

## Document-Based Question

Suggested reading and writing time : 1 hour

It is suggested that you spend 15 minutes reading the documents and 45 minutes writing your response.

**Note:** You may begin writing your response before the reading period is over.

**Directions:** Question 1 is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.

In your response you should do the following.

- ▶ Respond to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis or claim that establishes a line of reasoning
- ▶ Describe a broader historical context relevant to the prompt
- ▶ Support an argument in response to the prompt using at least six documents.
- ▶ Use at least one additional piece of historical evidence (beyond that found in the documents) relevant to an argument about the prompt.
- ▶ For at least three documents, explain how or why the document's point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience is relevant to an argument.
- ▶ Use evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the prompt.

Evaluate the most significant factors contributing to the global silver trade patterns that developed between 1550 and 1800.

## Document 1

**Source:** Tomás de Mercado, Spanish scholar, *Manual of Deals and Contracts*, Seville, 1571.

High prices ruined Spain as the prices attracted Asian commodities and the silver currency flowed out to pay for them. The streets of Manila in the Spanish territory of the Philippines could be paved with granite cobblestones brought from China as ballast\* in Chinese ships coming to get silver for China.

\*A heavy substance used to improve the stability of a ship.

## Document 2

**Source:** Anonymous Spanish painting depicting silver extraction and processing in Potosi, Bolivia, 1585.



## Document 3

**Source:** Ralph Fitch, British merchant, an account of his travels to the East Indies, published in 1599.

When the Portuguese go from Macao, the most southern port in China, to Japan, they carry much white silk, gold, perfume and porcelain and they bring from Japan nothing but silver. They have a great ship that goes to Japan every year, and brings back more than 600,000 coins worth of Japanese silver. The Portuguese use this Japanese silver to their great advantage in China. The Portuguese bring from China gold, perfume, silk, copper, porcelain, and many other luxury goods.

## Document 4

**Source:** Antonio de Morga, lawyer and bureaucrat for the Spanish Crown in the Philippines, *Account of the Philippine Islands*, c. 1600.

A considerable number of junks (large ships) come as a rule laden with goods from Great China to Manila. Every year thirty, sometimes forty, of these ships come, though they do not enter together as a fleet or armada, but in squadrons, with the monsoon and the settled weather. When a ship arrives and anchors, the royal officials carry out their inspection of the cargo. At the same time a formal valuation is made of the worth of the goods according to Manila prices, for the vessel immediately pays three percent on everything to the royal exchequer.

## Document 5

**Source:** Xu Dunqiu Ming, writer, in his essay in *The Changing Times*, about the commercial city of Hangzhou, 1610.

In the past, the dye shops would allow customers to have several dozen pieces of cloth dyed before settling accounts and charging the customers. Moreover, customers could pay for dyeing the cloth with rice, wheat, soybeans, chickens, or other fowl. Now, when you have your cloth dyed you receive a bill, which must be paid with silver obtained from a moneylender.

## Document 6

**Source:** Antonio Vazquez de Espinosa, a Spanish priest, *Compendium and Description of the West Indies*, 1620s.

So huge is the wealth that has been taken out of Potosí since the year 1545, when it was discovered, up to the present year of 1628, that merely from the registered mines, according to most of the accounts in the Spanish royal records, 326 million silver coins have been taken out. This does not count the great amount of silver taken secretly from these mines to Spain, paying no 20 percent tax or registry fee, and to the countries outside Spain, including the Philippines and China.

## Document 7

**Source:** Charles D'Avenant, an English political economist, *An Essay on the East-India Trade regarding the debate on a bill in Parliament to restrict Indian textiles*, 1697.

Since we were supplanted in the spice-trade by the Dutch, our chief investments or importations from the East Indies have been in dyed cotton cloth, silks, drugs, cotton-yarn, and wool; part of which commodities are for our own use but a much greater part, in times of peace, were brought to London for sale to France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, and our colonies.

For Europe draws from Asia nothing of solid use; only materials to supply luxury, and only perishable commodities, but sends to Asia gold and silver, which is there buried and never returns.