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Latin American Peoples Win Independence

TERMS & NAMES

- *peninsulares*
- creoles
- mulattos
- Simón Bolívar
- José de San Martín
- Miguel Hidalgo
- José Morelos

MAIN IDEA

Spurred by discontent and Enlightenment ideas, peoples in Latin America fought colonial rule.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Sixteen of today's Latin American nations gained their independence at this time.

SETTING THE STAGE By the late 1700s, the Americas, already troubled by Enlightenment ideas, were electrified by the news of the French Revolution. The French ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity inspired many Latin Americans to rise up against their French, Spanish, and Portuguese masters.

Revolution in Haiti

The French colony called Saint Domingue was the first Latin American territory to free itself from European rule. Saint Domingue, now known as Haiti, occupied the western third of the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean Sea.

Background

About 35,000 Europeans stood at the top of the social ladder in Haiti in the late 1700s. They were mainly French.



Nearly 500,000 enslaved Africans—the vast majority of Saint Domingue's population—lived at the bottom of the social system. Most slaves worked on plantations, and they outnumbered their masters dramatically. White masters thus used brutal methods to terrorize slaves and keep them powerless.

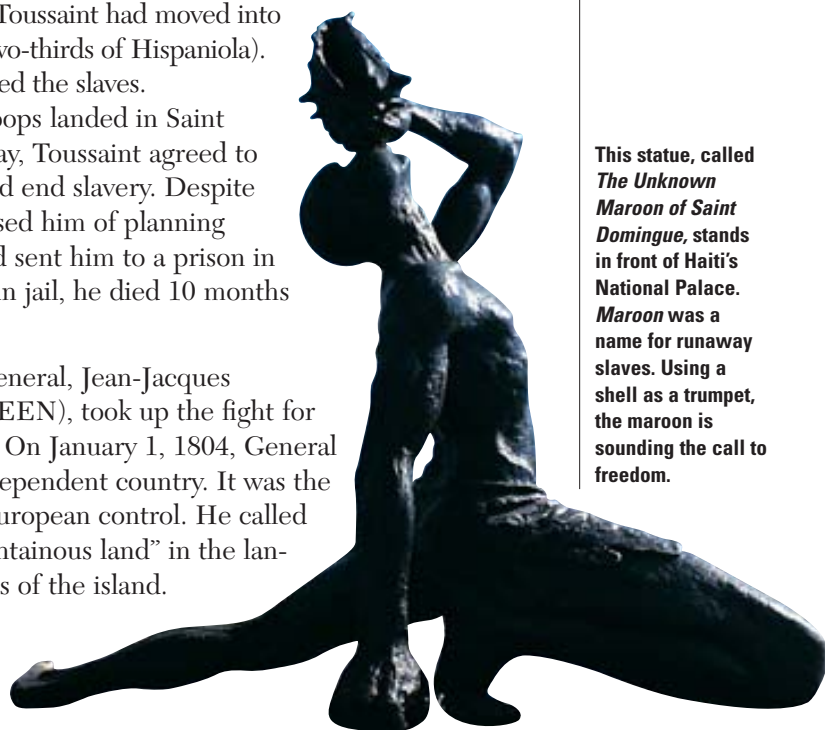
The Fight for Freedom The slaves soon showed that, in fact, they were not powerless. In August 1791, an African priest named Boukman raised a call for revolution. Within a few days, 100,000 slaves rose in revolt. A leader soon emerged, Toussaint L'Ouverture (too-SAN loo-vair-TOOR), an ex-slave. Toussaint was untrained in the military and in diplomacy. Even so, he rose to become a skilled general and diplomat. It is said that he got the name L'Ouverture ("opening" in French) because he was so skilled at finding openings in the enemy lines. By 1801, Toussaint had moved into Spanish Santo Domingo (the eastern two-thirds of Hispaniola). He took control of the territory and freed the slaves.

In January 1802, 16,000 French troops landed in Saint Domingue to depose Toussaint. In May, Toussaint agreed to halt the revolution if the French would end slavery. Despite the agreement, the French soon accused him of planning another uprising. They seized him and sent him to a prison in the French Alps. In that cold mountain jail, he died 10 months later, in April 1803.

Haiti's Independence Toussaint's general, Jean-Jacques Dessalines (zhahn-ZHAIHK day-sah-LEEN), took up the fight for freedom where Toussaint had left off. On January 1, 1804, General Dessalines declared the colony an independent country. It was the first black colony to free itself from European control. He called the country Haiti, which meant "mountainous land" in the language of the native Arawak inhabitants of the island.

Background

By 1600, almost the entire Arawak population had disappeared because of European conquest, warfare, disease, or slavery.



This statue, called *The Unknown Maroon of Saint Domingue*, stands in front of Haiti's National Palace. *Maroon* was a name for runaway slaves. Using a shell as a trumpet, the maroon is sounding the call to freedom.



Latin America Sweeps to Freedom

Latin American colonial society was sharply divided into classes based on birth. At the top of Spanish American society were the *peninsulares* (peh-noon-soo-LAH-rehs), men who had been born in Spain. Only peninsulares could hold high office in Spanish



This 18th-century painting shows a lower-class mestizo family in Mexico. Like many of the poor, this is a family of vendors. They are setting up their stand for market day.

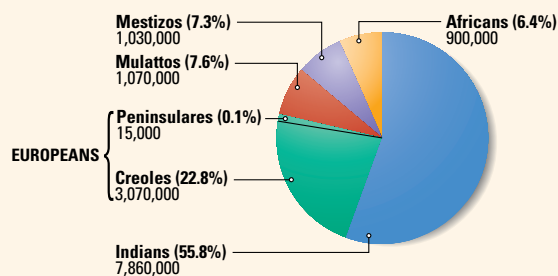
colonial government. In this way, Spain kept the loyalty of its colonial leaders.

Creoles, Spaniards born in Latin America, ranked after the *peninsulares*. Creoles could not hold high-level political office. But they could rise as officers in Spanish colonial armies. Together these two minority groups controlled wealth and power in the Spanish colonies.

Below the *peninsulares* and creoles came the mestizos (persons of mixed European and Indian ancestry) Next were the **mulattos** (persons of mixed European and African ancestry) and Africans. At the bottom of the social ladder stood Indians. Unlike enslaved Africans, Indians were of little economic value to the Spaniards. As a result, they were more severely oppressed than any other group.

Creoles Spearhead Independence Even though they could not hold high public office, creoles were the least oppressed of those born in Latin America. They were also the best educated. In fact, many wealthy young creoles traveled to Europe for their education. In Europe, they read about and adopted Enlightenment ideas. When they returned to Latin America, they brought ideas of revolution with them.

The Divisions in Spanish Colonial Society in 1789



SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts

- Which two groups made up the vast majority of the population in Spanish America?
- Looking at the chart, what was one possible reason that creoles felt resentful of the privileges of the peninsulares?

Creoles not only held revolutionary ideas. They also felt that Spain had inflicted serious injustices on them. A creole aristocrat wrote this complaint to the king of Spain:

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

[T]he Viceroy here and their retainers . . . mock, humiliate and oppress us. . . The more distinguished the unhappy Americans are, the more they suffer. . . Their honor and reputations are attacked, insulting them by depriving them of any honorific office of consequence.

MARQUÉS DE SAN JORGE, quoted in *Americas: The Changing Face of Latin America and the Caribbean*

Spanish royal officials suppressed actions and ideas that might fuel creole discontent. For example, Colombian patriot Antonio Nariño published a translation of the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man*. He was quickly sentenced to exile in Africa.

Background

The *peninsulares* got their name because they came from the Iberian Peninsula, where Spain is located.

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

A. Recognizing Effects How might creole officers serving in colonial armies become a threat to Spanish rule?

Background

Of the 170 Spanish viceroys (colonial governors) between 1492 and 1810, 166 were *peninsulares*; only four were creoles.



THINK THROUGH HISTORY

B. Summarizing

What factors caused the revolutions in Spanish America?

Events in Europe Trigger Latin American Revolutions Napoleon's conquest of Spain in 1808 finally triggered revolts in the Spanish colonies. After he had removed Spain's King Ferdinand VII, Napoleon made his brother Joseph king of Spain. Many creoles might have supported a Spanish king. However, they felt no loyalty to a king imposed by the French. Creoles argued that when the real king was removed, power shifted to the people.

In 1810, rebellion broke out in several parts of Latin America. In 1814, with the defeat of Napoleon, King Ferdinand VII returned to Spain. But the creoles had already begun their drive for independence. And they would continue until victory.

The *Libertadores* End Spanish Rule

The South American wars of independence produced two brilliant generals. Their leadership largely achieved victory for the rebels. One was **Simón Bolívar** (see-MAWN boh-LEE-vahr), a wealthy Venezuelan creole. Called *Libertador* (Liberator), Bolívar was at the same time romantic and practical, a writer and a fighter.

The other great liberator was **José de San Martín** (hoh-SAY day san mahr-TEEN). Unlike the dashing Bolívar, San Martín was a simple, modest man. But he too displayed great courage in battle. Though born in Argentina, he spent much of his youth in Spain as a career military officer. San Martín believed in strict military discipline. However, he also showed concern for the well-being of his troops.

Bolívar's Route to Victory Simón Bolívar's native Venezuela declared its independence from Spain in 1811. But the struggle for independence had only begun. Bolívar's volunteer army of revolutionaries suffered numerous defeats. Twice he had to go into exile. A turning point came in August 1819. Bolívar led over 2,000 soldiers on a daring march through the Andes into what is now Colombia. (See the 1830 map on page 608.)

Coming from this direction, Bolívar took the Spanish army in Bogotá completely by surprise. There he won a decisive victory.

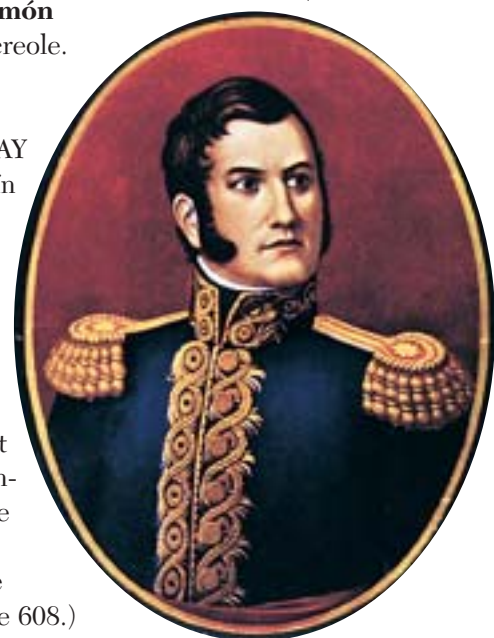
By 1821, Bolívar had won Venezuela's independence. He then marched south into Ecuador. In Ecuador, Bolívar would finally meet with José de San Martín. Together they would decide the future of the Latin American revolutionary movement.

San Martín Triumphs and Withdraws San Martín's Argentina had declared its independence in 1816. However, Spanish forces in nearby Chile and Peru still posed a threat. In 1817, San Martín led his army on a grueling march across the Andes to Chile. He was joined there by forces led by Bernardo O'Higgins, son of a former viceroy of Peru. With O'Higgins's help, San Martín finally freed Chile.

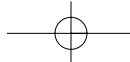
Next, in 1821 San Martín took his army north by sea to Lima, Peru. His plan was to drive out the remaining Spanish forces there. However, he needed a much larger force to accomplish this. This was the problem that faced both San Martín and Bolívar as they met at Guayaquil, Ecuador, in 1822.

No one knows how the two men reached an agreement. But San Martín left his army for Bolívar to command. Soon after, San Martín sailed for Europe. He died, almost forgotten, on French soil in 1850.

With unified revolutionary forces, Bolívar's army went on to defeat the Spanish at the Battle of Ayacucho (Peru) on December 9, 1824. In this last major battle of the war for independence, the Spanish colonies in Latin America won their freedom.



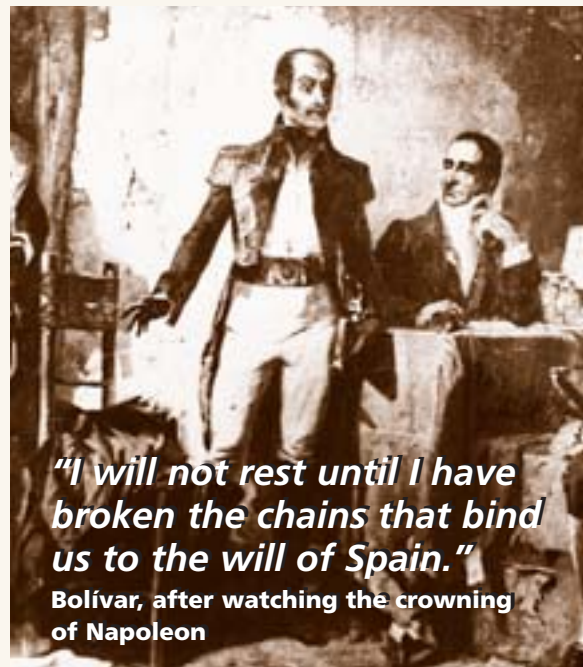
Educated in Spain from the age of six, José de San Martín returned to Latin America as a man in his early 30s. Fighting for 10 years, he became the liberator of Argentina, Chile, and Peru.



GlobalImpact: Struggling Toward Democracy

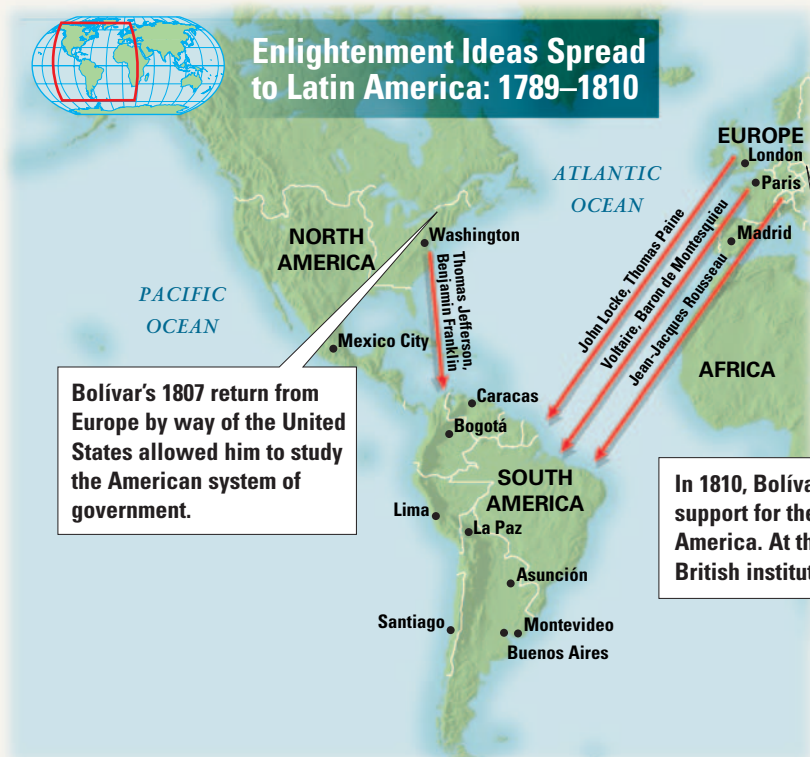
Ideas and Revolution

Revolutions are as much a matter of ideas as they are of weapons. And Simón Bolívar, the hero of Latin American independence, was both a thinker and a fighter. Through his education, readings, travels, and friendships, Bolívar was able to combine Enlightenment political ideas, ideas from Greece and Rome, and his own original thinking. The result was a system of democratic ideas that would help spark revolutions throughout Latin America.



"I will not rest until I have broken the chains that bind us to the will of Spain."
Bolívar, after watching the crowning of Napoleon

Besides being a military leader, Bolívar was also a superb speaker and statesman. He is shown here presenting his plans for a new government.



Enlightenment Ideas Spread to Latin America: 1789–1810

Bolívar's 1807 return from Europe by way of the United States allowed him to study the American system of government.

In 1810, Bolívar went to London to seek support for the revolution in Latin America. At the same time, he studied British institutions of government.

By 1800, the writings of Enlightenment authors were widely read throughout the Spanish American colonies.

After winning independence in 1819, Simón Bolívar organized the Republic of Venezuela and wrote the Constitution of Bolivia. Like many successful revolutionaries, Simón Bolívar became disillusioned with Latin America's chaos after independence. Before his death in 1830, he commented bitterly: "Those who worked for South American independence have plowed the sea."



Bolívar admired Napoleon. But later, he was disappointed by Napoleon's betrayal of democracy.

Patterns of Interaction

The Latin American independence movement is just one example of how the Enlightenment spread democratic ideals throughout the world. In countries facing oppressive conditions, a leader frequently emerges to establish a popular government. Even today, as can be seen in South Africa, democratic ideals inspire people to struggle for political independence and to overthrow oppressive governments.

VIDEO *Struggling Toward Democracy: Revolutions in Latin America and South Africa*

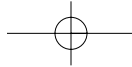
Connect to History

Making Inferences How is Enlightenment thought reflected in Bolívar's ideas on Latin American independence and government?

SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R16

Connect to Today

Comparing What recent events in today's world could be compared to Simón Bolívar's movement for Latin American independence?



Mexico Ends Spanish Rule

In most Latin American countries, creoles led the revolutionary movements. In Mexico, ethnic and racial groups mixed more freely. There Indians and mestizos played the leading role.

A Cry for Freedom In 1810, Padre **Miguel Hidalgo** (mee-GEHL ee-THAHL-goh), a priest in the small village of Dolores, took the first step toward independence. Hidalgo was a poor but well-educated man. He firmly believed in Enlightenment ideals. On September 16, 1810, he rang the bells of his village church. When the peasants gathered in the church, he issued a call for rebellion against the Spanish. Today, that call is known as the *grito de Dolores* (the cry of Dolores).

The very next day, Hidalgo's Indian and mestizo followers began a march toward Mexico City. This unruly army soon numbered 60,000 men. The Spanish army and creoles were alarmed by this uprising of the lower classes. In reaction, they joined forces against Hidalgo's army. Hidalgo was defeated in 1811. The rebels then rallied around another strong leader, Padre **José María Morelos** (moh-RAY-lohs). Morelos led the revolution for four years. However, in 1815, he was defeated by a creole officer, Agustín de Iturbide (ah-goos-TEEN day ee-toor-BEE-day).

Mexico's Independence Events in Mexico took yet another turn in 1820 when a revolution in Spain put a liberal group in power there. Mexico's creoles feared the loss of their privileges. So they united in support of Mexico's independence from Spain. Ironically, Agustín de Iturbide—the man who had defeated Padre Morelos—made peace with the last rebel leader. He proclaimed independence in 1821.

Before the Mexican revolution, Central America had been governed from Mexico. In 1821, several Central American states declared their independence from Spain and thus from Mexico as well. Iturbide, however, refused to recognize those declarations.

Iturbide (who had declared himself emperor) was finally overthrown in 1823. Central America then pulled together. The region declared its absolute independence from Mexico. It took the name the United Provinces of Central America.

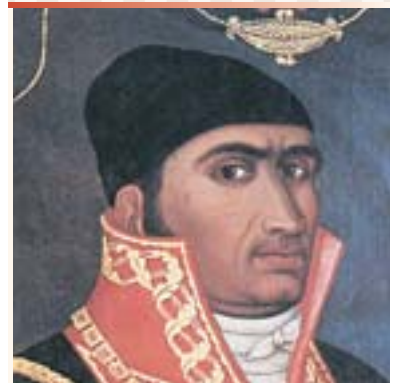
Brazil's Royal Liberator

With no violent upheavals or bloody atrocities, Brazil's quest for independence was unique in this period of Latin American history. In fact, a member of the Portuguese royal family actually played a key role in freeing Brazil from Portugal.

The Portuguese Royal Family in Brazil In 1807, Napoleon's armies swarmed across the Pyrenees mountains to invade both Spain and Portugal. Napoleon's aim was to close the ports of these countries to British shipping. As French troops approached Lisbon, the Portuguese capital, Prince John (later King John VI) and the royal family boarded ships to escape capture. They also took their court and royal treasury with them. The royal family then sailed to Portugal's largest colony, Brazil. For 14 years, Brazil was the center of the Portuguese empire. During that time, Brazilians had developed a sense of their own uniqueness. Many of them could not imagine their country becoming a colony again. However, after Napoleon's defeat in 1815, the Portuguese government wanted exactly that.

By 1822, creoles demanded Brazil's independence from Portugal. Eight thousand Brazilians signed a petition asking Dom Pedro, King John's son, to rule. He agreed.

HISTORY MAKERS



Padre José Morelos
1765–1815

Born into poverty, José Morelos did not begin to study for the priesthood until he was 25. In his parish work, he mainly served poor Indians and mestizos. In 1811, he joined Padre Hidalgo, along with his parishioners. After Hidalgo's death, the skillful Morelos took command of the peasant army.

By 1813, his army controlled all of southern Mexico except for the largest cities. Morelos then called a Mexican congress to set up a democratic government. The supporters of Spain, however, finally caught up with the congress. As the rebels fled, Morelos stayed behind to fight. The Spanish finally captured and shot Morelos in 1815. Napoleon knew of this priest-revolutionary and said: "Give me three generals like him and I can conquer the world."

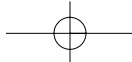
Background

Soon after his *grito*, Father Hidalgo declared an end to slavery and called for other sweeping social and economic reforms.

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

C. Making

Inferences How do you think the royal family's living in Brazil might have helped Portugal's largest colony?



Latin America, 1800



Latin America, 1830



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

- Region** What two European countries held the largest colonial empires in Latin America in 1800?
- Region** Comparing the two maps, which independent countries had emerged by 1830 from Spanish territory in the Americas?

On September 7, 1822, he officially declared Brazil's independence. Brazil had won its independence through a bloodless revolution.

Independence Brings Disunity

Throughout Latin America, independence actually brought an increase in poverty. The wars had disrupted trade and devastated cities and countryside. After all the destruction, the dream of a united Latin America quickly fell apart. In South America, Bolívar's united Gran Colombia divided into Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela in early 1830. And by 1841, the United Provinces of Central America had split into the republics of El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Honduras.

Meanwhile, the ideas of the French Revolution and the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars were causing upheaval in Europe, as you will learn in Section 2.

Section 1 Assessment

1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify

- peninsulares
- creoles
- mulattos
- Simón Bolívar
- José de San Martín
- Miguel Hidalgo
- José Morelos

2. TAKING NOTES

Using a chart like the one below, compare independence movements in Latin America.

Where?	Who rebelled?	Why?	What happened?
Haiti			
Spanish South America			
Mexico			
Brazil			

3. FORMING AND SUPPORTING OPINIONS

Think about the background of many creole revolutionaries. What do you think might have been their tendencies as government leaders: toward democracy or authoritarianism? Explain your answer.

THINK ABOUT

- their education
- their professions
- their economic interests

4. ANALYZING THEMES

Power and Authority

Consider the following statement: "Through its policies, Spain gave up its right to rule in South America." Do you agree or disagree? Explain. Did Spain ever have the right to rule?

THINK ABOUT

- Spanish colonial society
- why independence movements arose
- who gained the power that Spain lost