Veracruz at Crossroads

Trace how colonial trade and cultures shaped a port.

6.C.3.6.C "Examine Spanish colonialism of Latin America and its influence on language, religion, and customs, including the practices of privateering and mercantilism."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline Spain's trade rule, circle a privateer action, and number one example each of language, religion, and customs 1, 2, and 3 to trace how colonial rule shaped trade and daily life.

Ships, Silver, and Daily Life in Veracruz

1. In the 1600s, ships entered Veracruz, a busy port in Spain's colony of New Spain, now part of Mexico. Sailors unloaded cloth and tools from Europe. Workers loaded silver mined inland onto ships bound for Spain. Spain's rulers followed mercantilism: they wanted colonies to supply valuable goods and buy goods through trade controlled by Spain. The crown limited trade to approved ports and merchants. These rules helped Spain collect wealth, but they also limited whom people in its colonies could trade with.

2. Those silver ships drew attention from Spain's rivals. A privateer was a sailor allowed by another country's government to attack enemy ships during war. English and Dutch privateers sometimes targeted Spanish shipping in the Americas, hoping to seize cargo such as silver. Their attacks threatened the trade Spain tried to control. Spain built defenses around ports, including Veracruz, and sent armed ships to protect cargo. Privateering did not create mercantilism, but the wealth moving through Spain's trade system made its ships tempting targets.

3. Colonial rule also changed daily life far beyond the docks. Spanish officials and settlers used Spanish in government and trade, while many Indigenous people kept speaking their own languages. Catholic missionaries spread Christianity, sometimes pressuring Indigenous people to leave older beliefs. In Veracruz, colonial life also brought together Indigenous, African, and Spanish traditions. Today's son jarocho music, for example, reflects these mixed influences. Spanish remains widely spoken, Catholicism remains influential, and local music shows that people did not simply copy one culture: they shaped new customs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Spain's trade rules help the crown while limiting people in its colonies?

2. Why did privateers target Spanish ships, and how did Spain respond?

3. How did Spanish colonial rule affect both language and religion?

4. How does son jarocho show that colonial customs came from more than one group?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence letter from a young person in colonial Veracruz to a cousin. Describe a possible event at the port involving controlled trade or privateers, and explain how Spanish colonial rule affects one part of daily life: language, religion, or customs.

ANSWER KEY

Veracruz at Crossroads

GRADE 6 · 6.C.3.6.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline Spain's trade rule, circle a privateer action, and number one example each of language, religion, and customs 1, 2, and 3 to trace how colonial rule shaped trade and daily life. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Spain's trade rules help the crown while limiting people in its colonies?	**The rules helped Spain collect wealth, but people in the colonies could trade only through approved ports and merchants.**
2	Why did privateers target Spanish ships, and how did Spain respond?	**Privateers hoped to seize valuable cargo such as silver. Spain built port defenses and sent armed ships to protect cargo.**
3	How did Spanish colonial rule affect both language and religion?	**Spanish became a language of government and trade, although Indigenous languages continued. Catholic missionaries spread Christianity, sometimes pressuring people to leave older beliefs.**
4	How does son jarocho show that colonial customs came from more than one group?	**Son jarocho reflects Indigenous, African, and Spanish influences rather than only Spanish traditions.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Cousin, today I watched workers load silver onto a ship bound for Spain. A merchant said the crown allows trade only through approved ports and merchants, so he cannot sell his goods wherever he wishes. Guards watched the harbor because privateers might attack ships carrying silver. At home, I speak an Indigenous language with my grandmother, but I hear Spanish at the market.

Accept other passage-supported examples of trade controls, privateering, and cultural change. For the letter, look for four sentences that connect a plausible port event and a daily-life effect to Spanish colonial rule.