

## Introduction to the SAQ

Sometimes SAQs will contain documents. There are several forms these SAQs may take:

1. 2 “dueling” sources (text or images)
  - They might be two primary or secondary (usually from historians) texts, or they might be two images (drawings/paintings, political cartoons)
  - They typically will be posing two different (but not necessarily opposite or opposing) points of view.
    - Ex: one historian might argue that protests leading up to the American Revolution reflect economic issues and grievances, while another historian might argue that protests leading up to the American Revolution reflect the ideological issues and grievances.
  - You will have to explain the differences between the points of view/arguments and then provide **SPECIFIC EVIDENCE for each argument/POV.**
  - **You are not giving your opinion about which POV/argument you think is “right” or with which you most agree.**
2. 1 text-based document
  - Again, it might be primary or secondary (again, usually a historian).
  - Typically you must explain the author’s argument/POV
  - Additionally you will usually be expected to give and explain one piece of historical evidence that either supports or opposes the view
    - Sometimes you will only be asked to provide evidence supporting the claim
    - Sometimes you will be asked to provide one piece of evidence in support and one that refutes
3. 1 image (political cartoon, drawing, painting, poster/broadside)
  - These are typically, but not always, primary sources
  - You will usually be asked to
    - explain the point of view of the author – potentially the view on different themes
    - explain how the visual expressed that point of view
    - give and explain one piece of historical evidence that either supports or opposes the view

**ACE is the acronym we usually use to explain how to tackle the SAQ:**

- **A = Answer.** You directly answer the question by identifying your historical claim (argument). - Use specific factual information, if applicable.
- **C = Cite.** You briefly define/describe your claim. - Use specific factual information. - In stimulus-based questions, use a word or image component. (“snag a word/image”)
- **E = Expand.** You explain your answer, connecting it to relevant historical developments and elucidating why your claim best provides evidence to answer the question.

**So, how do you analyze and interpret documents in answering an SAQ?**

### **1a. “Dueling” secondary sources**

“The Columbian connection had a devastating effect on the indigenous human societies of the Americas.... New disease vectors suddenly introduced into the vulnerable populations of the New World began a sequence of horrific pandemics. Rapidly spreading infectious disease devastated indigenous peoples of the New World. It thinned their numbers, destroyed their institutions, and broke their resistance to Spanish aggression.... Demographic recovery after major pandemics was hindered by reduced fertility, stillbirths, and other physical effects, as well as by cultural depression, hopelessness, and malaise resulting from Spanish colonial domination.”  
— John R. Richards, *The Unending Frontier*, 2006

“The New World provided soils that were very suitable for the cultivation of a variety of Old World products, . . . The increased supply lowered the prices of these products significantly, making them affordable to the general population for the first time in history. The production of these products also resulted in large in flows of profits back to Europe, which some have argued fueled the Industrial Revolution and the rise of Europe. The Old World gained access to new crops that were widely adopted.... The improvement in agricultural productivity . . . had significant effects on historic population growth and urbanization.”  
— Nathan Nunn and Nancy Qian, “The Columbian Exchange,” 2010

1: What is the topic/historical context?

2. For each author...

	Richards	Nunn & Qian
Main argument/claim?		
Does the author provide Evidence, Examples, Reasoning, Interpretation (on what are they basing their argument?)		
Differences between the two arguments		
Similarities between the two arguments		

3. What other/outside information do you know about this topic? (evidence not included by the author OR something alluded to but not specifically mentioned)

Now, use your analysis of the sources to ACE the prompt.

Prompt

a) Briefly explain ONE specific historical difference between Richards’s and Nunn and Qian’s interpretations.

- You must understand 1) what each person’s argument is and 2) how these arguments differ in interpreting the same event (this does not necessarily mean they are opposing each other)

**b) Briefly explain how ONE specific historical event or development not explicitly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Richards's interpretation.**

- Think of this as “outside evidence” that would improve or make Richards' argument clearer or stronger. What could Richards add to his argument to make it more compelling?

**c) Briefly explain how ONE specific historical event or development not explicitly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Nunn and Qian's interpretation.**

- Think of this as “outside evidence” that would improve or make Nunn and Qian's argument clearer or stronger. What could Nunn & Qian add to their argument to make it more compelling?

Sample Response: In general, Richards describes negative consequences of trans-Atlantic interactions, detailing the devastating biological effects on native populations. Nunn and Qian, on the other hand, take a more positive view of trans-Atlantic interactions and the Columbian Exchange, highlighting the economic and agricultural benefits experienced in Europe.

One development supporting Richards' point of view is the outbreak of devastating diseases such as smallpox, which weakened the resistance of native groups like the Aztec, who were then weakened and conquered by conquistadors like Cortes.

One development supporting Nunn and Qian's point of view is the introduction of crops such as sugar in the Americas, which helped fuel trans-Atlantic trade that linked together sugar, food, and labor (free and forced) producing regions, reaped tremendous profits for sugar producers in areas such as Barbados and Saint Domingue, and made sugar a global commodity enjoyed by all social classes. New World crops also had significant demographic impacts in the Old World. The potato, which could be grown in regions where wheat or other crops did not thrive, contributed to population growth.

### 1b: “Dueling” primary sources

**Question 1 is based on the following two passages.**

“The Spanish have a perfect right to rule these barbarians of the New World and the adjacent islands, who in prudence, skill, virtues, and humanity are as inferior to the Spanish as children to adults, or women to men, for there exists between the two as great a difference as between savage and cruel races and the most merciful...I might even say, between apes and men. You surely do not expect me to recall at length the prudence and talents of the Spanish....Now compare these [Spanish] traits of prudence, intelligence, magnanimity [generosity], moderation, humanity, and religion with the qualities of these little men (hombrecillos)...who not only are devoid of learning but do not even have a written language; who preserve no monuments of their history...and who have no written laws but only barbaric customs and institutions...they waged continuous and ferocious war against each other, with such fury that they considered a victory hardly worthwhile if they did not glut their monstrous hunger with the flesh of their enemies...

“ Into and among these gentle sheep, endowed by their Maker and Creator with all the qualities aforesaid, did creep the Spaniards, who no sooner had knowledge of these people than they became like fierce wolves and tigers and lions who have gone many days without food or nourishment. And no other thing have they done for forty years until this day,<sup>1</sup> and still today see fit to do, but dismember, slay, perturb, afflict, torment, and destroy the Indians by all manner of cruelty...Their reason for killing and destroying such an infinite number of souls is that the Christians have an ultimate aim, which is to acquire gold, and to swell themselves with riches...It should be kept in mind that their insatiable greed and ambition, the greatest ever seen in the world, is the cause of their villainies. And also, those lands are so rich and felicitous, the native peoples so meek and patient, so easy to subject, that our Spaniards have no more consideration for them than beasts....Two principal and general customs have been employed by those, calling themselves Christians...The first

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Therefore, if you wish to reduce them, I do not say to our domination, but to a servitude a little less harsh.... How can we doubt that these peoples, so uncivilized, so barbarous, contaminated with so many infidelities and vices, have been justly conquered by such an excellent, pious, and just king as the late Ferdinand the Catholic, and the present Emperor Charles, and by a nation that is most humane and excels in every kind of virtue?"

Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, *The Nature of Natives*, 1550

being unjust, cruel, bloody, and tyrannical warfare. The other...is to oppress them with the hardest, harshest, and most heinous bondage to which men or beasts might ever be bound into. . . .

Bartoleme de Las Casas, *Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies*. (1542)

### 1: What is the topic/historical context?

### 2. For each author...

	Las Casas	Sepulveda
Main argument/claim?		
Does the author provide Evidence, Examples, Reasoning, Interpretation (on what are they basing their argument?)		
Differences between the two arguments		
Similarities between the two arguments		

### 3. What other/outside information do you know about this topic?

Now, use your analysis of the sources to ACE the prompt.

Prompt

- (A) Briefly explain the main point made by Sepulveda.
- (B) Briefly explain the main point made by Las Casas.
- (C) Provide ONE specific piece of evidence not explicitly mentioned in the passages, and explain how it supports the interpretation in either passage.

Sample Response: Sepulveda attempts to justify Spanish conquest and colonialism in the Americas by both belittling the Native Americans and lauding the Spaniards. Sepulveda believes Spanish colonialism and rule is justified because 1) Native Americans are unChristian "savages" who engage in warfare and are not properly civilized, and 2) the Spanish will provide the Christian message and

civility to improve the lives of natives.

Las Casas, on the other hand, argues that the Spaniards have unjustly treated the natives with cruelty because of their greed for gold and conquest and because natives were unable to resist Spanish conquest. Las Casas claims that the Spanish not only killed numerous Native Americans, but also enslaved those they did not kill.

One piece of evidence that supports Las Casas' argument is the implementation of the encomienda system, which granted land and native labor to conquistadors. This system allowed encomenderos to exploit native labor by forcing communities to provide labor to work in mines or haciendas, and many natives died as a result of overwork and cruelty or exposure to disease.

## 2. One Text Document

**"There was a vast human diversity among the peoples thrown into contact with one another in the New World. Exploration and settlement took place in an era of almost constant warfare among European nations, each racked by internal religious, political, and regional conflicts. Despite their differences, the Spanish, French, and Dutch empires shared certain features and studied and borrowed from one another, each lauding itself as superior to the others. Native Americans and Africans consisted of numerous groups with their own languages and cultures. They were as likely to fight one another as to unite against the European newcomers. All these peoples were changed by their integration into the new Atlantic economy. The complex interactions of Europeans, American Indians, and Africans would shape not only American history, but also Atlantic World history and even world history. After contact, European, Native American and African societies experienced change as they navigated these new interactions."**  
--Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty*, 2011

1: What is the topic/historical context?

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2. What is the overall argument and interpretation presented?

Main argument/claim?	
Does the author provide Evidence, Examples, Reasoning, Interpretation (on what are they basing their argument?)	
What would be an opposing or different interpretation of this historical event/development?	

3. What other/outside information do you know about this topic? (evidence not included by the author OR something alluded to but not specifically mentioned)

**Now, use your analysis of the source to ACE the prompt.**

**Prompt**

- a) Explain the point of view of the author.
- b) Explain one piece of historical evidence not explicitly mentioned that supports the author's argument.
- c) Explain one additional piece of historical evidence not explicitly mentioned that supports the author's argument.

Sample Response: Foner argues that the Age of Exploration, Columbus' "discovery" of the Americas, and the subsequent centuries of resettling and colonizing the Americas altered the societies, economies and cultures of all parties involved—Europeans, Native Americans and Africans—in positive and negative, intended and unintended ways and across landscapes beyond just the newly "discovered" and transformed Americas.

One piece of evidence that supports Foner's argument is the explosion of trade and economic changes during and after the Columbian Exchange. Europe, the Americas and Africa incorporated new crops into their diets, such as the potato, sugar and cassava, respectively. These groups also engaged in new trade networks that held both positive and negative consequences for all parties involved—Europeans, Native Americans and Africans demanded and supplied slaves, guns, precious metals, furs and other commodities that linked together the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia in an increasingly global trade network that provided new capital and enriched regions while also exploiting the labor and resources of certain peoples and environments.

Another piece of evidence that supports Foner's argument is the explosion of cultural syncretism and acculturation that occurred during and after the Columbian Exchange. Each group adopted and adapted cultural and social practices from one another—the Spanish and French in particular intermarried with Native Americans, the English employed Native American agricultural techniques and crops, Native Americans and Africans both blended their own religious beliefs with Christianity, and all three groups incorporated new languages, political beliefs and cultural ideas from land to religion.

**3. Images (political cartoons or artwork)**

"Colonial Domination," Diego Rivera, 1951



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What do you see in the image?	
What is the historical context/subject of the painting (what event/development does it depict or represent?)	
When did the artist create the image? Is it a primary/first-hand account?	
What seems to be the POV or message of the artist in this image?	
Other info about the time period/event that you think is relevant/significant?	

**Now, use your analysis of the sources to ACE the prompt.**

### Prompt

- Briefly explain the point of view expressed by the artist in the painting.
- Explain ONE specific piece of evidence that supports the point of view expressed in the painting.
- Explain ONE specific piece of evidence that challenges the point of view expressed in the painting.

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Sample Response: Rivera expresses a negative view of Spanish colonialism, depicting greedy Spaniards growing wealthy at the expense of Native American labor, with Native Americans enslaved and brutally treated in the background, even by supposedly Christian missionaries.

One piece of evidence that supports Rivera's view is the use of native labor in the mines in towns like Potosi. Once gold was discovered in Potosi in the 1540s, the Spanish enslaved millions of Native Americans, forcing them to work in brutal and dangerous conditions in order to extract the silver that fueled the growth (and then demise) of the Spanish Empire.

One piece of evidence that challenges Rivera's view is the growth of Spanish missions throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. While some missions were equally as cruel toward Native Americans, others worked hard to improve and protect Native Americans, as seen in the work of men like Las Casas, who argued for reforms in New Spain.