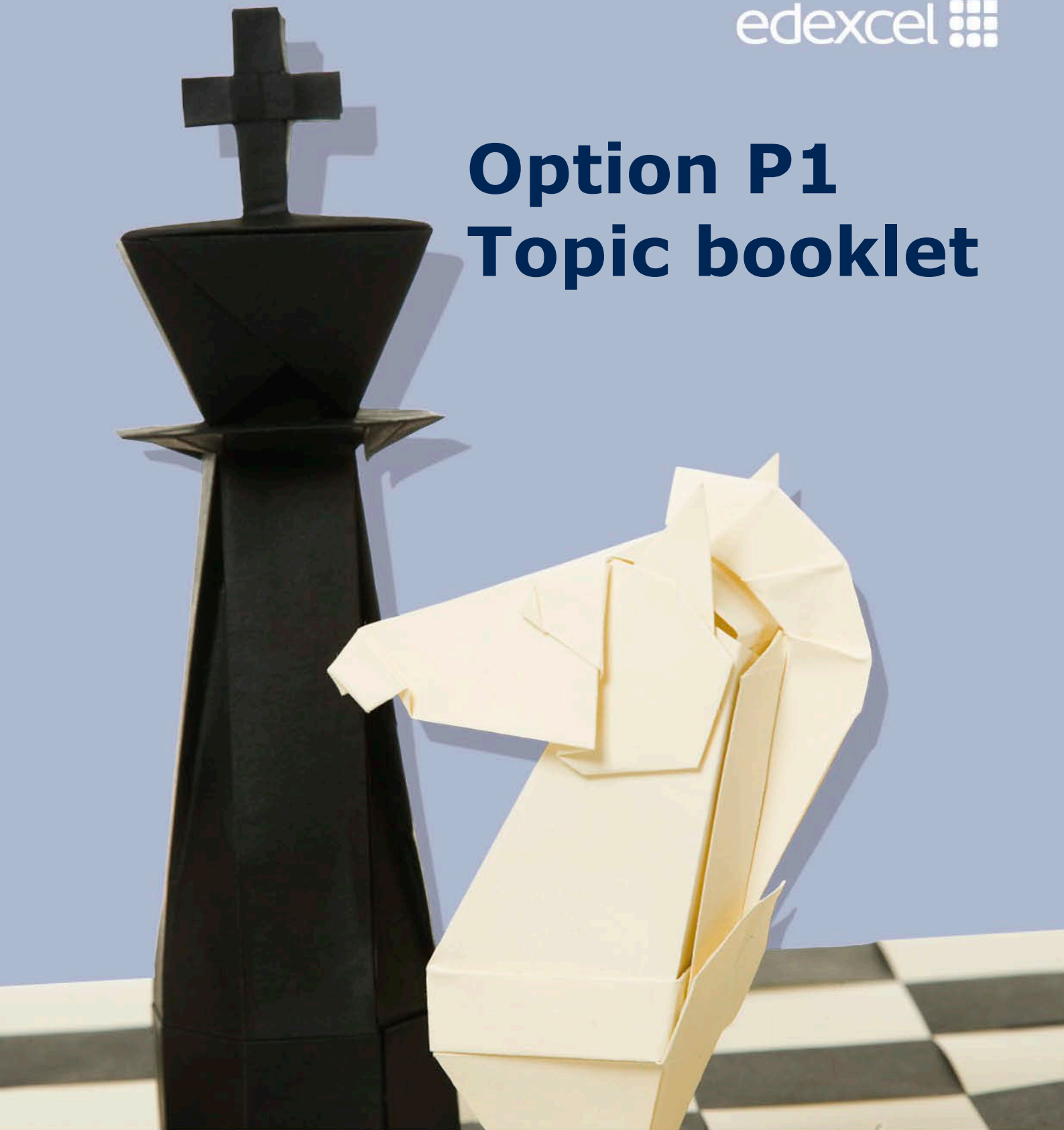


# Option P1

## Topic booklet



**Spain and the 'New World', c1490–1555**

**GCSE (9–1) History**

**Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9–1) in History (1HI0)**

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## Version 4 (March 2025)

This topic booklet has been updated to include changes made to new issues of the specification and sample assessment materials.

- Issue 5: language and assessment changes, for first assessment June 2025.
- Issue 6: content changes, for first teaching September 2024 and first assessment June 2026.

Information on new resources has also been added.

Summary guidance on the changes can be found [here](#).

## The Period study

Period studies focus on a substantial and coherent medium time span of at least 50 years and require students to understand the 'unfolding narrative' of substantial developments and issues associated with the period.

A narrative framework forms the basis of the division of the content into three key topics. These key topics clearly run in chronological sequence, but should not be taken in isolation from each other. Students should be encouraged to see the period study as a whole and appreciate the narrative connections across the key topics.

# 1. Overview

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This topic illustrates a key theme in early modern history – a clash of cultures. The lack of understanding, the conviction of being 'right', a greed for gold and the use of violence can be seen in many examples throughout history and therefore this study can support the development of religious and racial toleration. The choice of topic is a useful reminder that a Eurocentric view of the world is limiting and helps students to appreciate that different cultures have flourished across the world.

The specification starts with the situation in Spain and the context in which the discovery and exploration of the Americas took place. The period of 65 years from c1490–c1555 saw the establishment of the Spanish Empire in the Caribbean, Mexico and Peru. The story contains wealth, danger, religion, treachery, battles and murder. The events by which Spanish control was established, and the role of key individuals, are all studied, as well as the impact of such events upon the native Caribs, Tainos, Aztecs and Incas, their leaders and their cultures. The continued expansion of the Spanish Empire included the founding of significant mines, such as Zacatecas in Mexico and Potosi in Bolivia – nicknamed 'the mountain that eats men' by the local population, due to the appalling conditions they worked in. Mining boom towns were created, not unlike those found in the American West; the *encomienda* system of land distribution led to the virtual enslavement of Indigenous peoples; conquistadors found themselves unwilling governors, with some obstructed from afar by the withdrawal of their titles and the refusal of permission to explore further; the affairs of the empire were run by the Council of the Indies, based in Spain, many of whom had never set foot in the region. Among them all, Bartolome de las Casas, a Dominican friar, observed with increasing horror his countrymen depart from the Christian values that had driven their first expedition, in pursuit of extreme wealth and power. His work lobbying the crown for improved rights for Indigenous peoples and the subsequent New Laws of 1542 mark a small positive at the end of a tale mostly focused on greed and destruction. The final strand of the specification looks at the impact on Spain of the acquisition of this empire.

## 1.1 Assessment (from June 2025)

Students answer five questions for the period study.

- Questions 1(a) and (b): focus on consequence. These are compulsory; each question asks students to provide one consequence.
- Question 2: focuses on analytical narrative, in which students write an account that not only describes what happened, but also involves analysis to find connections and make sense of events and their impact to explain why events unfolded in the way that they did. This is likely to involve a mix of second-order concepts (i.e. causation, consequence, change).
- Question 3: students select two from a choice of the three events or developments given. Each focuses on the importance of an event/person/development in terms of what difference they made in relation to specified situations and unfolding developments (i.e. their consequence and significance).

Detailed information and guidance on assessment can be found in the separate [Getting Started Guide](#).

## 2. Content guidance

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### 2.1 Summary of content

#### **Spain reaches the Americas, c1490–1512**

The first key topic establishes the context in which Spain began to establish an empire in the Americas. Students should understand the importance of religion as a factor for Spanish expansion, shown from the start in the personal motives of Queen Isabella, as well as how other factors combined at the time, including the desire for land and wealth, and rivalry with Portugal.

Students should understand that Columbus's first voyage illustrated both the danger and the profits to be found in the 'New World' and led to the Spanish claim of authority over the Americas. His later voyages established several themes of this period study, including the quest for gold, the role of religion, the treatment of Indigenous peoples by the Spanish, and the attempts to exert the authority of the Spanish crown.

#### **The conquistadors, 1513–c1528**

Key topic two deals with the rapid expansion of the Spanish Empire across the Caribbean and central America. Students should be aware of key developments and understand that the conquest of Cuba marked a high point of Spanish dominance in the Caribbean; the exploration of the Isthmus of Panama led to Balboa's claim over the Pacific for the Spanish Crown; and Magellan's circumnavigation opened up new trade routes across the Pacific, eventually leading to further exploration along the Pacific coast.

Students should understand that Cortes's conquest of the Aztec Empire was a major event, which showed what could be done by a conquistador. They should be aware of the dramatic narrative of events, including the massacre at Cholula, the treatment of Montezuma, the 'Night of Tears' and the capture of Tenochtitlan. They should understand that the conquest had extreme consequences from the perspective of both the Aztecs and the Spanish and should be aware that parallels can be drawn with the treatment of Caribs and Tainos in the Caribbean, but also between the experiences of Cortes and those of previous conquistadors, including Columbus and Balboa.

#### **The Spanish Empire, c1528–c1555**

The final key topic covers the story of Pizarro's conquest of Peru, providing another interesting parallel. Students should understand that the conquest was set against the backdrop of civil war among Indigenous peoples and an insatiable desire for wealth and glory among the Spanish, and be aware that the passage of conquest was not as smooth as it had been elsewhere in the empire. The remainder of the topic deals with the entrenchment of the Spanish Empire across South America and the impact on Spain itself. Students should understand the significance of the exploitation of silver deposits through mining and that the development of empire had profound effects on both the Americas and Spain. They should understand the key issues of the religious conversion and enslavement of Indigenous peoples, the development of the *encomienda* system, the effect of the treasure on Spain's economy and the development of an administration for this part of the Spanish Empire. Students should understand the role of Bartolome de las Casas in the development of the New Laws and the significance of these. Finally, students should consider the impact of the conquistadors and the policies of the Spanish monarchs.

## 2. Content guidance

### The unfolding narrative

Period studies focus on an analytical narrative of events and therefore students should appreciate the chronology of key events, while understanding that some developments overlap several events. For example, various areas were being explored at the same time, while the themes of the treatment of Indigenous peoples and the attempt to impose imperial control are important at several points in the narrative.

Within that analytical narrative, students will need to see that events do not occur in isolation but unfold as a consequence of what has gone before. For example, the discovery of gold or silver stimulated further expeditions to find 'El Dorado'.

When discussing the significance of an event, students should be able to explain its impact and the way it changed the situation or attitudes.

### Key terms

It may be useful at the start of the course to provide students with a list of key terms and concepts that they will need to be familiar with for this option. Students should be familiar with the terminology found in the specification content.

The list of terms below is not intended to be a comprehensive checklist, rather simply a useful starting point for teachers to produce their own list of terms that their students may not fully understand or have difficulty spelling.

Students should be familiar with broad terms, such as authorities, economic, government, political, religious and social.

- |                      |                |
|----------------------|----------------|
| • administration     | • Huascar      |
| • annexation         | • Huayna Capac |
| • Atahualpa          | • Imperial     |
| • Caribbean          | • Indigenous   |
| • Caribs             | • missionary   |
| • Catholic           | • monopoly     |
| • Cajamarca          | • Montezuma    |
| • Christian          | • Pope         |
| • colony             | • settlement   |
| • conquistador       | • sponsorship  |
| • Cuzco              | • Tainos       |
| • <i>encomienda</i>  | • Tenochtitlan |
| • <i>encomendero</i> | • Tlaxcalans   |
| • expedition         |                |

## 2. Content guidance

### 2.2 Content exemplification

This section provides additional guidance on the specification content. It should be remembered that the official specification is the only authoritative source of information and should always be referred to for definitive guidance. Any examples provided here do not constitute additional specification content and other relevant material illustrating aspects of the specification can be used.

Key topic 1: Spain reaches the Americas, c1490–1512		Exemplification
1 <b>Spanish exploration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Spain c1490: the crusading spirit and foreign ambitions.</li><li>Columbus's attempts to gain sponsorship. The role of Queen Isabella: her desire to spread Christianity and sponsorship of Columbus.</li><li>Columbus's first voyage of 1492 and the problems encountered.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The context of Spain in 1490: Queen Isabella's personal piety; the importance of religion. The desire for territory and rivalry between Spain and Portugal.</li><li>Columbus's contact with Isabella and her attitude towards his project; official support for Columbus's expedition, 1492.</li><li>The problems of the voyage, for example, acquisition of ships and crew and the provisioning of the ships; difficulties in navigation.</li></ul>
2 <b>Columbus reaches the Americas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Columbus's actions: exploration of the Bahamas and the Caribbean. The foundation of La Navidad.</li><li>The impact of contact with Indigenous peoples: the discovery of gold, relations with the Tainos and Caribs.</li><li>The impact of rivalry with Portugal, and the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Columbus's declaration of the annexation of San Salvador; his first contact with Indigenous peoples and his interest in their gold. His exploration of the Bahamas and voyage to Cuba; the discovery of gold on the island of Hispaniola; relations with the Tainos and the Caribs.</li><li>Events leading to the foundation of La Navidad, for example the rebellion of Martin Pinzon and the wreck of the Santa Maria.</li><li>Columbus's return to Spain, celebrations of his discoveries and confirmation of his titles.</li><li>Portuguese attempts to claim the new land; Spanish negotiation with Portugal and with the Pope; Papal support for Spain; the importance of the Treaty of Tordesillas.</li></ul>

## 2. Content guidance

Key topic 1: Spain reaches the Americas, c1490–1512	Exemplification
<p>3 <b>Spanish claims in the Caribbean</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Columbus's later voyages and his role as governor in the Spanish settlement. The significance of the establishment of the Spanish colony at Santo Domingo (1496).</li> <li>• The effects of Spanish settlement: treatment of Indigenous peoples, effects of smallpox.</li> <li>• Development of an imperial policy in relation to the Caribbean: the regulation of further exploration, the establishment of a monopoly on trade, the extension of Spanish authority and the use of slavery. The role of Catholic missionaries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Columbus's later voyages and further exploration of the Caribbean; his titles and powers; his responsibility to organise a colony, appoint officials, treat Indigenous peoples well but convert them to Christianity. His actions and experiences during this period.</li> <li>• The quest for gold; the brutal treatment of the Tainos; the development of the <i>encomienda</i>; royal policy on enslavement of Indigenous peoples; intermarriage and the transfer of syphilis to the Spanish and smallpox to Indigenous peoples. <i>Note: the first documented epidemic was not until 1518 but historical accounts suggest that smallpox, and its attendant consequences, may have been present from at least 1507.</i></li> <li>• The increasing expansion of Spanish administration; regulation of expeditions; the establishment of a colony at Santo Domingo; the role of Catholic missionaries in baptising Indigenous peoples, reinforcing Spanish authority and allowing slavery.</li> </ul>

## 2. Content guidance

Key topic 2: The conquistadors, 1513–c1528		Exemplification
1 <b>The start of an empire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balboa's claim of Spanish authority over the Pacific (1513).</li> <li>The conquest of Cuba.</li> <li>The voyage of Magellan and Spanish claim to the Philippines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balboa's crossing of the Isthmus of Panama and claim of Spanish authority over the Pacific and adjoining lands; his acquisition of gold and pearls and the reports of more wealth inland.</li> <li>The conquest of Cuba by Diego Velázquez, for example the execution of Hatuey, relations with Indigenous peoples and the massacre at Caonao and the establishment of a Spanish colony on Cuba.</li> <li>Magellan's voyage (1519) to find a new route to the spice islands and new lands for Spain; the discovery of the Straits of Magellan and a route into the Pacific and to the Philippines.</li> </ul>
2 <b>The conquest of Mexico</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cortes's expedition to Mexico in 1519.</li> <li>Key events of the Spanish conquest of Mexico; the role of Montezuma, the war between Aztecs and Tlaxcalans.</li> <li>The capture of Tenochtitlan and the Aztec surrender.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reports of the Mayan civilisation and of gold; key features of Cortes's expedition to Mexico, for example his contact with the Mayans at the Tabasco River; the importance of artillery and horses and the role of Malinche as interpreter.</li> <li>Contact with the Aztecs and key features of conquest, for example the attitude of Montezuma and the belief that the Spanish were gods; contact with the Indigenous subjects of the Aztecs, the march into the interior and the alliance with the Tlaxcalans; the massacre at Cholula and the submission of Indigenous peoples.</li> <li>The role of Montezuma, for example the meeting of Montezuma and Cortes and the claim that Montezuma ceded his kingdom to the Spanish; Aztec dissatisfaction with Montezuma; Cortes's arrest of Montezuma, his attempt to use him as a puppet king and to enforce Christianity.</li> <li>Events leading to the Aztec surrender, for example the 'Night of Tears' massacre of Aztecs and outbreak of war, Cortes's retreat, attack on Tenochtitlan and siege.</li> </ul>



## 2. Content guidance

Key topic 2: The conquistadors, 1513–c1528		Exemplification
3 <b>Impact of Spain in the Americas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cortes's actions as Governor and Captain-General of New Spain (1523–28).</li><li>• The consequences of the Spanish invasion for the Aztecs.</li><li>• The founding and significance of a Spanish base at Panama.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cortes's actions in founding new cities, supporting further exploration, extending Spanish rule, encouraging conversion to Christianity, developing mines and farms, fostering the growth of sugar and the use of slavery.</li><li>• The arrival of more Spanish settlers, the conversion of Aztecs and intermarriage; the effects of smallpox, land division and religious conversion.</li><li>• The exploration of the 'south sea' by Pedrarias and Espinosa and their joint foundation of Panama in the name of Spain; the establishment of Santiago and Nombre De Dios.</li></ul>

Key topic 3: The Spanish Empire c1528–c1555		Exemplification
1 <b>Pizarro and the conquest of the Incas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact with the Incas (1528); the significance of the death of Huayna Capac.</li><li>• The voyage of Pizarro (1530), and the significance of the war between Atahualpa and Huascar.</li><li>• Key events of the Spanish conquest of Peru: the Battle of Cajamarca and the capture of Atahualpa, the revolt of the Incas, the siege of Cuzco (1536–37). The impact of the conquest.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pizarro's first contact with the Inca civilisation and his declaration of annexation on behalf of Spain; his exploration along the coast and realisation of the scale and quality of the Inca civilisation; the spread of smallpox, the death of Huayna Capac and the civil war between his heirs.</li><li>• Pizarro's voyage of 1530, royal support. His discovery of the war between Atahualpa and Huascar and the opportunity it provided for him.</li><li>• The meeting with Atahualpa, Battle of Cajamarca, Atahualpa's imprisonment and ransom; the murder of Huascar; the murder of Atahualpa, the revolt of the Incas, the siege of Cuzco.</li><li>• The destruction of Inca culture and civilisation.</li></ul>

## 2. Content guidance

Key topic 3: The Spanish Empire c1528–c1555		Exemplification
2 <b>Expansion of empire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The role of the viceroys and <i>encomiendas</i> in the Spanish Empire. The role of Las Casas and the significance of the New Laws (1542).</li> <li>The significance of the discovery of silver in Bolivia and in Mexico. The foundation of La Paz (1548).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The attempts of the crown to control the conquistadors; the role of viceroys, the use of <i>encomiendas</i> and changing patterns of land use.</li> <li>The issue of the status of Indigenous people, critical comments and the publication of Las Casas's <i>A Short account of the Destruction of the Indies</i>; the New Laws, 1542; the temporary halt of conquest in 1550.</li> <li>The discovery of silver at Potosi in Bolivia and at Zacatecas in Mexico and its importance to Spain; the development of mining towns and the need for labour. The founding of La Paz as the centre of Spanish control of Bolivia.</li> </ul>
3 <b>Impact of the 'New World' on Spain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of gold and silver for the Spanish economy and to support Spain's European empire.</li> <li>The impact on Spain of the slave trade and goods from the Americas.</li> <li>The government of the Spanish Empire: the role of the House of Trade and Council of the Indies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The effect of the influx of gold and silver on Spain's economy; the development of the Spanish treasure route.</li> <li>The importance of Seville as the main trade link to the Americas; the trade in plants, crops and animals; the growth of the slave trade.</li> <li>The development of a system of government based in Spain and the regulation of trade within the empire through the House of Trade and Council of the Indies.</li> </ul>

## 3. Student timeline

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The timeline below could be given to students, and could be further edited and added to by them. Inclusion of dates and events in this timeline should not be taken as an indication that these are prescribed: the official specification and associated assessment guidance materials are the only authoritative source of information and should always be referred to for definitive guidance.

1492	Columbus's first voyage Foundation of La Navidad
1493	Columbus's second voyage
1494	Treaty of Tordesillas
1498	Columbus's third voyage, leading to his removal as governor
1511–12	Conquest of Cuba
1513	Balboa's claim of Spanish authority over the Pacific
1519	Magellan's voyage commences Cortes's expedition to Mexico
1520	Night of Tears; conquest of the Aztecs
1528	Pizarro's contact with the Incas
1529	Pizarro granted licence to discover and conquer Peru
1532	Battle of Cajamarca and the capture of Atahualpa
1536–37	The siege of Cuzco
1542	New Laws of the Indies for the Good Treatment and Preservation of the Indians issued by Charles V
1545	Discovery of silver at Potosi
1548	Foundation of La Paz

## 4. Resources

The sections below list a range of resources that could be used by students and teachers for this topic.

The first section lists information on free support materials available on the Edexcel website. On the [GCSE History \(9–1\) from 2016](#) page:

- select the [Teaching support](#) tab, where resources are separated out by Plan, Teach, and Track and Assess;
- or select the [Course materials](#) tab, and then select the appropriate tab for [Specification and sample assessments](#), [Exam materials](#), or [Teaching and learning materials](#).

The table below provides a selection of the free support materials available on the Edexcel website. Details and links for all the free support available can be found in [this document](#). It is updated regularly, so worth bookmarking.

The second section lists publishers who have been endorsed for GCSE (9–1) History. Endorsement means that a resource has been through our quality assurance process to confirm that it meets the teaching and learning requirements a specification is aimed at. Endorsement of a resource doesn't mean it's the only suitable material available, or that it is required to achieve the qualification.

The remaining sections list both endorsed resources and those that have not been endorsed. While these resources – and others – may be used to support teaching and learning, the official specification and associated assessment guidance materials are the only authoritative source of information and should always be referred to for definitive guidance.

There has been a rapid growth in podcasts in recent years, and we have added below links to a few well-known ones. Some may not be suitable for younger listeners, so please check carefully before sharing with students. Similarly, there are plenty of useful videos for History students on online sharing platforms, and any links below have been checked, but please exercise care before sharing social media links with students.

### 4.1 Free support materials

Resource	Details
<a href="#">Specification</a> and <a href="#">sample assessment materials</a>	The starting point for information on content and assessment in GCSE (9–1) History.
<a href="#">Past papers, mark schemes and examiner reports</a>	An <a href="#">Edexcel Online</a> login is required to access files with a silver padlock – check with your exams officer if you can't open them.
<a href="#">Getting Started Guide</a>	An overview of the specification, to help you get to grips with the content and assessment requirements of the specification. Updated for Issues 5 and 6.
<a href="#">Summary guidance on changes for 2025 and 2026</a>	Summary guidance with links on the changes being made for Issue 5 (first assessment 2025) and Issue 6 (2026).
Content changes for 2026: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Topic guidance</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">FAQs</a></li> </ul>	Guidance for each option on the changes being made to the content for Issue 6 of the specification (first assessment June 2026), and FAQs.

Resource	Details
Assessment changes for 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Guide</a></li> <li><a href="#">FAQs</a></li> </ul>	Guidance on the changes being made to the assessment model for Issue 5 of the specification (first assessment June 2025), and FAQs.
Specification language changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Track changes on</a></li> <li><a href="#">Rationale</a></li> <li><a href="#">FAQs</a></li> </ul>	Guidance on the language changes made for Issue 4 of the specification (first teaching September 2023, first assessment June 2025).
<a href="#">Paper 2 Guide</a>	Teaching approaches and ideas for the period study and British depth study, with case studies from practising teachers.
<a href="#">Schemes of work</a>	Sample outline schemes of work for each topic in the specification, in editable Word files. A digital <a href="#">interactive scheme of work</a> is also available for both KS3 and GCSE.
<a href="#">Mapping documents</a>	Mapping documents to help support teachers in moving to Edexcel GCSE History.
<a href="#">Exemplar student answers</a>	Exemplar student answers, including from the summer 2018, 2019 and 2022 series, with examiner commentaries and mark schemes.
<a href="#">Student walkthroughs</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Paper 2P playlist</a></li> </ul>	A series of pre-recorded student walkthroughs, created in collaboration with Harris Federation. <i>Updated for Summer 2025.</i>
<a href="#">Revision tips</a>	Some useful revision tips for students. <i>Updated for Summer 2025.</i>
<a href="#">Command words</a>	A series of student-friendly files exploring each command word in turn, plus a summary document paper-by-paper. <i>Updated for 2025.</i>

## 4.2 Endorsed resources\*

**[Pearson](#)** – Designed to help develop confident, articulate and successful historians.

**[Hodder Education](#)** – The Hodder GCSE History for Edexcel students' book helps students achieve their full potential while ensuring pace, enjoyment and motivation.

**[Oxford University Press](#)** – Oxford's Edexcel GCSE History student books help to develop young historians who have the confidence to succeed, with the most up-to-date exam practice and a tried-and-trusted, accessible approach.

**[Zigzag Education](#)** – Photocopiable resources for learning, revision and exam practice.

**[Anglia Tours](#)** – A range of fully-guided History tours which enhance both teaching and learning for the related Pearson qualification.

**[NST Tours](#)** – Guided History tours to support teachers and students with GCSE History.

\* You don't have to purchase any resources, including those from Pearson, to deliver our qualifications.

### 4.3 Resources for students

Resource	Details
<i>GCSE History (9–1) Spain and the 'New World', c1490–1555</i> (Pearson, 2017)	Student book written for this option in the specification.
<i>Revise Edexcel GCSE (9–1) History: Spain and the 'New World' Revision Guide and Workbook</i> (Pearson, 2017)	A combined revision guide and workbook written for this option in the specification.
The Story of the Conquistadors <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/tudors/conquistadors_01.shtml">www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/tudors/conquistadors_01.shtml</a>	Webpage by Michael Wood.
The Mariners' Museum: Christopher Columbus <a href="http://exploration.marinersmuseum.org/subject/christopher-columbus/">http://exploration.marinersmuseum.org/subject/christopher-columbus/</a>	Includes sections on 'The Big Idea', and the first, second, third and fourth voyages.
Fall of the Aztec Empire <a href="http://www.aztec-history.com/fall-of-the-aztec-empire.html">www.aztec-history.com/fall-of-the-aztec-empire.html</a>	Written for students in the US.
<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhWMM_EKNxdQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhWMM_EKNxdQ</a>	American history teacher with videos aimed at pre-university American students. American spellings but useful overview.
Gord Hill, <i>The 500 years of indigenous resistance comic book: revised and expanded</i> (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2021)	New and expanded version of the illustrated history of Indigenous struggles in the Americas.

### 4.4 Resources for teachers

Resource	Details
Fernando Cervantes, <i>Conquistadores: A new history</i> (Allen Lane, 2020)	Recent scholarship focusing on the period of the topic.
Michael Wood, <i>Conquistadors</i> (BBC, 2000)	Also a television series.
Henry Kamen, <i>Spain's road to Empire</i> (Penguin, 2002)	General history titles relevant to this option.
John Pemberton, <i>Conquistadors</i> (Futura, 2011)	
J. H. Parry, <i>The Spanish Seaborne Empire</i> (University of California Press, 1966)	
J. H. Elliott, <i>Empires of the Atlantic World</i> (Yale University Press, 2006)	
Colin Pendrill, <i>Heinemann Advanced History Spain 1471–1700</i> (Heinemann, 2002)	A level textbook.

Resource	Details
<p>Alan Taylor, <i>Colonial America: A Very Short Introduction</i> (OUP, 2012)</p> <p>David Carrasco, <i>The Aztecs: A Very Short Introduction</i> (OUP, 2012)</p> <p>Matthew Restall and Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, <i>The Conquistadors: A Very Short Introduction</i> (OUP, 2012)</p>	<p>Oxford University Press, A Very Short Introduction Series</p> <p>An interesting and well-written series covering a wide variety of topics that serve as an excellent overview.</p>
Max von Habsburg, <i>Spain in the Age of Discovery, 1469–1598</i> (Cambridge University Press, 2015)	A level textbook
Jill Kilsby, <i>Access to History: Spain 1469–1598</i> (Hodder, 2015)	A level textbook
Camilla Townsend, 'Burying the White Gods: New Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico', <i>American Historical Review</i> , Vol. 108, Issue 3 (June 2003)	Available on Jstor.
Camilla Townsend, <i>Fifth Sun: A New History of the Aztecs</i> (Oxford University Press, 2020)	An engaging, revisionist history of the Aztecs in all its complexity, based on texts written by the indigenous people themselves.
David M. Carballo, <i>Collision of Worlds: A Deep History of the Fall of Aztec Mexico and the Forging of New Spain</i> (Oxford University Press, 2020)	A deep history of the Aztec-Spanish war of 1519–21 and the new colonial order it created.
Caroline Dodds Pennock, <i>On Savage Shores: How Indigenous Americans Discovered Europe</i> (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2022)	Highly readable scholarship on the experiences of Indigenous Americans in Europe.
Ned Blackhawk, <i>The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of US History</i> (Yale University Press, 2023)	A sweeping and overdue retelling of US history that recognises that Native Americans are essential to understanding the evolution of modern America.
<p>British Museum Moctezuma Teacher Resource</p> <p><a href="http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/MoctezumaTeacherResource09.pdf">www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/MoctezumaTeacherResource09.pdf</a></p>	Designed for exhibition visits, but provides useful background.
<p>PBS Conquistadors</p> <p><a href="http://www.pbs.org/conquistadors">www.pbs.org/conquistadors</a></p>	Interactive website, including information on Cortes and Pizarro.
<p>School History Website</p> <p><a href="http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk">http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk</a></p>	A very comprehensive website with resources for teaching history. GCSE resources are arranged by exam board and cover most modules. Some resources are free but to get the full range available there is a subscription payment.

Resource	Details
<a href="https://www.tes.com/teaching-resources/hub/secondary">https://www.tes.com/teaching-resources/hub/secondary</a>	A comprehensive bank of resources for teachers, some free, some paid-for.
Mexicolore <a href="https://www.mexicolore.co.uk/aztecs/">https://www.mexicolore.co.uk/aztecs/</a>	A wealth of resources and information on (ancient) Mexico
Podcast series <a href="#">Historical Association</a> , free to members <a href="#">The Rest Is History</a> <a href="#">Dan Snow's History Hit</a> <a href="#">History Extra</a> <a href="#">You're Dead to Me</a>	There are lots of History podcast series available these days through various platforms. We have listed here a few well-known ones, and you can search for relevant episodes. There are also revision podcasts available. Please check they are suitable before sharing with students.

## Educational Recording Agency

### Transform History Teaching with Multimedia Resources from the Educational Recording Agency (ERA)

[The ERA Licence](#) provides seamless access to television and radio recordings, offering a single point of clearance for the rights needed to create and use authentic media resources in your classroom. With [ERA's free video streaming platform](#), licensed institutions can explore a rich library of curriculum-mapped TV and radio clips tailored to GCSE, AS, and A-level teaching.

Engage your learners with curated clips, full-length documentaries, and programmes that bring historical contexts to life. The platform also includes exclusive access to the **BBC Shakespeare** and **Literary Archives**, offering unique cross-curricular opportunities to enrich your lessons with impactful media—perfect for both homework and classroom activities.

To access this free resource [registration is required](#) - but is quick and simple. State schools in England are licensed under a central agreement with the DfE and the vast majority of independent schools also hold a current ERA Licence.