

# HISTORICAL ANALYSIS – Causation... *Cultural Interactions and Group Identities*

**From the 2015 Revised Framework:**  
 Historical thinking involves the ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate the relationships among historical causes and effects, distinguishing between those that are long term and proximate. Historical thinking also involves the ability to distinguish between causation and correlation, and an awareness of contingency, the way that historical events result from a complex variety of factors that come together in unpredictable ways and often have unanticipated consequences.

**From the 2015 Revised Rubric for the Long Essay:**  
 Describes causes AND/OR effects of a historical event, development, or process. Explains the reasons for the causes AND/OR effects of a historical event, development, or process. (2 of 6 possible points)

**Scoring Note:** *If the prompt requires discussion of both causes and effects, responses must address both causes and effects in order to earn both points.*

**A Note to Students about Causation**

Historians often debate the causes and effects of events, because history is complex and filled with multiple variables. Some facts are facts: black and white. But most of history is gray: up for interpretation. When analyzing causation, we must remember that we are making a judgment and defending our viewpoint. And, remember... every viewpoint has an opposing or differing viewpoint. For example, we can agree that Hitler invaded Poland in 1939. That is a fact with ample evidence to prove it. But, we may not agree on whether or not that invasion was a main cause for World War II. We can make a strong argument for that viewpoint, as England and France declared war on Germany following that event. However, we could also make an argument for it being less significant than the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 which so punished Germany as to inspire desperation and despotism, i.e. Hitler. Analyzing causes, then, is more than listing precursor events: it is analyzing *how* those events did or did not lead to another. Analyzing the effects of historical events requires similar skill. It is not only listing ways the event impacted the nation, for example, it is analyzing historical significance of those effects. Did the effect stem directly from the event? Or, was it simply a coincidence in time and place? Was the effect short term or long term? Etc. For example, students who read directions write more complete answers. Therefore, an effect of reading directions is higher grades. To what extent is that true? Is it just a coincidence or correlation? What other variables are there? ☺ Let's find out!

**From the Period 1, 2015, Revised Content Outline:**

In their interactions, Europeans and Native Americans asserted divergent worldviews regarding issues such as religion, gender roles, family, land use, and power. Mutual misunderstandings between Europeans and Native Americans often defined the early years of interaction and trade as each group sought to make sense of the other. Over time, Europeans and Native Americans adopted some useful aspects of each other's culture. As European encroachments on Native Americans' lands and demands on their labor increased, native peoples sought to defend and maintain their political sovereignty, economic prosperity, religious beliefs, and concepts of gender relations through diplomatic negotiations and military resistance. Extended contact with Native Americans and Africans fostered a debate among European religious and political leaders about how non-Europeans should be treated, as well as evolving religious, cultural, and racial justifications for the subjugation of Africans and Native Americans.

**Related Thematic Learning Objectives (Focus of Exam Questions)**

- CUL-1.0:** Explain how religious groups and ideas have affected American society and political life.
- CUL-3.0:** Explain how ideas about women's rights and gender roles have affected society and politics.
- CUL-4.0:** Explain how different group identities, including racial, ethnic, class, and regional identities, have emerged and changed over time.
- WOR-1.0:** Explain how cultural interaction, cooperation, competition, and conflict between empires, nations, and peoples have influenced political, economic, and social developments in North America.

**Brief Summary of Worldviews:**

European Worldviews	American Indian Worldviews	African Slaves' World Views
Indians were uncivilized. Some were welcomed as "noble savages" and others were feared as vicious barbarians. African slaves were uncivilized. Slavery was a reality in this era and very few challenged it. Europeans saw African and Indian religions as inferior and incorrect, and sought to Christianize them. Some slaves were able to earn their freedom after becoming Christian (before tighter slave codes ended that). Land use and land ownership beliefs differed greatly with the Indian views. The fact that Africans and Indians had lower literacy rates, lack of written language in many cases, primitive weapons and architecture, etc. was "proof" to the Europeans that their views and their society was superior. Because their views and society's superiority coincidentally was from people of a different color... fueled development of the view of white superiority. The Indian susceptibility to European diseases also "proved" to Europeans that they were superior and/or that God was on their side. European culture was impacted by Indian and African culture, although Anglicization paved the way for European cultural dominance. Gender roles were strict with few rights and freedoms for women.	Indians generally thought the Europeans were less intelligent as they struggled to adapt to the new environment and had strange beliefs and practices. Indians were able to identify useful resources while avoiding poison or harmful resources, and the Europeans did not have this knowledge. Many Indians saw the Europeans as lazy and ignorant. Slavery was not a foreign idea to many Indians, so the view on African slaves was not dramatic, however some did welcome runaway slaves into their tribes. Some Indian groups assimilated to varying degrees, including becoming owners of African slaves. Indians enjoyed European goods such as guns, cloth, and metal and traded for them. However many saw manufactured goods as a poor use of time and intelligence as it was disconnected with nature. Indians were highly spiritual with connections to the environment and other elements. Their beliefs on the importance of respecting and connecting to nature contrasted with European beliefs in praying and miracles. Some Indian groups were matrilineal, but most were patrilineal with similar gender roles as the Europeans.	Slavery had existed in Africa for centuries, and it was an accepted reality. However, the slave systems in Africa included more ability to earn freedom than the African slave system that developed in the Americas which became a chattel system with permanent status in many areas. Most slaves converted to Christianity, but they also blended it with their culture. Music, farming techniques, language, and beliefs all mixed with European beliefs, creating a unique slave culture. Christian beliefs became a core value for slaves and after emancipation the Black Church movement led the way to Civil Rights. In some areas, European, African, and Indian beliefs all mixed together to form a new culture. Africans who were able to separate from Europeans established cultural autonomy such as the maroon communities in Brazil and the Caribbean. Gender roles were similar to the group they most assimilated into, however slave codes often prevented marriage and family ties from being permanent as a spouse or child could be sold to another family. Despite being treated as property, slaves maintained familial roles.

# Explaining Causation...Cause: Cultural Interactions Effect: New Group Identities & Cultural Beliefs

## Directions for Activity:

1. Using prior knowledge, knowledge from the reading assignments for Unit 1, and information provided in this activity, complete the graphic organizer by organizing detailed notes that address the topics and questions presented. Please note... you will need more information than what is presented in this activity to complete this activity satisfactorily. Make sure you read your text and other materials as assigned!
2. When you finish, discuss not only causation, discuss how identities of various groups changed before and after contact and discuss the extent to which groups were similar and different from another. This discussion will connect your analysis to other themes and objectives, better preparing you for possible exam questions on the topic of group identity and culture in the colonial era.

List and describe 4 ways the European colonizers challenged the independence and core beliefs of Native Americans and Africans. Include a specific example in each description. (causes)



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Explain how these interactions caused a new concept of group identity and cultural beliefs for European colonizers. (impact)

Explain how these interactions caused a new concept of group identity and cultural beliefs for American Indians. (impact)

Explain how these interactions caused a new concept of group identity and cultural beliefs for Africans. (impact)

Which group was impacted most by European colonizers? Defend your answer!