

## WHAP EXAMPLE DBQ

*Note: This is an example of a document-based question (DBQ) response that would get a total score of 7/7 (the highest score that can be attained on the DBQ). The purpose in providing this is to show the structure of the DBQ as well as best practices. This is meant to serve as an example of how to write a quality DBQ in AP World History. This DBQ is color coded. The key is at the end of the DBQ.*

**Prompt:** Evaluate the extent to which the establishment of mercantilism in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries marked a turning point in relations between Europe, Africa, and the Americas.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the economies of Western European countries had grown since the Middle Ages, largely due to the expanded productivity and trade from the Commercial Revolution. However, Western Europe still paled in comparison to the more established civilizations of India and China in terms of economic productivity and wealth. Europeans, seeking access to the trade routes of Asia and thus greater wealth for themselves, ventured out on oceanic explorations, which brought them unexpectedly to the Americas. After arrival, European nations set up colonies in the Americas for the purpose of supplying the European mother countries with raw materials that could be converted into finished goods and sold to market for profit. This process was called mercantilism, and it allowed the economies of Western Europe to expand. The establishment of mercantilism marked a turning point in the relations between Europe, Africa, and the Americas to the extent that it subjugated people into forced labor, it brought wealth to the colonizers, and it resulted in a truly global exchange of goods the likes of which had never been seen prior to the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Prior to the accidental discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus in 1492, the Americas and Afro-Eurasia existed in separate spheres, and thus no global relations among these continents took place. However, the arrival of Europeans and the colonies they created in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries changed those relations, so that from that point forward, Europe, Africa, and the Americas would have sustained connections. One of the biggest effects of these new relations was the movement of people to work as slaves in the new colonies that were established in the Americas. Spain established its colonies in America in an attempt to find wealth; specifically, gold and silver. Once those precious minerals were discovered, a source of labor was needed to mine them from the earth. The native population was initially used, but proved unsuitable for the nature of the work; thus, Spaniards turned to enslaved Africans as a new source of labor (Doc 1). The author of the letter about Spain's interaction with its colonies from 1559 likely wrote the letter to explain the Spaniards' reasoning for importing African slaves into their American colonies given this labor requirement that difficult mine work demanded. Of course, this forced migration of people from Africa to the Americas greatly impacted the people of Africa as well. Since Europeans demanded slaves from Africa, local rulers and merchants would wage war on other African tribes and kingdoms (with guns received from the Europeans), often for the sole purpose of obtaining more slaves to sell to Europeans in the slave trade. Once captured, African slaves were subjected to horrible inhumane treatment and frequently abused by their captors (Doc 2). As a former slave himself, Offobah Cugoana definitely has a distinct point of view as he views the people operating the slave trade as tormentors and abusers, and describes the overall experience as nightmarish.

Mercantilism in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries brought great wealth to European mother countries as well. Precious gems, foodstuffs, and raw materials flowed in from their colonies. As the European colonies in the Americas were being exploited, stripped of their natural resources, Europe's economy flourished with the influx of these materials, and by converting them into finished goods reaped the financial benefits, which is reflected in the growing extravagance of its monarchs at the time (Doc 6). The author of the cartoon in Doc 6 likely created it to show this servant-master relationship that came to be symbolic of the relationship between European rulers and their colonies. In the 1600s, the Dutch were increasingly involved in global trade, becoming well known for their oceangoing vessels and prosperous merchant class. One of the parts of the world the Dutch focused on was the West Indies, where they established sugar plantations to satisfy the high demand for sugar in Europe (Doc 4). Sugar plantations required a lot of imported labor, but could provide the mother country with large quantities of sugar that could then either be sold for profit or converted into some kind of secondary product. The author of this document likely created it to depict what sugar mills in the West Indies were like in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and how Dutch merchants, who did not perform the laborious task of producing the sugar, benefitted from sugar mills. Mercantilism became so

profitable that once Spain and Portugal established their first colonies in the Americas, other countries rushed to follow so as to not lose out on this opportunity for increased wealth. In addition to the Dutch, who became highly involved in mercantile efforts of their own, France also sought to reap the benefits that colonies could provide (Doc 5). Jean-Baptiste Colbert, France's Minister of Finance to Louis XIV, likely intended this letter to be read by French government officials to convince them of the benefits mercantilism and expanded production of goods could provide.

Mercantilism also marked a turning point in relations between Europe, Africa, and the Americas in terms of the global distribution of goods. Colonies in the Americas would supply their European mother countries with raw materials, such as furs, iron, rice, cotton, and tobacco. In turn, Europe would take these raw materials and convert them into finished goods. They would take these finished goods and ship them back to the colonists, or to Africans in exchange for slaves, which would then be shipped to the Americas to work on plantations (Doc 7). This document was likely created to inform people about the new global triangular trade that mercantilism fostered amongst these nations. This movement of goods also created problems for native societies. For instance, in North America, Europeans would give Native Americans alcohol (among other things) in exchange for furs, which gave the Native Americans to capture more furs so that they could obtain more goods from Europeans. However, many Native Americans, not being familiar with the dangerous effects of alcohol, succumbed to its influence, and alcoholism ended up ruining the lives of many Native Americans. In Africa, the guns that Europeans would give Africans resulted in armed conflicts between many African groups, spurred on by the European demand for slaves. This armed conflict has unfortunately had an enduring presence in African societies since.

Mercantilism, established in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries by European governments seeking to expand their nations' economies and thus enhance their wealth and prestige, dramatically changed relations in the world as it ushered in a new era of global interaction. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, these interactions were marked by imported forced labor, the increased accumulation of wealth to colonial powers, and a new global exchange of goods. The exchange of goods established by global mercantilism in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries is similar to the Silk Road that connected Europe to East Asia centuries before in the sense that both involved the exchange of goods among distant locations and diverse populations. Mercantilism involved the exchange of goods between the Americas, Europe, and Africa, while the Silk Road distributed goods between Rome, Central Asia, India, and China.

**KEY:**

**GREEN:** Contextualization

**BLUE:** Thesis statement

**YELLOW:** Doc citations

**PINK:** Synthesis

**Red lettering:** Historical context (required for each doc analysis)

**Blue lettering:** One of the other components of HIPP included in the analysis of that doc

**Green lettering:** Analysis of outside examples (2)