the help of a family member or adult, look through souvenirs of their lives (e.g., photographs, letters, certificates, diaries, newspaper clippings, birth certificates, library cards, report cards). Have each student select a primary source to share with the class.
- **2.** Before they bring their selected primary sources to class, have students think about the following questions:
 - What does the primary source have to do with them?
 - What does the item say about their life?
 - Where did the primary source come from?
- **3.** During the follow-up class meeting, ask students to share their selected primary sources. As they present, have them share answers to the following questions:
 - What type of primary source is this?
 - How was the primary source saved, and who saved it?
 - Who created the primary source?
 - How does the primary source relate to the rest of the students in class?
- **4.** As each student presents their primary source, have the rest of the class record responses to the following questions:
 - What does the primary source say about whoever created it?
 - What does the primary source say about whoever saved it?
 - What does the primary source say about life in this era?

Once you have prepared your students with this analysis strategy, you will be well on your way to introducing them to the work of historians as they make valid inquiries into the past.



Components of This Resource

With its authentically re-created primary source documents, captivating images, and easy-to-follow lessons, the *Exploring Primary Sources* series allows teachers and students to expand their study of history beyond the textbook and classroom. The components included in this series assist busy teachers in presenting innovative primary source lessons that meet social studies standards and the NCSS C3 Framework.

The robust lessons of this series provide teachers with all they need to teach with primary sources without additional research or planning. Teachers have print and digital primary sources at their fingertips and do not need to rush to find such resources. Activities are varied, flexible, challenging, and engaging.

Teacher's Guide

This Teacher's Guide is divided into three sections: Primary source cards, Primary Source Reproductions, and Culminating Activities. The first two sections are arranged chronologically. The lessons may be taught in whichever order meets classroom needs. The culminating activities provide opportunities for students to share their learning in multiple ways.

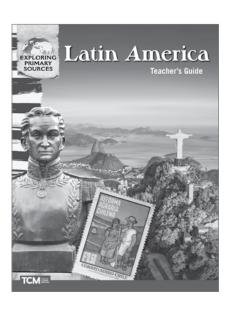
By participating in the lessons provided in this kit, students will do the following:

- articulate their observations
- analyze what they see
- improve their content vocabularies
- build literacy skills
- strengthen critical-thinking skills
- study visual clues

- compare their assumptions against those of others
- expand their appreciation for other time periods
- collaborate creatively with classmates
- develop strong questions and research skills

By presenting the lessons in this book, teachers will do the following:

- meet social studies curriculum standards
- integrate literacy into social studies
- develop critical-thinking skills in students
- prepare students for document-based assessments
- grow students' twenty-first century skills
- challenge students to question their assumptions
- provide inquiry-based activities
- encourage all students to succeed



Components of This Resource (cont.)

Primary Source Cards and Reproductions

Latin America is a region of the world that spans two continents. Students will study the history of the region through primary sources such as maps, portraits, cartoons, and letters. Students will examine significant developments of the expanse as well as the numerous achievements of several key figures during its rich history.

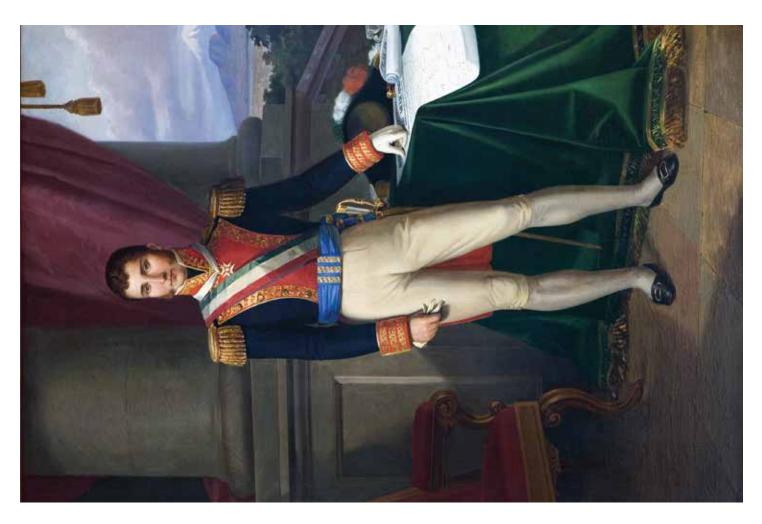


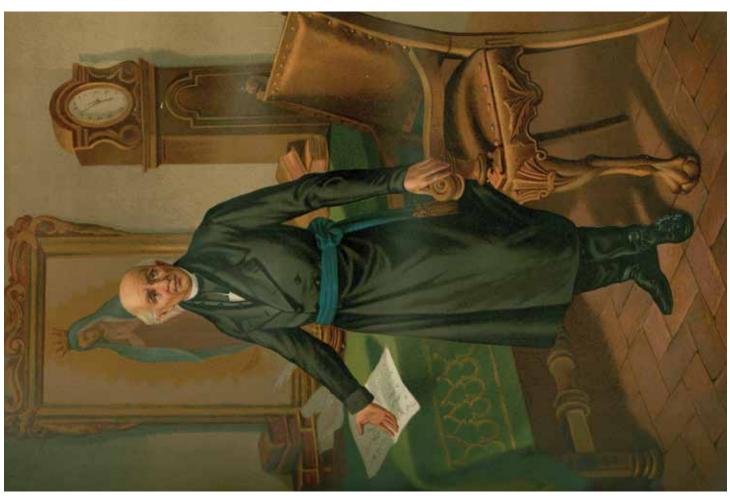
Primary Source Cards

Primary Source	Description	Pages
Spanish Armor	painting of Spanish soldiers wearing metal armor	31–34
Casta Painting	paintings of the caste system in Latin America	35–38
Toussaint Louverture on Horseback	engraving showing Toussaint Louverture on horseback	39–42
Contrasting Heroes for Mexican Independence	portraits of Miguel Hidalgo and Agustín de Iturbide	43–46
Manuela Sáenz	portrait of Manuela Sáenz	47–50
The Man Who Can Make the Dirt Fly	political cartoon of Theodore Roosevelt	51–54
Chiquita Banana	Chiquita Banana sheet music art	55–58
Ronald Reagan	photograph of Ronald Reagan holding an anti-communist T-shirt	59–62

Primary Source Reproductions

Primary Source	Description	Pages
The History of the New World	spread from Girolamo Benzoni's book	63–68
Slavery in Latin America	engraving of a map of Brazil	69–74
Map of New Spain	map showing New Spain and the Caribbean	75–80
Napoleon Political Cartoon	political cartoon of Napoleon and Joseph Bonaparte	81–86
Letter from Jamaica	letter written by Simón Bolívar	87–92
1891 Map of South America	1891 map of South America	93–98
Monroe Doctrine Cartoon	political cartoon depicting the Monroe Doctrine	99–104
Mexican Revolution Broadside	humorous broadside printed during the Mexican Revolution	105–110





Contrasting Heroes for Mexican Independence

About the Portraits

The portrait on the left is of Miguel Hidalgo y Castillo. It is titled *El Cura Hidalgo*, *Libertador de México*, or *The Priest Hidalgo*, *Liberator of Mexico*. He is shown inside his humble study with a few books, a desk, and a painting of the *Our Lady of Guadalupe*. The portrait on the right is of Agustín de Iturbide. It is simply titled *Agustín de Iturbide*. He is wearing a blue gala military suit with a red chest with gold buttons and gold embroidery. On the table is the Act of Independence, and another document, the Plan of the Three Guarantees, is rolled up.



- Identify the most distinct differences between the two portraits.
- Why do you think Hidalgo is better remembered for the revolution than Iturbide?
- If you supported the revolution, which leader would you follow, and why?
- If you were going to create a monument that includes both revolutionaries, what would it look like? What details would you focus on? What message would you want the monument to send to people?

Historical Writing

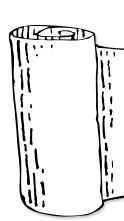
Fiction

Pretend you are Father Hidalgo and you are writing your memoir. In this part of the memoir, reflect on how you would have done things differently during the revolution.

Nonfiction

Create a time line of the Mexican Revolution with two parts, one representing Hidalgo and the other Iturbide. Find out where their paths crossed during the revolution.





Writing Challenge

Iturbide became Emperor Agustín I of Mexico for a short time. Write a summary of his time as emperor. What were his goals for Mexico? What did he accomplish? How and why did his reign end?





The Gap Between Rich and Poor

Learning Outcomes

- Students will discuss the impact that class had on the Mexican War for Independence.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast the social differences between the leaders of the Mexican Revolution.



Materials

- copies of the Contrasting Heroes for Mexican Independence primary source card (heroes.pdf)
- copies of *The Angel and the Dragon* (page 45)
- copies of the *Mexican Independence Mural* document-based assessment (page 46)

Essential Question

What factors shape our values and beliefs?

Guiding Questions

- How are the two portraits similar, and how are they different?
- What items pictured in each portrait reveal the values and beliefs of each person?
- What additional information would be helpful to see in each portrait to show each person's social status?

Introducing the Primary Source

- **1.** Ask students to find partners and to define the terms *values* and *beliefs*. Then, have students share their definitions with the class and come up with a consensus class definition. Then, ask students to think about where they learn their own personal values and beliefs. Ask for volunteers to share their answers.
- **2.** Share the portraits from the primary source card. Give students a few minutes to make lists of at least five observations, inferences, or questions they have about the image.
- **3.** Introduce the essential question, and use the guiding questions to discuss the portraits. Encourage students to ask their own questions to facilitate further inquiry.





The Gap Between Rich and Poor (cont.)

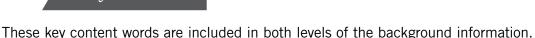
Analyzing the Primary Source

- 1. Have small groups of students read the background information, *The Angel and the Dragon*. (A copy of this text at a lower reading level is provided in the Digital Resources.) Review the key words with students as necessary. As students read, they should annotate the text by identifying the different values and beliefs held by each revolutionary leader.
- **2.** Provide time for students to complete at least two of the activities from the back of the primary source card.
- **3.** In small groups, have students complete Venn diagrams to compare and contrast Father Hidalgo and General Iturbide. Have students use the historical background information and any outside information they can find through their own research.
- **4.** Have students write editorial opinion papers on why it would be mutually beneficial for the rich and poor in society to work together. They should cite examples from the Mexican Revolution that would historically support their opinion.
- **5.** To learn more about Hidalgo and Iturbide, see page 119 for a technology-based extension activity.

Document-Based Assessment

- Distribute copies of *Mexican Independence Mural*. A digital copy of the primary source is provided in the Digital Resources (mural.jpg).
- Have students think about what they've learned throughout this lesson, carefully analyze the primary source, and respond thoughtfully to the questions.

Key Words



- congregation—a group of people regularly attending a particular place of worship
- **conservatives**—people who believe in the value of established and traditional practices in politics and society
- **liberals**—people who believe that government should be active in supporting social and political change
- looting—stealing goods from a place, typically during a war or riot
- loyalists—people who remain loyal to the established ruler or government, especially during a revolt



The Angel and the Dragon

There were many stages involved in Mexico gaining its independence. The revolt also had many leaders. Each stage was supported and opposed in different ways. Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla was known as the Angel of Independence. He began the Mexican Revolution. It would take eleven years of fighting before the country was free. It was General Agustín de Iturbide, nicknamed the Dragon, who led the final stage.

The Spanish upper class had treated indigenous people and mestizos badly, and there was a lot of anger toward the upper class. Father Hidalgo was a Mexican Catholic priest who encouraged Mexico's repressed people to revolt. On September 16, 1810, he rang the church bell in Dolores. He called on his congregation to revolt. This event is known as the *Grito de Dolores*, which means "the Cry of Dolores." During his speech, he asked the people to rebel. Hidalgo wanted racial equality and to give land back to the indigenous people.

Indigenous people and mestizos fought together. They took over many cities until they were stopped at the capital. Sadly, the leadership was not strong, and the rebels had little military training. Hidalgo also allowed violence and **looting** by his army. This led to a loss of support. The movement changed from one of independence to a social and economic war of the poor versus the wealthy.

The war was not going well. Hidalgo could not create a clear national identity for all Mexicans. Hidalgo was caught by the military and executed, and leadership

of the revolt went to José María Morelos. The battles went on for years with little change. General Agustín de Iturbide fought with the Spanish and against Morelos for three years. Iturbide was a hero to Spanish **loyalists** because he beat Morelos.

By 1820, the revolt was at a stalemate. Then, the movement changed course. After a military uprising, **liberals** took over in Spain. The **conservatives** in Mexico who once supported Spain now wanted instant independence. Iturbide became the leader of the army and offered three guarantees. The first was independence from Spain. The second was equality for peninsulares and creoles, the upper classes. The third was the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and a ban on all other religions in the country.

Iturbide quickly conquered the country and on August 24, 1821, the Treaty of Córdoba was signed. The treaty recognized the independence of Mexico. Yet it is Hidalgo who became the hero of independence for most Mexicans. The anniversary of the *Grito de Dolores* is celebrated today as Mexico's Independence Day.





The Angel and the Dragon

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The Spanish upper class had treated indigenous people and mestizos badly. Both groups were part of the lower class. There was a lot of anger toward the upper class. Father Hidalgo was a Catholic priest. He gave a reason for the poor to revolt. On September 16, 1810, he rang the church bell in Dolores. He called on his **congregation** to revolt. It is known as the Grito de Dolores. This means "the Cry of Dolores". During his speech, he asked for the people to rebel. He wanted racial equality and to give land back to the poor.

Indigenous people and mestizos fought together. They took over many cities until they were stopped at the capital. Sadly, the leadership was not strong. The rebels also had little military training. Hidalgo also allowed violence and **looting** by his army. This lead to a loss of support. The movement had changed. Now, it was a social war of the poor versus the upper class.

The war was not going well. Hidalgo could not create a clear national identity for all the people. After he was caught by the military and executed, the job fell

to José María Morelos. The wars went on for years with little change. General Agustín de Iturbide fought with the Spanish and against Morelos for three years. Iturbide was a hero to Spanish loyalists when he finally beat Morelos.

After ten years of fighting the revolt was almost over. Then the movement changed course. After a military uprising, **liberals** took over in Spain. The **conservatives** in Mexico no longer supported Spain. Iturbide became the leader of the army and offered three guarantees. The first was independence from Spain. The second was equality for peninsulares and creoles, the upper classes. The third was the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and a ban on all other religions in the country.

Iturbide quickly conquered the country. On August 24, 1821, the Treaty of Córdoba was signed. The treaty confirmed the independence of Mexico. Yet it is Hidalgo's name that most Mexicans remember. The anniversary of the *Grito de Dolores* is celebrated today as Mexico's Independence Day.





Mexican Independence Mural

Directions: This mural features Miguel Hidalgo. It is painted on the Palacio de Gobierno in Guadalajara, Mexico. Use the image to answer the questions.



1.	How would you describe the intended feeling behind this mural?
2.	Why did the artist choose to show Father Hidalgo with a flaming sword?
3.	How is this mural meant to be a celebration of Mexican independence?



The Making of Latin America

Learning Outcomes

- Students will study and interpret a historical map of Brazil.
- Students will be able to complete a time line displaying the abolition of slavery in Latin America.



Materials

- Slavery in Latin America reproduction (slavery.pdf)
- copies of The Encomienda System and Slavery (page 71)
- copies of Engraving of a Map of Brazil (page 72)
- copies of Abolition of Slavery (page 73)
- copies of the Enslaved People in Brazil document-based assessment (page 74)

Essential Question

How has slavery affected the world?

Guiding Questions

- What clues from this map tell you the time and place it is showing?
- Which part of the map or the image stands out the most to you, and why?
- Is this an accurate depiction of slavery in Brazil? Why or why not?
- What was the purpose and intended message of this map?

Introducing the Primary Source

- 1. Ask students to think about a time outside of school when they were forced to do something that they did not want to do. Have them write a brief description of the situation. Ask them to create lists of five to seven words describing how they felt. Share and discuss as a class.
- 2. Share the *Slavery in Latin America* reproduction, and ask students to study it carefully. Then, project the digital image, and distribute copies of *Engraving of a Map of Brazil* for students to analyze more closely. Give students a few minutes to make lists of at least five observations or questions they have about the image.
- **3.** Introduce the essential question, and use the first two guiding questions to discuss the map. Encourage students to ask their own questions to facilitate further inquiry.



The Making of Latin America (cont.)

Analyzing the Primary Source

- 1. Have small groups of students read the background information, *The Encomienda System and Slavery*. (A copy of this text at a lower reading level is provided in the Digital Resources.) Review the key words with students as necessary. As students read, they should annotate the text by writing question marks when they have questions and exclamation marks when they read something surprising or interesting. Then, have students share their annotations and discuss with their groups.
- 2. Return to the essential question and discuss the last two guiding questions with students.
- **3.** Tell students that between 1804 and 1888, slavery was abolished in every country in Latin America. Distribute copies of *Abolition of Slavery* to student pairs. Have students use the internet and other research materials to complete the time line.
- **4.** You may choose to create a larger time line for display in the classroom. Encourage students to complete the challenge activity so more information about each country can be added to the display.

Document-Based Assessment

- Distribute copies of *Enslaved People in Brazil*. A digital copy of the primary source is provided in the Digital Resources (enslaved.jpg).
- Have students think about what they've learned throughout this lesson, carefully analyze the primary source, and respond thoughtfully to the questions.

Key Words



These key content words are included in both levels of the background information.

- cash crop—a crop produced to sell for a profit rather than for use by the grower
- convert—to persuade a person to change their religious faith or other beliefs
- diverse—showing a great deal of variety or differences
- encomienda—a grant by the Spanish Crown to a conquistador in America giving them the right to demand tribute and forced labor from the indigenous inhabitants of an area
- **reparations**—something that is done or given as a way of correcting a mistake that you have made or a bad situation that you have caused
- tributes—payments made periodically by one person to another, especially as a sign of dependence

The Encomienda System and Slavery

The **encomienda** system was a labor system used in the Spanish colonies of the New World. This system, which began in 1503, was meant to help manage the new lands and people.

Under this system, a Spanish conquistador, or wealthy male Spaniard, was given some land. He would also be given control over the native people living on that land. As the owner of the land, he gave the workers protection. He also tried to **convert** the native people to the Catholic faith. The native workers paid **tributes** in the form of gold or farm products. This system of forced labor was very beneficial for the Spanish.

The encomienda system allowed conquistadors and the Spanish crown to become very rich. This system resulted in the abuse of native peoples. The native people were treated badly and forced into hard labor. They also lost control of their land and culture. In 1512, the crown tried to end the abuses of the system. They passed various laws throughout the sixteenth century. Most owners did not obey these new laws. This system was the first ethnically based system of forced labor in the New World. New encomiendas were finally outlawed in the colonies. The system that abused native workers would soon be replaced by one that forced Africans into slavery.

About 12 million Africans were forced to Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Americas between 1500 and 1900. Slavery would be part of Latin American history for four centuries. During that time, Brazil was responsible for enslaving 35 percent, or 4 million, of the Africans

who were captured and forced into labor. For the duration of the Atlantic slave trade, about 20 percent of the enslaved population, or 2.5 million people, were brought to Latin America.

Over 70 percent of enslaved people worked on sugarcane plantations. Sugarcane was the most important cash crop of the New World economy. Enslaved people also worked in the production of tobacco, rice, cotton, corn, and other products. The majority of enslaved people brought to the Americas were men. The plantation owners needed strength for the labor that was done in the fields. A smaller number of enslaved women were often responsible for cutting the sugarcane, fertilizing the plants, and grinding the cane. They also took care of the community vegetable gardens and looked after children.

The African presence in Latin America had an effect on the culture across the region. Enslaved Africans and Asians were in the Americas during the early time of exploration and settlement. The effects of slavery on Latin American culture are still being felt today. Calls for reparations and unsettled claims to land have been ongoing for decades. Still, this troubling aspect of Latin America's history has created a diverse mix of cultures in the region.

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Under this system, a Spanish conquistador was given some land. He would also be given control over the indigenous peoples living in the area. As the owner of the land, he gave the workers protection. He also tried to convert the natives to the Catholic faith. The native workers paid tributes in the form of gold or farm products. The system of forced labor was very beneficial for the Spanish.

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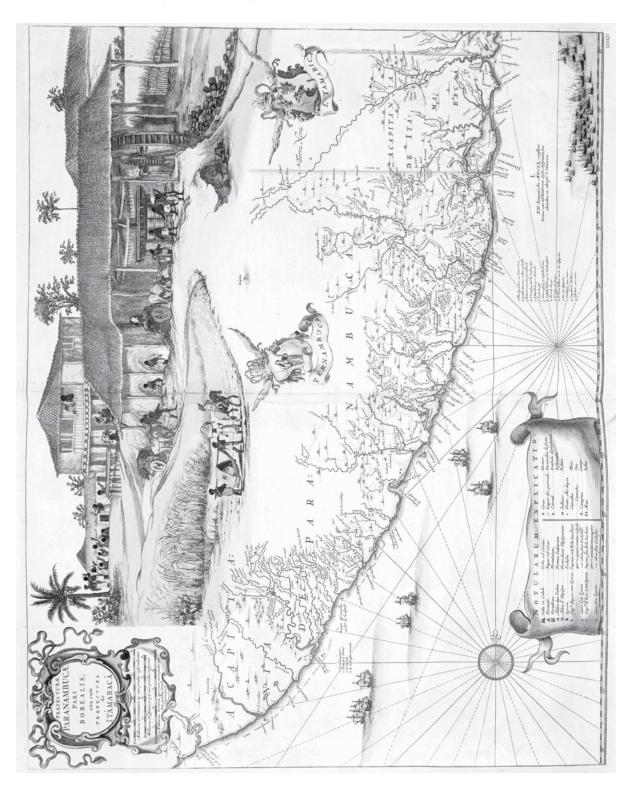
During the Atlantic slave trade, about 20 percent of the enslaved population, or 2.5 million people, were brought to Latin America.

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Engraving of a Map of Brazil



"Office of Pernambuco Northern Region"

Abolition of Slavery

About the Engraving

From 1630 to 1654, the Dutch controlled the northeast coast of Brazil. This came to be known as New Holland, or Dutch Brazil. This engraving is of the coast of Pernambuco, Brazil. It was created in 1640 by Frans Post, a Dutch painter, and Georg Marcgraf, a Dutch cartographer. The image shows a sugar plantation and enslaved people working on different tasks. In the middle, a group is moving a planter's wife in a hammock. The various plantation buildings include the manor house and a sugar mill powered by water. The legacy of 350 years of slavery is enormous. The Golden Law officially ended slavery in Brazil in 1888.

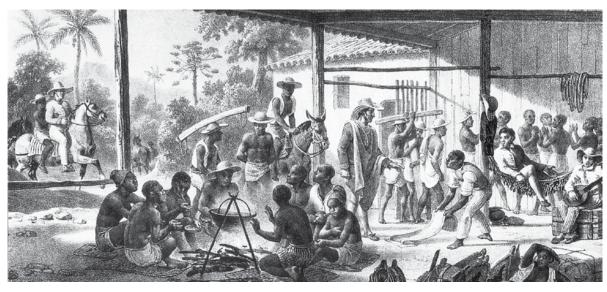
Directions: Between 1804 and 1888, slavery was abolished in every country in Latin America. Research each country to find out when slavery ended. Then, write the names of each country next to the year slavery was abolished.

Belize Bolivia Brazil Chile Argentina Dominican Republic Colombia Costa Rica Cuba Ecuador El Salvador French Guyana Guatemala Haiti Guyana **Honduras** Mexico Panama Nicaraqua Paraguay Peru Puerto Rico Suriname Uruguay Venezuela 1826 1804 1823 1830 1836 1821 1824 1829 1833 1848 1853 1863 1873 1888 1851 1854 1869 1886

Date _

Enslaved People in Brazil

Directions: Use the image to answer the questions.



enslaved people in Brazil on their way to the farms of the landowners who bought them

- 1. How does the artist show differences between the newly arrived enslaved people and those who have been in Brazil for some time?
- 2. How would you describe the mood or feelings being expressed by the new arrivals?

3. What message does the artist present about slavery in Brazil, and what evidence supports your claim?