

The Treaty of Tordesillas: How South America Was Divided (VI)

Name: _____

The Treaty of Tordesillas: How South America Was Divided

A long time ago, European countries were exploring the world. Spain and Portugal were two of the biggest explorers. They both wanted new lands, especially in South America, which they didn't fully know yet. This caused a problem: both countries claimed the same areas. To avoid fighting, they made an agreement called the **Treaty of Tordesillas** in 1494.

The treaty divided the world into two parts. Imagine a line running from the top of the Earth to the bottom. Land to the **west of the line** would belong to Spain. Land to the **east of the line** would belong to Portugal. This line ran through the Atlantic Ocean and South America. Because of this line, most of South America became Spanish land. Today, countries like Argentina, Peru, and Chile were mostly claimed by Spain. Portugal got the land that is now **Brazil** because it was east of the line. This is why Brazil speaks Portuguese, and most other countries in South America speak Spanish.

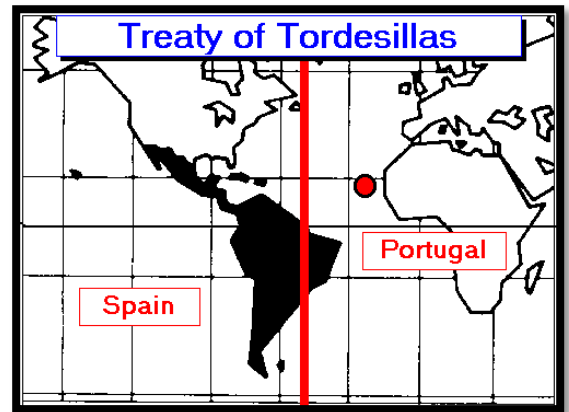
The Pope (the head of the Catholic church [he lives in Italy]) helped Spain and Portugal make the treaty. The Pope at the time, Alexander VI, suggested dividing the world with a line to stop fights between Christian countries. But the Pope had **no real right to divide land** that already belonged to the people living there. The indigenous peoples of South America were not asked and had no say.

The treaty had some benefits. It helped Spain and Portugal **avoid wars** over land, and it made their explorations clearer. But it also caused problems. The lines were **arbitrary**—drawn on maps that were very incomplete—and it ignored the people already living there. It also created unfair advantages, giving Portugal control over some areas of South America, Africa, and Asia, while Spain got most of the Americas.

Even though it was just a line on a map, the Treaty of Tordesillas shaped South America for hundreds of years. It influenced languages, cultures, and borders that we still see today. It is a reminder that political decisions made by powerful people can affect millions of others, even if they had no say in the matter.

Reflection Questions

1). Why did Spain and Portugal make the Treaty of Tordesillas?



2). Was the Treaty of Tordesillas a success, or a failure? Why is that?

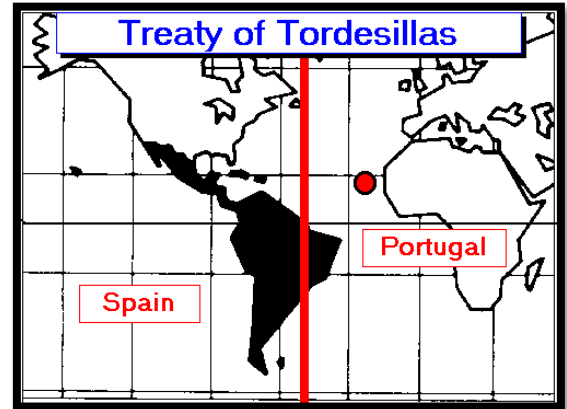
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The Treaty of Tordesillas: Dividing South America Between Spain and Portugal (V2)

Name: _____

In the late 15th century, Spain and Portugal were leading European powers in exploration. Both countries wanted to claim new lands for trade, wealth, and spreading Christianity. However, their claims often overlapped, leading to the risk of war. To settle these disputes, Spain and Portugal signed the **Treaty of Tordesillas** in 1494.

The treaty drew an imaginary line from the North Pole to the South Pole, west of the Cape Verde Islands. Lands **west of the line** were reserved for Spain, and lands **east of the line** were reserved for Portugal. This division gave Spain most of the Americas, while Portugal kept control over parts of Africa, Asia, and a portion of South America. Because Brazil is east of the line, it became a Portuguese colony. The rest of South America, including Argentina, Peru, and Colombia, became Spanish territories.



The Pope (the head of the Catholic church [he lives in Italy]) played a role in the treaty by approving the division. Pope Alexander VI supported the line to prevent wars between Christian nations. But the Pope had **no real right to divide land** that was already home to millions of indigenous peoples. The treaty ignored the rights and freedoms of these communities.

The treaty had **advantages and disadvantages**. On the positive side, it reduced the risk of war between Spain and Portugal, clarified exploration routes, and allowed these nations to focus on colonization and trade. On the negative side, the line was **completely arbitrary**, based on maps that were not accurate, and it disregarded native populations. It gave Portugal control over Brazil, parts of Africa, and Asia, while Spain controlled most of the Americas, which could have led to tensions in other areas.

The Treaty of Tordesillas shows how political decisions by powerful nations can **shape culture, language, and borders for centuries**. Spanish and Portuguese became the dominant languages in South America, Catholicism spread widely, and colonial borders were influenced by a line drawn without consulting the people who lived there. The treaty demonstrates the long-term impact of arbitrary decisions made by leaders with power, rather than fairness or justice.

Reflection Questions

1). Why did Spain and Portugal feel the need to create the Treaty of Tordesillas?

2). Was the Treaty of Tordesillas a success, or a failure? Why is that?

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