

## Graph of Latin American Class System, 1700s

**Instructions:** Read the following passage and complete the circle graph on the next page. Be sure to write the correct percentage in the correct portion of the graph, complete the key and color the graph.

The class system was very important in Latin America. It determined a peoples place in society. Many countries lived by this system for many hundreds of years. The Spanish colonies in Latin America were no different.

In the Latin American colonies, individuals that were born in Spain and then moved to the Americas were in the highest class. Spaniards only made up two percent of the population, but had most of the power and ran the government. They were a very powerful group.

Creoles were next in line. They were individuals that were born in the Americas, but had parents or ancestors that had been born in Spain. Even though Creoles were not mixed with another race they had less power than the Spaniards and could not hold government office. They were eighteen percent of the population.

Thirty percent of the population was made up of Mestizos. They were part Indian and part Spanish: they worked as craftspeople, shop owners, managers in mines or on plantations and sometime held minor positions in the church. The Mestizos lived better than the Indians or slaves, but had little opportunity for improving their lives.

Although Indians made up the largest part of the population, forty-five percent, most were poor and had few rights. They worked in mines and on plantations, but many still lived in the mountains, forests and jungles, having little to do with the colonies.

Finally the most oppressed, least powerful group of all were the slaves. These were Africans that had been brought, by the Spanish, to the Americas starting in the early 1500s. They made up the remaining five percent of the population.

The lower three classes made up the majority of the population, but they were the poorest, least educated and oppressed. Throughout all of the colonies in Latin America the Europeans were at the top of the ladder and the Indians and African were at the bottom

(adapted from *Pearson Learning History and Geography*)

## **Latin American Class System in the 1700's**

1. Why was the class system important in Latin America?
2. Which group was at the top of the social class in Latin America?
3. What type of jobs did Spaniards have?
4. What is a creole?
5. What type of job could Creoles NOT have?
6. What is a Mestizo?
7. What types of jobs did Mestizos have?
8. Which group of people made up the largest population in the Latin American class system?
9. What type of jobs did Indians have?
10. Who was the most oppressed group of people in Latin America?
11. How did this group of people make it to Latin America?