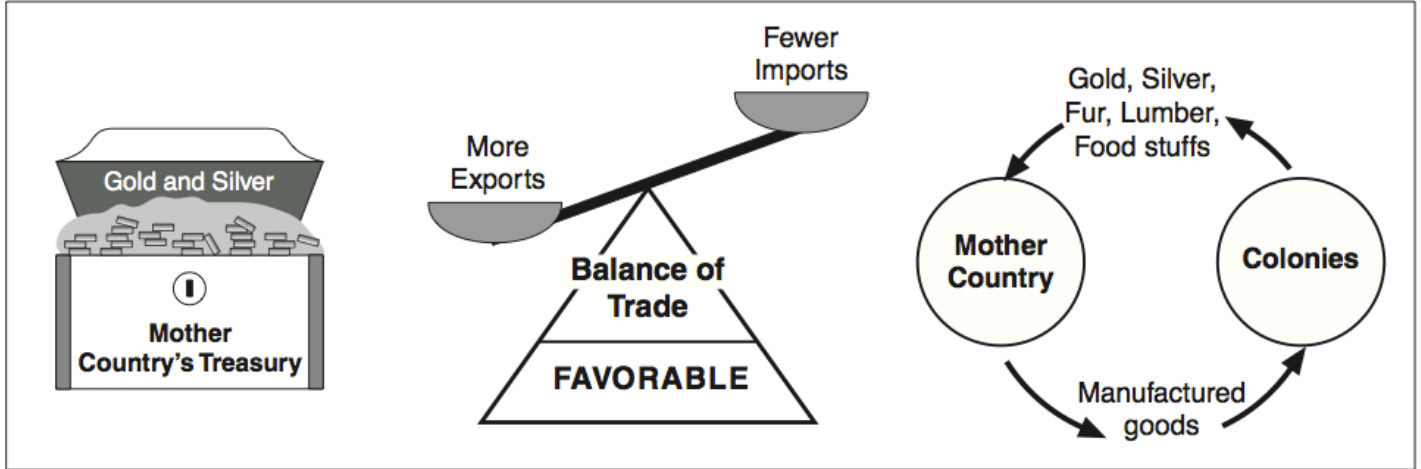


MERCANTILISM DBQ

Directions: Examine the documents and answer the questions that follow.

Document 1

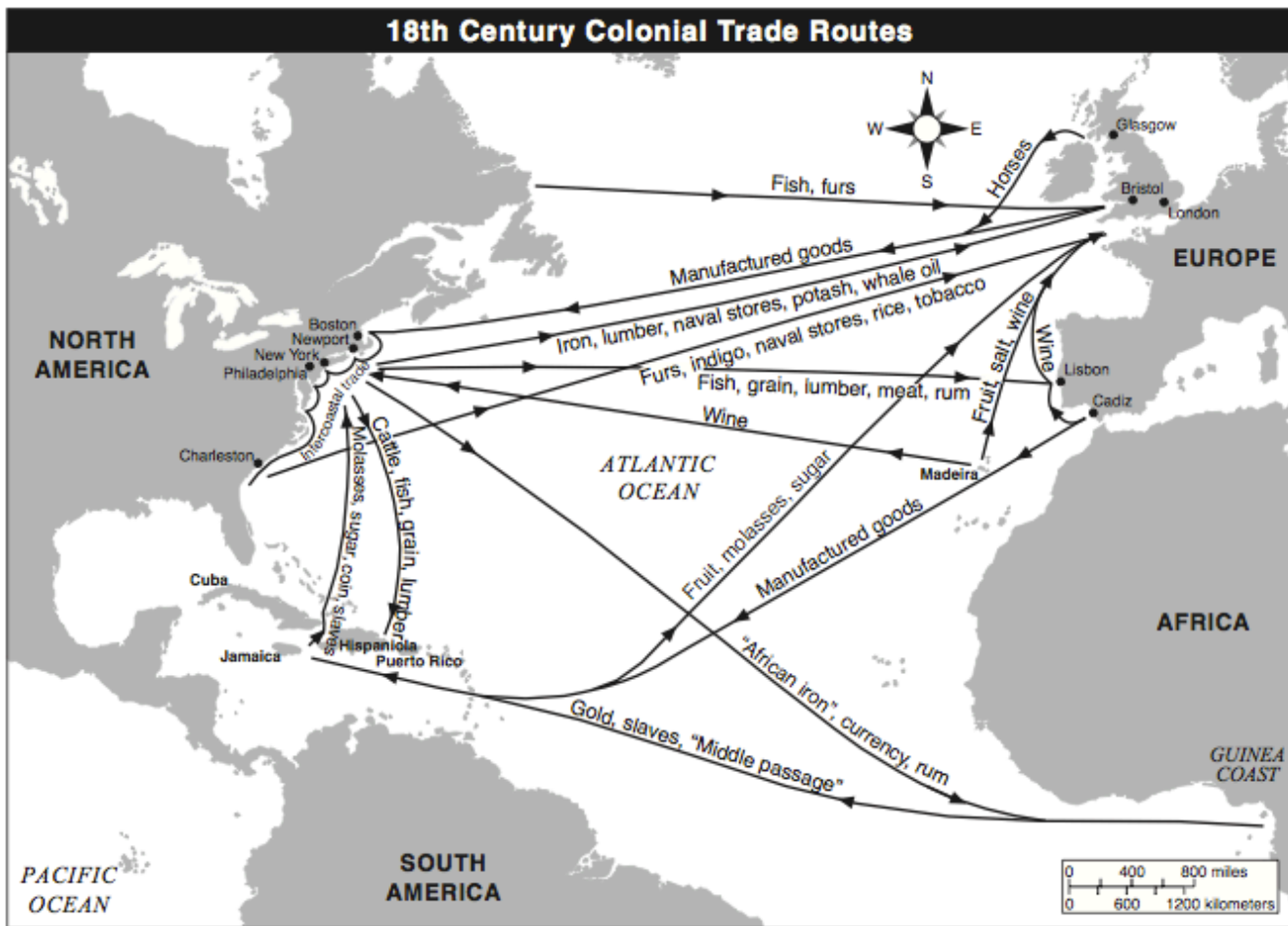


Document 2

The Mercantilist Argument for Colonial Expansion



Document 3



Document 4

This is an excerpt from a letter written in 1559 by Michele Soriano about Spain's interactions with its colonies in the Americas.

. . . From New Spain are obtained gold and silver, cochineal, (little insects like flies,) from which crimson dye is made, leather, cotton, sugar and other things; but from Peru nothing is obtained except minerals. The fifth part of all that is produced goes to the king, but since the gold and silver is brought to Spain and he has a tenth part of that which goes to the mint and is refined and coined, he eventually gets one-fourth of the whole sum, which fourth does not exceed in all four or five hundred thousand ducats, although it is reckoned not alone at millions, but at millions of pounds. Nor is it likely that it will long remain at this figure, because great quantities of gold and silver are no longer found upon the surface of the earth, as they have been in past years; and to penetrate into the bowels of the earth requires greater effort, skill and outlay, and the Spaniards are not willing to do the work themselves, and the natives cannot be forced to do so, because the Emperor has freed them from all obligation of service as soon as they accept the Christian religion. Wherefore it is necessary to acquire negro slaves [enslaved Africans], who are brought from the coasts of Africa, both within and without the Straits, and these are selling dearer [more expensive] every day, because on account of their [enslaved Africans'] natural lack of strength and the change of climate, added to the lack of discretion [care] upon the part of their masters in making them work too hard and giving them too little to eat, they fall sick and the greater part of them die. . . .

Source: Merrick Whitcomb, ed., "The Gold of the Indies — 1559," *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, The Department of History of the University of Pennsylvania